

Destroying Information with Eraser

INTRODUCTION

This is a brief guide on how to set up and use Eraser, a free, open-source tool for securely and permanently deleting information from your computer or other storage device. Note: this tool is only for Windows. For Mac OS, use the Securely Empty Trash function under the Finder menu, or Disc Utility, to securely delete information.

INSTALLATION & SETUP

1. Go to <http://eraser.heidi.ie/download.php> and download the latest version, currently Eraser 6.0.10.
2. Save and install on your computer. Select **Typical** setup type.
3. Open Eraser and go to **Settings**
4. Under **Erase Settings**, select default methods for file and unused space erasures that are at least 3 passes, although some recommend a minimum of 7 passes. The greater the number of passes, the less likely it is that the wiped data can ever be recovered.
5. If you want to replace erased files with another file or folder (to avoid any suspicion), select the option “Replace erased files with...” and add the file(s) or folder(s) that you want as replacements.
6. Click **Save Settings**

USE

1. To erase a file, click on the arrow to the left of **Erase Schedule** to select **New Task**
2. Select **run manually** if you want to choose when to delete the item, **run immediately** if you want the item deleted now, **run on restart** if you want the item deleted when your computer restarts, and **recurring** if you want the item deleted on a schedule.
3. Click **add data** to select the item you want to delete.
4. Click on the **schedule** tab to select how often the item will be deleted. You can only set a schedule for a recurring task.
5. When finished arranging the task, click OK.
6. The task should now appear listed under **Erase Schedule**. Left click to **edit** or **run** a task. You will have to **run** any task created to run manually.
7. *Note:* If you ever need to delete an entire drive (before you discard a drive or give it to someone else), the operating system cannot be running. You will have to remove the drive, put it in an external USB drive enclosure, and plug into any computer with Eraser installed. The process of wiping the entire drive will likely take a significant amount of time.

PORTABLE ERASER

A portable version of Eraser is installed directly onto an external hard drive or USB memory stick. Portable Eraser can be used from any computer, and the use and existence of this tool may remain undetected. But *remember*: portable tools are not safe if the computer you are using is infected with malware!

1. Go to <http://portableapps.com/apps/security/eraser-portable> and download the latest version, currently 5.8.8.1. Save the installation file to your computer, then run the installer.
2. In the Installer Window, choose the Install Location by selecting **browse** and selecting the removable disk that is plugged into the computer.
3. Left click on the Removable Disk to **create a new folder** where Portable Eraser will be stored. Name the folder something that will not draw suspicion. Select the new folder and click **OK**.
4. Click **Install** and then click **Finish** when the extraction process is complete.
5. To confirm installation and use Portable Eraser, navigate to the new folder you created on the removable disk and open Portable Eraser.

Screen Shots

