BACKGROUND

Old desktops, laptops, and mobile and portable storage devices may contain UW information, such as personally identifiable information, cached login credentials, or other confidential data that can be compromised if the physical device is not securely disposed.

If this information is not deleted in the proper way prior to relinquishing custody of or surplusing the device, then there is the potential for a data breach. This situation is worsened by the fact that there may be delay in realizing that the "disposed" device has been compromised.

Deleting the data on your device is not as easy as dragging all the files to the trash. Fortunately, it is not too difficult — if you know how.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

UW-owned computers and devices:

Follow the UW Computer Disposal Policy

In particular be sure to review and document the types of information that were stored on the device prior to surplussing, and the method used for deleting data.
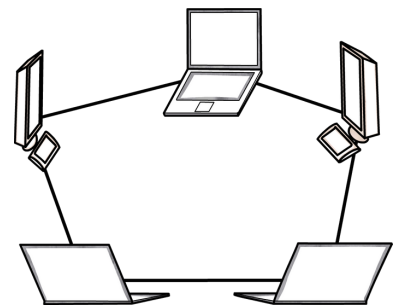
Wiping Options and Tools:

Ensure that information has been deleted if you surplus UW owned computers or devices or discard, recycle, donate, or sell your personal computer or device. Consider the following tools and resources to ensure that all data has been deleted:
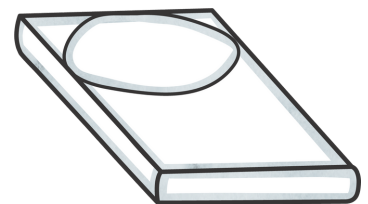
**Office of the Chief Information Security Officer
Risk Advisory: Secure Disposal**

- How to erase a disk for a Mac
- Windows 10
- Windows 8.1
- Other erasure or wiping software like DBAN (any operating system)

Android

- If your phone has an SD card, go to Settings -> Storage -> Unmount SD card and then tap Format SD card.
- Next, to wipe the phone itself, go to Settings -> Backup & Reset. Under Personal Data, select the Factory data reset option.
- Read the warning and tap Reset phone

Apple

- Go to Settings > General > Reset and then select Erase All Content and Settings.
- Read the warning and tap "Erase iPhone" (or "iPad")

RESOURCES

What to do before you sell, give away, or trade in your Mac

How to Wipe a Windows Hard Drive

Wipe vs Shred vs Delete vs Erase: What's the Difference?

*For additional information, consult your department's IT support person.
help@uw.edu*