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Adventures in binary

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Deleting all partitions on a USB drive using fdisk

👤 Mike   📁 How-to, Linux   🕐 November 29, 2011September 13, 2012   ▤ 1 Minute

Due to my rampant experimentation with many different Linux distros, I often times have to wipe a USB drive completely after making it a bootable live USB for something like OpenSUSE. If you used the Imagewriter.exe program used to create the drive, you'll have a hard time later on if you try to use uNetBootin to make a live USB for a different distro. You can use bootice.exe in Windows to restore the drive. Here's how to do it with fdisk in Linux (courtesy of PenDriveLinux.com (http://www.pendrivelinux.com/restoring-your-usb-key-partition/))Restoring your USB key to it's original state using Linux:

First we need to delete the old partitions that remain on the USB key.

1. *Open a terminal and type sudo su*
2. *Type fdisk -l and note your USB drive letter.*
3. *Type fdisk /dev/sdx (replacing x with your drive letter)*
4. *Type d to proceed to delete a partition*
5. *Type 1 to select the 1st partition and press enter*
6. *Type d to proceed to delete another partition (fdisk should automatically select the second partition)*

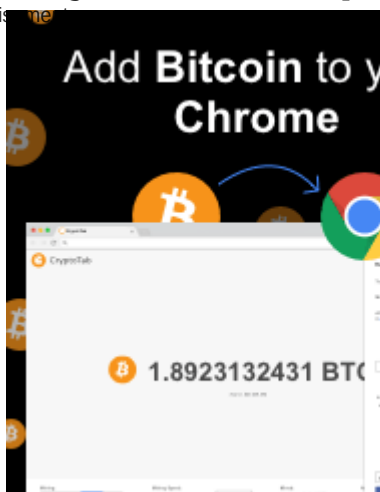*Next we need to create the new partition.*

1. *Type n to make a new partition*
2. *Type p to make this partition primary and press enter*
3. *Type 1 to make this the first partition and then press enter*
4. *Press enter to accept the default first cylinder*
5. *Press enter again to accept the default last cylinder*
6. *Type w to write the new partition information to the USB key*
7. *Type umount /dev/sdx (replacing x with your drive letter)*

The last step is to create the fat filesystem.

1. *Type mkfs.vfat -F 32 /dev/sdx1 (replacing x with your USB key drive letter)*

That's it, you should now have a restored USB key with a single fat 32 partition that can be read from any computer.
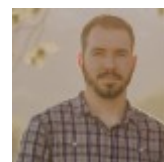
Published by Mike

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3 thoughts on "Deleting all partitions on a USB drive using fdisk"

Rep says:
April 4, 2018 at 6:38 am
Thanks dude, saved me a fair bit of time stuffing around with the disk manager and going back and forth between machines.

↪ Reply

Shawn says:
May 24, 2018 at 6:27 pm

Very hard to read your page with dark gray text on light gray background. Need better contrast.

↪ Reply

Mike says:

May 24, 2018 at 8:05 pm

Ha—forgot I still had this blog hanging around. I've updated the theme to something that is hopefully easier to read 🙂

↪ Reply

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