

Burn

Version 2.0 Users Manual

Privacy for Everyone

1994

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About Burn

No data security system would be complete without a way to destroy the original versions of a file after they are encrypted. Burn provides exactly that function. It is a drag-and-drop application under system 7. Files dragged onto the icon will be overwritten a user specified number of times with a user specified pattern, then renamed, then deleted. Both data and resource forks are deleted.

A variety of options allow you to configure the application to exactly the ease of use and security you need. No matter what options you select, your trash will be far more secure than if you used Apple's built in trash capabilities.

This application is not a replacement for the trash can. You should continue to drag unimportant documents and applications to the trash can. When you drag a file to the Burn icon it will be

irretrievably deleted.

System Requirements

This application requires about 50k of disk space, 256k of RAM and is compatible with ANY macintosh running ANY version of the system software. If you encounter compatibility problems please let me know. Well Ok, it won't run on machines with 64K ROMs but if you have one of those BUY A NEW MAC! It will run on an Mac 512KE and it will run on a Power Mac (it's a little faster on the Power Mac though). Please let me know if you suspect or discover any incompatibilities. Note the Clean Free Space on Disk function is unavailable without System 7.

What's new in version 2.0

My thanks to Paul Jensen for his work on version 2.0 of Burn. All new features except the clean free disk space were developed by him.

Version 2.0 introduces many features to further enhance security:

- User selectable erase pattern (including random)
- User selectable number of erase passes
- Option to confirm deletes as a group instead of individual files
- Optional status dialog if you frequently erase large files
- Free space on a volume can be "erased" in case you accidentally deleted a file using the regular trash. This is totally harmless to the volume's data, only free space is erased.

How to Destroy a File

If you are a user of System 7.0 or later, you can use the drag and drop method of file selection which I highly recommend. To destroy a file simply drag the desired files to the Burn icon and release the mouse button. The file will be overwritten and deleted.

Pre system 7.0 users can destroy a file by double clicking on the Burn application and then selecting "Delete..." from the file menu. You will be prompted to select a file for destruction.

Warning: Burn does not handle alias's the same way the trash icon in the Macintosh Finder does. If you drag an alias record to Burn (or open an alias from within the application) the ORIGINAL file will be destroyed, not the alias.

Erasing Free Space on a Volume

Burn allows you to erase the contents of the free sectors on your disks. This option would be needed if you accidentally erased a sensitive file using the regular trash can, or if a file was deleted within an application. It is very safe because what it does is create a temporary file the size of the free space on your disk, and then burns that file. Thus there is no risk of Burn wandering off into parts of your hard disk that it should not venture.

To use this feature select "Clean Disk Free Space..." from the file menu. It will prompt you to select a volume to clean. A status dialog will show the progress of the cleaning.

For maximum security you should periodically select this option.

Configuring the Application

The options menu of Burn allows you to customize the behavior of Burn to suit how you use it. An option is active only if there is a check mark next to it in the

Options menu. Below each option is described in detail.

Confirm Before Delete

This option, if selected, will cause Burn to ask you to confirm the destruction of each file.

Group Confirm Delete

This option is similar to "Confirm Before Delete" except that the confirmation applies to the entire group of files dragged to the Burn application. It is more convenient, but slightly riskier than the "Confirm Before Delete" option. I suggest this option since it will give you one last chance to change your mind, otherwise accidents will occur.

Display Status

This option if selected will display a dialog box during destruction, showing the progress of the destruction. Burn can quickly destroy normal sized files, but you might want to select this option if you frequently burn large documents.

Erase Patterns

This option lets you select the erase pattern Burn should use when overwriting files. If you are using only a single pass select all zeros or all

ones for quick but good security. For maximum security you should probably select Random (and multiple passes).

Erase Passes

This option lets you specify the number of erase passes Burn should make over the file while destroying it. For maximum security, select at least three. Anything over a single pass is serious overkill though unless you expect your hard disk to be under an electron microscope anytime soon.

Saving Options

Under the file menu there is a selection called "Save Options". This will save your option information so that it will be used the next time the program is run. For people using intense virus checking software: The options are saved in a resource called OPTN so your virus checking software needs to allow Burn to update its own resources (no one else!). Disinfectant doesn't complain but I suspect Gatekeeper might.

Limitations

There are a couple of things you need to be aware of using this or any file destruction utility.

The first issue concerns file names. Burn does its best to destroy the file name as well as the data, but certain system extensions and inits will prevent this. Norton Utilities file saver for instance. No file saver I know of can prevent Burn from destroying the files contents, but they might allow recovery of the filename. Your best bet if this is a concern is to try whatever undelete utility you have. If the utility recovers the file name then you know this is an issue for you. If not then you have no problems. (Note that even if an undelete utility "recovers" a file, all that will be in it will be whatever erase pattern you specified.)

Secondly you should be concerned if you have a file which frequently grows and shrinks in size (maybe a database file for instance.) There is no way for an

application like Burn to know that some disk blocks used to be allocated to the file if it shrinks. Use the Erase Disk Free Space to minimize this problem.

Do not be unduly concerned by these limits. I want to make sure users are aware of them, but the vast majority of normal usage will never trigger the conditions under which these problems can occur.

Burn can not destroy locked files, or files on locked or write protected volumes. Nor can it destroy files that are in use. In such cases you will get an appropriate error message.

Unrelated to security, Burn can only destroy files. It can not and will not let you try to destroy folders and disks. If you need to do this select all the files and drag them to the Burn icon.

User Support

I provide full support for Burn. Don't hesitate to send mail with questions, bug reports or suggestions. I want this program to be the best there is, and I want you to be a satisfied user.

Standard Disclaimer

I am not responsible for any loss or damage due to any failure of this program regardless of the cause.

Burn is © 1994 by Michael Watson and Paul Jensen.

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