

Re: Is FAT32 format gone?

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<http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/WinXP/microsoft.public.windowsxp.general/2007-08/msg03527.html>

- *From:* "HEMI-Powered" <none@xxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Thu, 16 Aug 2007 12:32:48 -0000
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Anna added these comments in the current discussion du jour ...

http://www.microsoft.com/technet/prodtechnol/windows2000serv/rskit/core/fncf_fil_tvjq.msp?mfr=true>> -->> Tim Slattery>> MS MVP(DTS)>> Slattery_T@xxxxxxx>> <http://members.cox.net/slatteryt>"Anna <myname@xxxxxxxx> wrote in messagenews:%23s0v%23N03HHA.5424@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> As Tim has pointed out, for all practical purposes there really is no limit to partition size re FAT32-formatted partitions. If, for one reason or another, a user desires to use the FAT32 file system in a WinXP environment, he or she can do so. As we all know there is that 32 GB limitation involving *creating* FAT32 partitions from within XP, i.e., through the Disk Management utility, however these > 32 GB FAT32 partitions can be created through other means, primarily using the FDISK/FORMAT commands from a DOS boot disk, e.g., a Win9x/Me "Startup Disk". And then the XP OS will happily use those > 32 GB FAT32 partitions.>> There was (and is) a problem with large-capacity disks, i.e., > 127 GB binary, when used with a Win9x/Me OS. For one thing problems arise in those operating systems with using the defragmentation & disk scanning utilities.> We've also run into serious disk corruption errors in general which we attributed to those large-capacity FAT32-formatted drives. Our general recommendation to users of those operating systems is to install no HDD >> 120 GB.>> Like virtually all other commentators, for a variety of reasons, we ordinarily recommend using the NTFS file system in an XP environment.> However, as one or more posters has commented, we too have run into situations - primarily involving custom-designed programs specialized for use in a business - where the program simply refused to work or worked erratically within an NTFS file system but had no problem when installed in a FAT32 file system in an XP environment. So in those cases the user had little or no choice to use the FAT32 file system.> Anna "HEMI-Powered" <none@xxxxxxx> wrote in

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message: Xns998D6B1668A8ReplyScoreID@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> I still don't understand, Anna, why I can't get Partition Magic> to format larger than in the 150 gig range. Is it wounded or> defective? As you know, Symantec bought it but never ever updated> it. And, other competitive products seem to have similar> problems, although I cannot personally vouch for any limits on> partition size.>> Just for the record, how would I format a FAT32 partition on,> say, a 500 gig external to over 150? I know and understand FDISK> but am very skittish about it because a minor mistep can wipe out> my primary. Yes, I am cautious, some would say overly cautious.> but I've found in my 60 year life that it pays to not lead with> my chin.>> Thanks for your comments.(SNIP)> Incidentally, do you have an opinion on my observation that FAT32> is much faster on read/writes than NTFS as well as far faster to> just bring up a folder tree? For awhile, NTFS on my extended> partitions (I have two) and my external were SO slow, many> minutes to just get a tree, that I reformatted them as FAT32. For> other reasons, primarily the need to store very large Acronis> True Image image files, I was forced to go back to NTFS. It was> as if a miracle had occurred. I've had little trouble since.> although my Maxtor 300 gig with 2 NTFS partitions (I wanted 2 to> separate the data on the drive logically) normally works fine.> there ARE occasions when it'll go away for a minute or two trying> to access one of the partitions in Explorer.>> Again, thanks for your observations. Am I correc that you are the> same "Anna" that posted that excellent True Image tutorial some> time back? Very nicely written and quite helpful.> --> HP, aka JerryJerry:I honestly don't know why you're having trouble using the Partition Magicprogram (I assume you're using the 8.01 version) to create one or more FAT32partitions. It's usually a very "cut & dried" procedure with PM. Although Ihave to admit it's been a very long time since we used that program tocreate large FAT32 partitions. In the event we *do* find it necessary, weinvariably use the FDISK & FORMAT commands from a DOS boot floppy disk or CDto create FAT32 partitions.As to formatting a FAT32 partition on your external 500 GB HDD...I'm assuming it's a USB external HDD, right? If so, you really won't be able to use the FDISK/FORMAT commands in that situation because of the USBinterface. It will be necessary to install the disk as an *internal* HDD inyour system and then boot to the DOS boot disk to invoke the FDISK/FORMACommands. Then, of course, reinstall the disk in its USB enclosure.Now, there *is* ostensibly a program that purports to format FAT32partitions > 32 GB from *within* WinXP. It's a Linux-based program – themkdosfs.exe program that you can download in ZIP format from<http://www.mager.org/mkdosfs/>Basically the process is to create the partition on your USB external HDDusing the Disk Management utility in XP and format the > 32 GB partition

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inNTFS. Then use the mkdosfs.exe program which will be installed in your XPsystem to format that partition FAT32. We've used this program a number oftimes and for the most part it "worked". But I have to tell you that in acouple of cases we later ran into some data corruption issues which, whilewe couldn't *prove* they were caused by the mkdosfs FAT32-formattingprocess, we were (and continue to be) uneasy about using the program again.So you may first want to experiment with this program by testing it withsome non-critical data. But I would be cautious about using it without anyreservations until you're confident of its effectiveness.In any event, if you are able to uninstall the 500 GB HDD from its USBenclosure and then install it as an internal HDD in your XP system, I wouldgo ahead and use the FDISK/FORMAT commands as indicated above. As youprobably know it's a rather straightforward process and shouldn't cause youany difficulty. Just take your time and understand those commands' optionsas you go through the process.As to your questions re the differences between the FAT32 & NTFS filesystems as to performance (speed of read/writes). I really can't concludethe FAT32 file system is faster in this regard. As I previously stated,unless the user has some special need to use the FAT32 file system becauseof some program/system compatibility issues, we strongly recommend employingthe NTFS file system in an XP environment.And yes, I'm the very same "Anna" and thank you for your nice comment. I'mglad to hear you found those Acronis True Image step-by-step instructionshelpful. I might mention in passing that we've actually been using anotherdisk cloning program since earlier this year and we've been quite impressedwith it. To the point where it's our disk-cloning program of choice and weprefer it over the ATI program. It's the Casper 4.0 program (see<http://www.fssdev.com>)Perhaps you've come across a couple of my postings in which I extolled thevirtues of this program and provided some details as to using it. It'scertainly worth looking into. In this connection you might want to take alook at my post to this newsgroup of August 7 - the subject being "Re: needa good backup method or program".(BTW, I'm leaving for a two-month overseas assignment tomorrow morning andwill not have access to this & other newsgroups during that time. I mentionthis only because I probably won't have an opportunity to respond to anyfurther posts over the next few months.)Anna

Thank you immensely, Anna, I've saved your excellent reply for future reference.

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HP, aka Jerry

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