

Re: A Related Maxtor External HD Problem

Source:

<http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/WinXP/microsoft.public.windowsxp.hardware/2005-07/msg01787.html>

- *From:* "Anna" <myname@xxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Wed, 27 Jul 2005 10:02:21 -0400
-

>>> "Mike K." <MikeK@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message
>>> news:519CCBB5-D737-4647-9024-82D0C72409FC@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
>>> I'm afraid that I can only share in your misery around this problem.
>>> I
>>> think that our problems are related.
>>>
>>> I also have a Maxtor One Touch External Hard Disk (200GB with USB 2.0)
>>> that I would like to use for both a Mac (OS X10.4 Tiger) and a Windows
>>> (XP Home) computer. In my case I'd like to create a single large
>>> partition to hold a large and growing collection of pictures and video
>>> clips. Ideally either
>>> computer should be able to read or write to the external hard disk.
>>>
>>> Option 1: When I format the disk with XP in NTFS, the Mac can read but
>>> not
>>> write to the HD. Actually with older versions of Mac OS (I tried
>>> 10.2)
>>> you can't even read NTFS.
>>>
>>> Option 2: When I format the disk with the Mac, the XP machine sees the
>>> disk as a FAT32 formatted volume. I tried copying a few files and it
>>> crashed the hard disk in less than five minutes. Neither computer
>>> would
>>> recognize it.
>>>
>>> Option 3: Reformat the disk with FAT32 file system using either an
>>> older
>>> Windows operating system or a third party utility. Actually I haven't
>>> tried this option yet. I was hoping to learn something about clusters
>>> and block
>>> sizes that would sensibly use the disk space before I start to
>>> populate
>>> it.
>>>
>>> Hope someone has better insights to either or both of our problems.
>>
>>

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>> "Yves Leclerc" <yveleclercNOSPAM@xxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message
>> news:%236dbgIVkFHA.572@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
>> > Creating a FAT32 partition in XP has two limitations! 1) FAT32
>> > partitions
>> > can only be created to a maximum of 32GB with XP's Disk Management (do
>> > not
>> > know why this limit?) and 2) File sizes on FAT32 can not be greater
>> > than
>> > 4GB each.

> "Anna" wrote:

>> Mike:

>> First of all, let me say that I've had so little experience with a Mac
>> that
>> the last thing I should presume to do is to try to give any advice
>> involving
>> that computer and its operating system.

>>

>> However, in your Option 3 you mention the possibility of formatting a USB
>> external hard drive with the FAT32 system. I'm assuming from your comment
>> that by doing so the data on that EHD will be accessible to the Mac and
>> thereby be useful to you. If that assumption is wrong, then read no
>> further...

>>

>> But if it's right...

>>

>> You can, as you surmise, format FAT32 that 200 GB external HD with a
>> bootable DOS floppy disk, e.g., a Win9x/Me Startup disk. I assume you
>> would
>> know how to use the FDISK & FORMAT commands that would need to be
>> invoked.

>> Understand that you could *not* accomplish that partitioning/formatting
>> of

>> your EHD in an XP environment using the DOS bootable floppy. Under those
>> circumstances DOS will not (unfortunately) see an external device. If you
>> could remove the HD from its enclosure and install it (temporarily) as an
>> internal drive in your computer, then you could use the aforementioned
>> procedure. But I believe that's not practical in your situation because
>> your

>> unit may be a kind of one-piece sealed affair where the drive is not
>> readily

>> available for removal. And even if it is there may be warranty issues to
>> contend with.

>>

>> While you can partition/format your EHD using XP's Disk Management
>> utility,

>> I assume you're aware of Yve's comment that XP is unable (*unwilling* is
>> more like it!) to create a FAT32 partition > 32 GB. That, of course, is
>> the

>> dilemma here. And there is that 4 GB limitation that Yves also mentions

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>> re
>> moving/copying files in a FAT32 environment. I don't know if that's
>> particularly significant to you inasmuch as (I assume) you'll be working
>> with large photo & video files. BTW, don't get overly concerned with
>> cluster
>> sizes and such with respect to working with an external hard drive. It's
>> of
>> little or no import when you're using that device simply for storage as
>> apparently is your intention.
>>
>> There is another way you can create a single FAT32 partition for your 200
>> GB
>> EHD without removing it from its enclosure and within an XP environment.
>> The
>> process involves invoking a Linux-developed file (freely available)
>> within
>> an XP environment. It's a fairly simple straightforward process. If you
>> or
>> others are interested, please so indicate and I'll detail the steps.
>> Anna

"Mike K." <MikeK@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message
news:E814864B-2242-4A6F-97DE-DD5445DB9C27@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
> Anna & Yves,
> Thanks to you both for your input. If it means that I can swap the
> external
> 200GB HD between the Mac and XP computers, then I am definitely willing to
> live with filesizes <4GB. Anna is correct that I'm unwilling to open the
> HD
> case, mount it as an internal IDE just to run the DOS formatting, so I'd
> be
> happy to get some details on a third party (Linux) tool to perform the
> format. Hopefully the tool will run in the XP environment (is that asking
> too much?)
>
> One remaining aspect of this puzzle is an explanation to my Option 2
> failure. Why would a Linux FAT32 formatting be different to the FAT32
> format
> that was made with the Mac X10.4 OS? Are there important options to be
> selected when formatting FAT32? Even without answers, I'd be happy to give
> it
> a try and report on my results. I haven't started to populate the new EHD
> yet, so I'm still willing to crash it a few times, in the name of
> educating
> myself.
>
> Thanks again for your help.

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Mike:

The following is based on a paper I prepared not too long ago for a local computer club in response to their request. I trust it will be useful to you and others who are interested in this issue.

As most of us know, the XP operating system cannot partition/format a hard drive in FAT32 greater than 32 GB. One can use the FDISK/FORMAT commands on a DOS bootable floppy disk (such as a Win9x/Me Startup Disk) to partition/format an internal hard drive of virtually any size in FAT32. However, since the FDISK command will not "see" a USB external hard drive, that drive cannot be partitioned/formatted in FAT32 using the FDISK/FORMAT commands. While a USB EHD *can* be formatted FAT32 using XP's Disk Management utility, the 32 GB limitation will still apply.

One way to overcome this barrier is to use a Linux–developed program called mkdosfs.exe developed by Jens–Uwe Mager (<http://www.mager.org/mkdosfs/>). Refer to that site for complete details on the background of this program and its utilization.

This program was brought to my attention some months ago by a contributor to a Microsoft–supported newsgroup dealing with XP issues. (I failed to make a note of his/her name). You can download the mkdosfs.zip file from Mr. Mager's website and extract the mkdosfs.exe program file. The great advantage of this program is that it works from *within* the XP environment. PLEASE NOTE THIS PROGRAM IS **NOT** A CONVERSION PROGRAM IN THE SENSE THAT IT WILL CONVERT A NTFS PARTITION TO A FAT32 PARTITION WHILE RETAINING ALL THE PARTITION'S DATA. RATHER IT IS DESIGNED TO FORMAT THE PARTITION, SO ALL DATA ON THE PARTITION(S) WILL BE LOST FOLLOWING THE FORMATTING.

The program is very easy to use.

- 1.. Install the mkdosfs.exe file (it's only 68 KB) in your C:\ root directory.
- 2.. Ensure that the drive to be formatted FAT32 is not presently being accessed at this point.
- 3.. Using Start > Run > cmd, and get to a C:\ prompt.
- 4.. Invoke the command "mkdosfs –F 32 x:" (no quotes) where x: is the drive to be formatted.
(note the spacing within the command (mkdosfs(SPACE)–F(SPACE)32(SPACE)x: and capitalize the "F", as shown).

MAKE ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN YOUR DRIVE LETTER REFLECTS THE DRIVE TO BE FORMATTED! YOU WILL NOT RECEIVE ANY CONFIRMATION PROMPT AFTER INVOKING THE COMMAND! ALL DATA ON THE FORMATTED PARTITION WILL BE LOST!

- 5.. Press Enter after typing the command.

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6.. The formatting of your designated drive in FAT32 will take place. Two lines of text will be displayed:
"mkdosfs 2.8 (28 Feb 2001)

Win32 port by Jens-Uwe Mager <jum@xxxxxxxxxxxxxx>"

followed by the C:\ prompt after the drive has been formatted.

In addition to the program's usefulness in overcoming the FAT32 32 GB limitation imposed by XP as it affects your internal hard drives, another significant advantage of this program is that you can now format a USB EHD in FAT32 in any capacity. And do so within the XP environment.

One additional note concerning use of this program.

Let's assume you have a 160 GB USB EHD that you want to format with three FAT32 partitions of 40 GB, 40 GB, and 80 GB. Remember that the mkdosfs program is a formatting device; it is not designed to create partitions. So in this example you would first use XP's Disk Management utility to *temporarily* create the three partitions in NTFS, after which you would simply use the mkdosfs program to format the three NTFS partitions with FAT32 ones.

NOTE: After using the DM utility to create the NTFS partitions, reboot the computer *before* invoking mkdosfs.

I trust this will work out for you Mike. Let us know one way or another.
Anna

• ***Follow-Ups:***

- ◆ ***Re: A Related Maxtor External HD Problem***
◇ *From:* Edward W. Thompson

• ***References:***

- ◆ ***Partition Maxtor One Touch External Hard disk***
◇ *From:* Sahana
- ◆ ***A Related Maxtor External HD Problem***
◇ *From:* Mike K.
- ◆ ***Re: A Related Maxtor External HD Problem***

Re: A Related Maxtor External HD Problem

◇ *From:* Yves Leclerc

◆ ***Re: A Related Maxtor External HD Problem***

◇ *From:* Anna

◆ ***Re: A Related Maxtor External HD Problem***

◇ *From:* Mike K.

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