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Thread: [How Would You Wipe a Computer to Prevent Tracking?](#)

Crazydude409 - October 17, 2016, 9:12 am

Recently, a friend of mine came across a MacBook and plans on keeping it for himself. He's not the most tech savvy person, so watching him clear and restore it was a little hilarious. I believe he did everything he knew how to, but I just have a feeling that if someone wanted to, they could track it back to him.

I don't plan on helping him as I wasn't involved nor am I too concerned about someone tracking it, but I wanted to ask a hypothetical.

If you came across a laptop, what steps would you take to clear it and make sure that it was impossible to track?

Armada - October 17, 2016, 9:13 am

Flash the drive clean with a fresh install of OSX, if I am not mistaken this should fix the issue (I however am NOT a MAC expert..)

Fantom4242 - October 17, 2016, 9:23 am

First of all, this is a general advice, your operation system should be open source.

If not, you're basically handicapped.

For instance, Linux distributions are operation systems, which are open source.

Rushax - October 17, 2016, 9:25 am

Smash it up.

/25 Characters.

Sorry couldn't resist, but yeah as others have said. A complete wipe of OS & re-install.

M5DD - October 17, 2016, 9:35 am

Wipe or get a new drive; then install debian

patflexx - October 17, 2016, 2:59 pm

First thing I would do besides just Overwriting, not just wiping the harddrive would be to take off any external sticker IE. the Serial Number. Call me paranoid but I do know that's how most of the people who pawn stolen electronics end up getting caught, the victim gives the cops the serial number.

That's how I got my 360 back a few years ago when I had a break in, three days after reporting it, cops call me and have me meet them at the pawn shop to confirm it was mine. It was another three months before I saw it thanks to the lengthy time before they were able to take him to court and charge him, (he cleaned out four apartments in the building I was at).

Speaker at Defcon 18 has a great story about idiots not taking the right digital precautions after theft: He Hacked His Computer Back after over a year of it missing! Long but entertaining:

[Defcon 18 Pwned By the owner - What happens when you steal a hackers computer](#)

Deus Ex Machina - October 17, 2016, 3:02 pm

The thing about macs is that they all talk back to Apple. So Apple will know if this computer is in use if you're using OSX.

pomwtin - October 17, 2016, 3:33 pm

Perform low-level formatting (aka null the disk) with dd to avoid any chance of file recovery, then use OS that is not made by apple...

ktpstudsteak - October 17, 2016, 9:06 pm

If you have a toolkit and a HDD handy, switching out the HDD might be a good option. Especially if you screw up the other one trying to put another OS on it.

THC - October 17, 2016, 10:25 pm

Reinstall the OS, remove anything that could identify it (including interior stickers), scratch off the serial number.

SIM-3051398 - October 17, 2016, 11:55 pm

Fill your bathtub with water simply pick up the computer which you are trying to wipe clean and drop it into the bathtub let it sit there for a hour or so, by doing this you are wiping the hard drives of the US governments main frame which disallows Donald trump to track you. P.S this isn't a shit post I swear :)

Legionhoster - October 18, 2016, 3:30 am

Well he will be traced out from the physical address of his network card of laptop plus the HWID.

If you just want to wipe out your traces then first reinstall the OS and then install disk wiper or cCleaner.

Use secure free space disk wiper to wipe out the free space. There is a method in that which securely writes the data 37 times or more then it becomes almost impossible for any software to recover and difficult to a hardware recovery analyst.

There are a lot of facts using which he can be traced out though.

Asdethprime - October 18, 2016, 4:52 am

Hi Crazydude409 ,

You see it's not very easy to track a laptop if you simply format the Operating System and change the Operating System to something that is open source.

Here is how this works, the operating system can read your MAC address/BSSID which is hardcoded in your computer. You can fool an external device communicating with you with a fake MAC you can't however do that to your built-in operating system. Apple does keep log of the operating system. So if you just uninstall and re-install the operating system the system itself can track you everytime you connect to the internet.

However, if you install a Linux distribution (which works perfectly on your MAC) you are going to be track.