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Wipe Clean Your Traces

Protect your intimacy

It is a known fact that your system will track everything you do on the computer whether you like it or not. Starting from temporary files, open file history, Windows Firewall log, stored application descriptions, defragmentation list, Windows Update logs, stored network passwords or clipboard content, it is all saved by your computer in more or less specific folders. Good thing that there are plenty of applications able to wipe all of these leaving the system squeaky clean and with no traces. The problem is not the fragile intimacy provided by your computer, but there is no use to keep files you are not going to use. R-Wipe & Clean is a \$28.99 solution for the issue. The application can do even more than that as besides cleaning unwanted system files it can also wipe free space on computer drives providing total privacy for deleted files as well. The looks are not at all impressive but in this case functionality prevails. All you need is a glance to realize that the entire application can be handled with the utmost ease. Feature set is available in the left hand side panel. R-Wipe & Clean's side panel view can be customized to show all the items either as bars or be placed in a tree. By default this is set to tree-view which is actually more flexible in my opinion. The categories of files to be wiped are expandable allowing for a full view of the subfolders. The application's wipe abilities comprise a suite that includes shredding free space on drives, wiping Internet left-overs from several web browsers (IE, Firefox, Opera, Netscape, AOL, MSN Explorer), removing application traces (the list includes the most popular softwares) cleaning system traces as well as letting the user create his/her own wipe list with files and folders. Wiping for unused space on drives as well as for deleting application traces is achieved by using standard algorithms. R-Wipe & Clean comes with a list of five choices, ranging from the very fast and insecure zero filling in one pass to the much acclaimed Peter Gutmann method which is the slowest and safest as it performs 35 passes with a special number pattern. Other methods available include filling with pseudo-random number (conceals the fact that the data is wiped), DoD 5220.22-M with three passes and DoD 5200.28-STD with seven passes. They are ordered according to the time needed to complete the task (time increases progressively but the process is more and more secure). When it comes to wiping Internet data R-Wipe & Clean takes care of temporary files, cookies (for IE and Firefox you can select which items should be kept), history, typed URLs, autocomplete forms, cached files, Flash Player cookies and Java files. Depending on the additional apps you have installed the program can also deal with Google or Yahoo! search history. System folder allows users to protect their privacy and remove links to all recently opened documents, started programs or search results. The software seems thorough enough to wipe recent network folders, cached icons and fonts, automatic updates log, Recycle Bin, defragmentation list or registry traces. Unfortunately the program overdoes it as Windows Prefetch folder is also included in the list. Prefetch stores PF files which are pages to be loaded whenever the correspondent executable is launched. If deleted, Windows will recreate the files the moment you launch the application and it trims the list of PF files itself when it exceeds 128 items. Plus you will put a dent on your PC's performance. The list of application traces is quite large (well over 100) and includes the most popular programs the average user would install on the computer. In the side panel you will be displayed only those that are currently available on the PC. The list can be trimmed down by customizing it from Tools menu > Customize. Unchecking the apps in there will remove them from main view. At the bottom of the tree there is another customization option. If some application is not in the default list of R-Wipe & Clean you can add a file, folder or registry key in Wipe Lists in order to be cleaned. The menu available in this case lets you choose the element, add masks, exclude file names as well as enable wiping in subfolders, delete empty subfolders as well as folders after all the files have been wiped. Settings list is composed by seven tabs, each providing different options for configuring free disk space and application trace wiping method (MFT wiping can be enabled), documents and Internet files deletion, R-Wipe & Clean's scheduler, assign a boss key to automatically close all the opened browsers on the system (so that the cleaning completes successfully). The application can be integrated in Windows Explorer's context menu and users can place a shortcut even in Recycle Bin's context. By enabling Explorer integration you will also be able to securely delete files or add them automatically to wipe list. Unauthorized

use can be prevented by simply protecting the program with a password and conceal its activity (no icon in system tray and no messages will pop up). But not to Windows Task Manager. However, scheduled tasks are stealthy enough not to disturb the user in any way. The application does a great job with trace wiping, but it will take quite a long time to finish the job. Testing its free disc space abilities using DoD 5220.22-M algorithm revealed that it needs quite some time to finish the job. But nothing could be retrieved by employing data recovery softwares and all the files had been overwritten by the book. The downside is that it includes Windows Prefetch folder in Application Traces. It is a known fact that the folder's purpose is to improve application launch times by preloading part of the needed files. Other than this R-Wipe & Clean does a great job, deleting all the traces (applications that are cleaned have to be closed before the operation starts). **The Good**R-Wipe & Clean does a great job with deleting application traces as well as free disk space. It is very easy to use and comes with a generous list of supported applications. Users can add their own files, folders or registry keys to be wiped during the process and the file masks and customizable exclusion list only increase the value of the application. **The Bad**Prefetch folder is included in Application Traces list. Also, stealth mode makes the application invisible only at a superficial level. Taking a look in Task Manager's Processes tab will reveal the program. The list of supported application needs updating as softwares like those from Ashampoo are not present. Also, not all applications in latest Nero (Nero 8 Ultra Edition) suite are detected. In this case out of 10 Nero apps present in R-Wipe & Clean's list only three were detected. Not even with Nero 7 Ultra Edition Enhanced will all the apps be detected. Nero Vision still stayed greyed out. **The Truth**All in all the application does a pretty good job with securing deleted files on disk or application traces. It is very easy to handle and the \$28.99 price is not too much of a financial effort considering that it will leave your computer with no trace of activity, searching every nook and cranny for logs and temporary files that may give away your activity on the machine. However there are minor issues with deleting Windows Prefetch folder and the list of supported applications. The 15 days available for trying out the software comes with absolutely no restriction (save the nag screen popping up at application launch). *Here are some snapshots of the application in action:*