Institutional Review Board
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ELECTRONIC FILE SHREDDING AND DATA DESTRUCTION:

The University of Maryland does not have a standard procedure for electronic file shredding and/or data destruction. However, the Division of Information Technology offers a media destruction service for external hard drives. For more information on this service, please visit: Storage Device Destruction.

A list of resources to aid in electronic file shredding and/or data destruction are provided below:

These procedures are not recommended for Solid State Hard Drives (SSDs). Overwriting data on SSDs can drastically reduce the lifespan of the drive, which is an issue if the drive is also used by the operating system. If sensitive data is going to be stored on SSDs or flash memory, the storage device should be destroyed instead.

FOR WINDOWS:

Windows provides a command line tool called “SDelete” which can be used to delete and overwrite sensitive data.

There are also a few stand-alone applications including CCleaner and Moo0, which are supported by Windows.

In addition to this, some antivirus programs may offer a feature to securely remove or shred a file.

FOR MACS:

For pre-El Capitan (OSX 10.11) Macs with Hard Disks, the secure empty trash feature is the most basic file shredding option.

For post-El Capitan Macs, terminal commands such as “srm” (secure remove) can be configured to delete specific files and/or directories and overwrite sensitive data.

There are also stand-alone programs for Mac that can shred files such as File Shredder and ShredIt X.

FOR LINUX:

Linux users can use a command line program called `shred` that deletes and overwrites data.

PLEASE NOTE: Command tools like “SDelete,” “srm,” and “shred” are extremely powerful and destructive. These tools should only be used after becoming thoroughly familiar with their usage and appropriately tested.

Although these tools were recommended to the IRB Office as possible file destruction resources, the IRB Office has not tested any of the above referenced destruction services. Researchers are encouraged to use these tools at their own discretion.