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CleanUSB splash screen

[Secure Your USB Storage Device](#)

USB wiper

With the abundance of storage devices on the market loss of information is more and more prone to occur. In the past this happened whenever you would sell your hard disk or take it for repairs. Now, with the massive injection on the market of all sorts of portable storage devices the risk of someone to find out about your confidential files has grown exponentially. Memory Sticks, Cool Disks, Flash Pens, or whatever your portable storage device, despite its toy-like looks, it is still a piece of hard drive, only in miniature sizes. Capacities vary from the useless 128MB (actually I think you can find storage devices this size only in museums or lost in under some couch) to incredible size of 64GB (yes, those are gigabytes, the device is not larger than a pack of gum and the price is also amazing, check [here](#)). With the sizes for the USB flash drives constantly increasing there is no wonder that owners want to get rid of them and if the investment is partially recovered, the better. However, I suggest cleaning the flash drive first before handing it to a perfect stranger, or worse, a kid (you know how the whiz kids nowadays can dig up any information). The conclusion is that you will have to make sure that the deleted data from your USB storage cannot be recovered through conventional, software means. That is all the free space has to be processed by an encryption algorithm that overwrites data over the free space. As all Windows partitions nowadays are running on NTFS file system, finding the right application for the job could become quite stressful because you need a software able to work on FAT file systems. However, CleanUSB is up to the task, as long as you are using it on Windows XP. Priced at \$14.95, the application can be tested for a trial period of 30 days with almost all the features activated. The only thing limited is that not all the storage devices are supported in the trial. To get the full support from the software you will have to pay the fee. Nevertheless, this gives plenty of room for properly testing the program. Working with the application is extremely easy solely because of the wizard that guides you from the beginning of the operation to the end of it. All the effort from your part is to make the right selection when the time comes, click Next and wait for the operation to finish. The first step is selecting the USB device to be "purified". The application supports a myriad of USB storage devices, so don't be shy and plug your USB device in, select it and move on to the next step. The options made available by CleanUSB are two: clean the free space or completely wipe the data on the stick. These tasks are completed by using an encryption algorithm (unknown to me as it is not mentioned anywhere and there are no details on the number of passes of the wipe) which overwrites the data on the device. Even if you delete the data and then empty the Recycle Bin the files are still stored on the computer. The only thing that is deleted is in fact the name of the file. Because of this some softwares are capable of recovering the lost files provided that they have not been overwritten. Before the actual cleaning process launches, CleanUSB asks you to confirm the recorded settings. Just to make sure that there is no mistake and that the user indeed intends to wipe the free space from the USB storage unit, you will have to press OK in the appropriate field. By typing in the letters you are actually confirming the previous settings. That is about it with configuration. CleanUSB proceeds to work and a progress bar shows how much there is to be wiped. The process is extremely slow and for a 1GB USB memory it took about 20 minutes to finish. The application had a bug that did not allow Vista users to employ it in USB cleaning tasks, but the problem has been remedied and the program works fine with Microsoft's latest operating system as well. There are some mischiefs of the software, besides the fact that the wipe-out algorithm is secret. During the process the user has no idea of the finish time of the operation. The green progress bar is OK, but there is no time

element involved (estimated time till completion or at least an elapsed time info). **The Good** The good side is that when trying to recover the wiped files with several recovery tools, I could not save anything. The files were either corrupted or simply could not be written on the drive. **The Bad** Mentioning the overwrite method would build confidence in the software. Also, adding some time estimating info for that progress bar would greatly increase its value. **The Truth** [Undelete Plus](#) showed some elements after scanning the USB drive, but none of the items could be recovered. Other applications of this sort did not find anything at all. The price is just right as you can confidently use the application on both XP and Vista. The job is done responsibly, but the user has no idea on the time of completion. Only the 30 days of trial will help you decide on the matter. *Here are some snapshots of the application in action:*