

Re: Wipe a file from disk

Source: <http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/VB/microsoft.public.vb.winapi/2004-09/0100.html>

From: J French (*erewhon_at_nowhere.com*)

Date: 09/03/04

Date: Fri, 3 Sep 2004 11:27:24 +0000 (UTC)

On Fri, 3 Sep 2004 12:30:21 +0200, "Andy DF" <PrivateType@vb.com>
wrote:

>hi all,

>

>I need to find a way to *COMPLETELY* delete a file from disk so that not even
>the "Undelete" programs will be able to restore it.

>

>Can it be done?

>Is there a Declare Sub WipeFile ... ?

Funnily enough we had a thread on this recently.

The trick is to open the file in Binary (or Random) mode and overwrite
the data, personally I would write a 'pattern'.

Then close the file,
then open it for Output – this will unlink the 'unused' clusters
then close the file
then delete the file

To get rid of the data you have to overwrite it.
Under the FAT system I am 99.5% certain that when you overwrite an
area of a file, it physically overwrites the existing data

It is possible that this does not happen on file systems that support
rollback – even then I would be surprized

I've often heard that people can recover data even if it has been
completely overwritten, which is why the UK Ministry of Defence
consigns all scrapped hard drives to an acid bath.

Personally I think this is exaggerated, and that by writing a few
random sequences to the disk, and ensuring that they hit the disk,
there is about as much chance of recovering data as a pig flying.