

Forum:[Hack Forums](#)

Thread: [Formatting and reinstalling due to suspected malware - but what about my backups?](#)

blobber - May 26, 2019, 2:57 pm

Hello everyone,

Once in a while, I like to format my hard drive completely and do a clean install. This time I suspect I may actually have malware on my computer.

Obviously formatting and reinstalling my OS would solve this problem. However, I have a Dropbox folder with work and personal files that I transfer between each fresh install, and I also keep these on USB drives- my backup files.

My question is: what if there is malware placed in the backup folders I transfer between my OS installations? What are the chances of this, can it be checked in any reliable way, and what can be done about it if it turns out to be a positive?

Basically I want ease of mind with a clean install, but I also would like to keep my backup files.

Thank you very much for reading.

fire_w1re - May 26, 2019, 10:31 pm

(May 26, 2019 02:57 PM)blobber Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Hello everyone,

Once in a while, I like to format my hard drive completely and do a clean install. This time I suspect I may actually have malware on my computer.

Obviously formatting and reinstalling my OS would solve this problem. However, I have a Dropbox folder with work and personal files that I transfer between each fresh install, and I also keep these on USB drives- my backup files.

My question is: what if there is malware placed in the backup folders I transfer between my OS installations? What are the chances of this, can it be checked in any reliable way, and what can be done about it if it turns out to be a positive?

Basically I want ease of mind with a clean install, but I also would like to keep my backup files.

Thank you very much for reading.

Well, there is always that possibility of you having malware. The only way for you to know is to reinstall the OS, restore the backup, and then do a scan to see if there are any detections. That will tell you if you can continue using that backup in the future. What are you backing up exactly?

And by the way, if youre paranoid about malware, reinstalling the OS and restoring from a backup seems senseless. Reinstall the OS and only move single documents you know are not infected. I dont know of anyone who "once in a while formats his HDD" for the fun of it. No one like doing that. That only shows that you have some concern about malware or are worried about something!

Yac1ne - May 27, 2019, 1:51 am

(May 26, 2019 02:57 PM)blobber Wrote: [\[CITE\]](#) Hello everyone,

Once in a while, I like to format my hard drive completely and do a clean install. This time I suspect I may actually have malware on my computer.

Obviously formatting and reinstalling my OS would solve this problem. However, I have a Dropbox folder with work and personal files that I transfer between each fresh install, and I also keep these on USB drives- my backup files.

My question is: what if there is malware placed in the backup folders I transfer between my OS installations? What are the chances of this, can it be checked in any reliable way, and what can be done about it if it turns out to be a positive?

Basically I want ease of mind with a clean install, but I also would like to keep my backup files.

Thank you very much for reading.

Only plug that suspicious flash drive of yours in your fresh installed windows AFTER doing a full virus scan , i'd recommend using another secured computer , once you confirm that there are no viruses , then you can plug , i must say you have some bad history with viruses to actually like to format every once in a while .

paradisiac - May 27, 2019, 3:11 pm

If the malware that you're afraid is injected into your backup files, you wont be able to locate it so easily. If you can take backups, take them as exported versions uploaded directly to cloud. Don't have them too long on your device.