

the newsletter of Tarragon Solutions

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How to stop your data going for a drive...

Maybe you're scrapping an old computer. Perhaps you're upgrading to a larger hard disk. Either way, the hard drive that is now obsolete contains data you certainly won't want to become available to anyone else - so it needs to be cleansed.

We all know that using Windows to 'delete' files doesn't actually remove them. Similarly, emptying the Recycle Bin does not actually erase anything, it merely turns off pointers to the data. So, what is the best way to clean up an old hard disk?

Before discussing that, it is important to have an appreciation of the difference between a disk that contains no data readable by Windows and a disk that contains no readable data. Windows expects a disk to be set up in a certain way, with a structure of folders and files all linked together by pointers. Remove or disrupt those pointers and Windows has a problem. The information is still there, though, and specialist programs *can* access the data, which is how data recovery firms can get back your data

Tarragon can cleanse your obsolete hard drives from as little as £25!

when something nasty, like a virus attack, has happened. Unfortunately, this also means that the information is available to less desirable elements, too.

So, what's the best way to ensure a disk is clean? First thing to ask is whether you want the disk to be *usable* once it's been cleaned. If not, then physical destruction is effective but a lot more difficult to achieve than you might think. Hard drives are built to be robust and their cases are very tough. Hitting them with a hammer or running over them with a vehicle doesn't actually do much to them, unless you want to put in a **lot** of effort and emphatically pierce the protective case (or have a Challenger tank at your disposal!) You can attack the disk with an electric drill which, once you have succeeded in penetrating the case, *will* stop a drive from working (although data on undamaged portions of the magnetic disk are still retrievable to those who care). The only certain way is to use a specialist crusher that puts the physical components beyond recovery.

Usually, though, you won't care whether the drive is re-used as long as your data has gone completely, so the best approach is to reformat the disk, isn't it?

Actually, no. Using Windows to reformat a drive, whether a "quick format" or a "low level format" does **not** clean the data. It merely rebuilds the structures Windows needs and doesn't care about what information is sitting there already. You won't be able to see it through My Computer, but it's still there.

There's only one way to be certain that all your information has gone and that is to carefully write over it, every single bit of it, with random 0s and 1s. It is a time-consuming process that requires special software and has to be done from outside the Windows operating system - and that's where Tarragon can help you.

Send us your old computer (or just the hard drive) and we will ensure it is wiped to the level of cleanliness and security demanded by the US Department of Defense (sic). We can then guarantee that **no** software product will be able to retrieve your data from that disk so that you may then dispose of or reuse the drive with confidence.

This peace of mind comes at a small price, too, just £25.00+VAT for the first 100GB of a disk, £5.00+VAT per 100GB thereafter. A collection fee will apply if you would like us to collect and/or return the computer or disk to you after cleansing.

Our service also offers cleansing of portable hard drives, USB memory sticks and, if anybody still has them, floppy disks; we can destroy CDs and DVDs for a nominal charge (*free* of charge, for up to 10).

For more information, just give us a call!

Personal Data Found On eBay Computer!

A computer bought for just a few pounds on the eBay auction site was found to contain the banking and payroll details of hundreds of workers.

It is believed the computer came from a company that had failed to ensure the all its data had been erased before passing it to another company for destruction. Instead of being destroyed, the computer ended up on eBay. Embarrassed officials of the organisation previously owning

Don't let this be you!

IAB curbs Phorm with controls

March 2009

Solutions!

Last year, this newsletter carried several articles about the way the Phorm behavioural advertising system had been introduced on trial by BT without informing its customers. Now, the Internet Advertising Bureau (IAB) has introduced a set of good practice guidelines to control the way Phorm is implemented.

Phorm is intended to aid targeted advertising by analyzing users' surfing habits and website visits. Major ISPs, such as British Telecom, Virgin Media and Carphone Warehouse (Talk Talk) have agreements with Phorm but privacy groups are unhappy. Many feel that the interception of users' data, even anonymously, is an intrusion. Because, in the UK, interception of communications is not allowed (except by the forces of Law and Order, of course) some believe the way Phorm works is possibly also illegal.

Nick Stringer, head of regulatory affairs at the Internet Advertising Bureau (IAB) said in an interview with Reuters: "Behavioural advertising makes up about 20 per cent of the online display advertising market and if this is going to grow, we need to have consumer trust."

The IAB guidelines, which complement the UK's data protection and collection rules by advising on collection of anonymous data, propose that, before collecting any data, online behavioural advertising systems must clearly inform the user that such collection will take place and what the collected data will be used for. The user must also be offered an opportunity to say No to the collection of information.

Privacy groups agree that this is a step in the right direction but would prefer to see an "opt-in" arrangement whereby data collection could not take place until the user had given specific permission.

The IAB has so far signed up 10 partners to its code of practice, including advertising networks, online publishers and technology companies.

Windows 7 includes a big turn-off!

Microsoft really are going all out to make people happy with Windows 7, possibly including those people in the EU who keep threatening anti-trust suits.

The latest builds of the Windows 7 beta includes a "Windows Features" dialogue box and, with this, a user can elect to turn off certain components. The list includes Internet Explorer, Windows Media Center, Windows Media Player and Windows Search.

Switching off the components means the files for them won't be loaded into the system libraries, which saves space and can reduce startup time. However, the files will be 'staged', which means the user can later switch components on without the need for the installation DVD.

Tip of the Month - Outlook: populating the Autocomplete list

In Outlook, when you create a new message and start to type an address into the **To:**, **CC:** or **BCC:** box, a list of possible names will appear according to the letters you have typed. If you would like to ensure that all the names in your contacts folder will be used in this autocomplete list, just do the following:

Open a New message then click on the **To...** button. Select all the contact names in the list that appears, click the **To ->** button then **OK**.

Wait a few moments (for all the addresses to resolve in the email message window) and all the contacts selected will now be available in the autocomplete list. The email message may now be discarded.

Please let us know what you think of [Solutions!](#) - email solutions@tarragon.co.uk