**Can I take the old hard drive out of a failed laptop, put it in an enclosure and connect it to my new laptop?**

Bottom of Form

Taking an old hard drive to a new computer can easily be done with a USB hard drive enclosure.

I'm buying a new laptop. Can I take the hard drive out of my old laptop, put in an enclosure with a USB connection, and plug into my new laptop? I want to play the games which cannot be transferred. Will the operating system on the USB hard drive interfere with the operating system on the new laptop? Any help will be appreciated.

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In this excerpt from [Answercast #77](http://ask-leo.com/answercast_77_moving_windows_scheduling_scans_epubs_on_kindle_computer_longevity_and_more.html), I look at using a hard drive from an old laptop as an external hard drive. It probably won't play games.

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**Taking an old hard drive to a new computer**

So, the answer to the two questions that you've asked is yes and yes - but the answer to the very important question that you didn't ask is no.

Let me walk through that.

Can you put that old hard drive in an enclosure and connect it up to your laptop? Absolutely! In fact, I recommend it as a very convenient way to be able to move data - *and* to actually have a useful hard drive out of what would otherwise be a dead laptop. So yes, absolutely, you can do that.

**Using the old software**

Will you be able to *play* the games that can't be transferred? No. The problem is that anything that required a *set up* (which almost all games do) needs to have that *set up* run when the game is to be played on a different computer.

Basically, you need to *reinstall* the game.

You can't just plug in the hard drive that contains the images and expect it to work. It's not going to.

The problem is that the game is going to need to have things installed in Windows. It's going to have settings that it expects in the registry; it's going to need a number of things that all happen when that program is "set up" for the first time from the setup disc or from the installation media or from the installation download.

None of that will be there if you just plugged the disk in. The only way to get those games over to this other computer is to reinstall them from scratch.

**Competing operating systems**

And then finally, "Will the operating system on the USB hard drive interfere with the operating system on the new laptop?" No, not necessarily.

The only thing that I can think that might cause a problem is if your computer is set up to boot from USB. In other words, if it checks for a USB device to boot from *before* it checks the hard drive, it's possible that it might try and boot from the external hard drive.

There are two solutions to that.

* One is don't plug in the USB external hard drive until after you've booted.
* Or you go into your BIOS and change the "priority order" of the boot devices. Make sure that the BIOS, when it's boot time, will look for something on the hard drive (or maybe the CD ROM) before it looks for something on USB.

If you ever need to boot from USB, of course, you'll need to change the order back. But to avoid booting from USB, you just want to make sure that the hard drive is in order *before* the USB device.