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Privacy Beyond Deletion

Scrub clean HDD's free space

Keeping your privacy to high levels is not a process restricted to limiting the access to important files, but also to keeping prying eyes away from the data you've just deleted. Removing the information from Recycle Bin does not ensure that the information is no longer recoverable as there are plenty of applications ready to grab deleted files. On the other hand, there are plenty of instruments that can make more difficult, if not impossible, the retrieval of data after its deletion. By using special wiping standards, software solutions can make the real information on the disk unrecoverable so that any leakage risk is eliminated. The standards simply overwrite the data on the disk with random info, making the recovery extremely difficult. For more privacy, even for files that have already been deleted, there is a special category of software that should be used. Their main purpose is wiping free space on a drive, without affecting any of the existent data on it. A freebie fitting this pattern is Disk Redactor from Cezeo, which is extremely easy to use and quite reliable. The interface is nothing fancy as there is only one window for you to deal with and it does not contain complicated elements worthy of a headache. Things are pretty simple and the online help file (accessible directly from the interface) covers all the steps to be made in order to successfully complete wipe operations. All details on the purpose of the software are explained in its main window and the fact that Disk Redactor will not delete any of the files stored on the disk is clearly stipulated, so there is no need to worry. The only options made available in the software permit the user to select the volume to be "purified". Once this selection is made and a warning later, the application will start the wiping process automatically. There is also an Options button available that should give you the possibility to enable the deleting of the files twice, check the disk for errors (a simple disk test), enable background working mode (uses less CPU power) or fill the free space with random data instead of 0x00. Unfortunately we were not able to check any of these options (neither on XP, nor on Vista) because they were all grayed out. Disk Redactor is extremely easy to use and does a pretty good job with wiping the free space as it overwrites it with data and there is little chance for recovery by using a traditional software tool. All you will get after a recovery session is a set of data chunks resulting from the wiping process. However, considering the non-working Options menu, user's input in configuring the software is reduced to none, as all you can do is to select the drive to be processed and agree with the operation. Other than this, there is nothing else you can do except for watching it finish the job. Although the application does a good job at wiping the files, making available various wiping algorithms would make it much more reliable in the eyes of the users. An algorithm like Gutmann, which features 32 passes or DoD (Department of Defense), gives the user more confidence as these are worldwide known, trustworthy standards. The main application window provides the user with certain information regarding the selected volume. There aren't many details, but the total size of the drive and amount of free space available for wiping are disposable. A progress bar will display the amount of space processed, but you are not given an estimated time for completing the process. The application does a good job at wiping the free space on the hard disk but it cannot be configured in any way, although there is an Options button present in the interface. There is a single wipe method for overwriting deleted files, but the job is well done. On the other side, the software leaves plenty of room for improvement and adding a few wiping standards would greatly increase its value.

The Good Disk Redactor is extremely easy to use and all information for reaching the desired result is included in the main application window. With easy clicks you can securely erase all the free space on a drive, making the information extremely difficult to retrieve. It deals only with the free space on the disk so there is no need to worry about existing files as they will not be affected in any way by Disk Redactor.

The Bad Users have no say regarding the configuring of the software as these are grayed out on both XP and Vista. There aren't any wipe standards available in the software and only one overpass is available. Wipe progress has no estimation time for completion.

The Truth The application is a freebie that wipes the free space off your volumes leaving existing files intact, thus making the recovery of deleted files more difficult. But you can't make any configuration as settings in Options are all grayed out, which is a major downside as they allow double erasing of the information and feature background more (takes less CPU). It is extremely

easy to use and all it takes to start the wiping process is just a few clicks. After that, the progress will be quite rapid as in our case a 6GB drive was processed in a little more than 3 minutes (3'02" to be more exact). *Here are some snapshots of the application in action:*