

By: March 12, 2007, Editor, Software Reviews

Is Your Deleted Data Secure?

Secure delete your operating system

I am sure that most of the users consider wiping softwares futile as they would never think of such thing as wiping clean their hard drives. Well, in some cases this deleting your files beyond recovery may come in handy. Think of selling your hard disk to someone. Maybe you had some "for your eyes only" files in there. It does not matter if you format the disk. You can do this twice or thrice if you want, but pieces of data will still be available for recovery. The softwares designed to wipe clean your hard disk are too many to count, but only few of them successfully accomplish this mission. Their prices depend on the overwrite methods used and the amount of effort invested in creating the software. Drive Scrubber from IOLO is \$24.95 and its sole purpose is to delete files. This is all that the application does. However, depending on your plans with the hard drive, Drive Scrubber can delete all the files on the disk(s) or it can wipe clean only the free space, preserving the integrity of the data it is already visible to the naked eye. As usual, IOLO came up with a very clean cut, easy to use interface. The wizard method they add to their applications and the amount of information appended in the Help file of the software will give you precious information about all the aspects of Drive Scrubber and more. As in other softwares from this publisher the limitation for working with the software is three uses. After that you either buy it or get rid of it. Three uses are certainly enough to test one aspect of the application, but considering that the use of the program is twofold, I would say that raising the number of uses to at least ten tries would be a benefit for both the publisher and the user. For wiping the free space on one of your disks, you will have to go through the three steps wizard available. The most important aspect is the wipe configuration. For this matter the application is flexible enough to let the user decide the number of overwrite passes to be applied and create a custom pattern. A more professional option is also available (DoD 5220.22-M method) which will perform a total of seven overwrite passes and is quite safe. You have to be aware of the fact that the more secure the wipe method, the longer will take to finish. Disk wiping on the other hand is enriched with the much appraised Peter Gutmann method. It uses 35 overwrite passes and it is considered one of the most secure wiping methods. It is pretty odd that this technique was not included for wiping the free space on your drive. The powers of Drive Scrubber are revealed in this second wiping option as it is able to delete even the operating system on your disk. However, in order to do this you will have to create a bootable disk that runs a DOS base program. Do not worry, Drive Scrubber supplies all the tools to create the disk and the necessary information to successfully finish the task. The available wizard comes to the rescue and walks you through all the settings until the disk is created. Now when I say disk I mean either a floppy or a CD, as both of them are supported. When writing the CD you even get to select a label for it (name it) and set the writing speed. The evaluation version also restricts creating more than one CD. If you are planning a full wipe of the disk I suggest you print the instructions in the help file first so that your task will complete without unfortunate events. **The Good** The application looks great and due to the incorporated wizard it is extremely easy to handle. But the best part is that it does a great job. During our tests we could not recover any of the files wiped with Drive Scrubber 3. The recovery software was not even able to read the data. The Help file is comprehensive enough and explains in detail every aspect of the application. **The Bad** As usual, the limited number of uses is not enough for a proper testing of the application. The bootable disk option could not be tested by Softpedia due to the trial limitation so you will have to trust the developer. I wish they preserved the customization method for wiping all the contents of the hard disk, too. I wanted to say a little something on the price but they are just making a discount now, from \$29.95 to \$24.95. **The Truth** There are alternatives on the market, but I have not seen one that incorporates the option to eradicate the operating system yet. The price is good and only the testing restrictions are bad. Try it for the three times offered by the developer. *Here are some snapshots of the application in action:*