THE JOURNALIST SURVIVAL GUIDE
ANANIMATEDVIDEOGUIDE

Lesson 12
How to Permanently Delete Sensitive Information

Why This Matters
When you delete a file, even after you empty the Recycle bin, some of the contents of that file remain on your hard drive. Deleting a file and emptying the Recycle Bin only clears the icon, removes the file's name from a hidden index of everything on your computer, and tells your operating system that it can use the space for something else. Until this space is filled with different data (which is decided at random by your computer), it will be occupied by the contents of the deleted information, much like a filing cabinet that has had all of its labels removed but still contains the original files. This also applies to removable media, such as USBs and rewritable CDs and DVDs.

This deleted information can be recovered by anyone who has the right tools and a little luck. In order to ensure that deleted information does not end up in the wrong hands, you will have to rely on special software that removes data securely and permanently.

More Information
When deleting a file or series of files from your computer, it is as if you are using an eraser to wiping off the markings on a chalkboard. You may still see some of the original writing, although most of the chalk is erased. Using a secure erase tool such as Eraser (www.erase.heidi.ie) will go back over those remaining markings, and will "wipe" them away at least 3-7 more times.

How to Use
You can learn more about securely erasing your files with Eraser here: *https://securityinabox.org/en/eraser_main*

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