



## When data destruction is your priority ...

CKS is an electronics lifecycle specialist and the leading provider of secure asset recovery and disposal services to regulated companies. This short article explains the options available for data deletion at end-of-life disposal or, ideally, as a regular part of the asset management function.



- Secure data deletion of all electronic stored information. Either using Blancco software which allows reuse or resale of the machine, or by degaussing.
- CKS are an approved Blancco partner
- Product liability of up to £10 million pounds that the data is irretrievable.
- On site engineers can be provided to ensure that the data is removed before the equipment leaves the premises.

Data recovery is a sophisticated business and a wide arsenal of methods and tools are available to resurrect even the most intractable data failures. Recycle bins aid recovery from simple user mistakes, RAID systems replicate data, parity checks trap corruption and a multitude of tools rebuild information from seemingly random bits. Indeed, thanks to object-oriented file systems, data is increasingly becoming self-healing.

The problem is that there are moments when you really do want it gone, forever!

Individuals are concerned about identity theft or fraud and business are additionally concerned about compliance with data protection and privacy regulations. Either way, when computers exchange hands, in-life or at end-of-life, risks are high and effective data destruction is essential.

Once reassuring data “recovery” systems can all collaborate to foil your best efforts to deliberately destroy your own data. If you are serious about it, there are only a small number of options available to you.

There are three key scenarios to consider with respect to typical end-user PCs.

1. In the case that the computer / HDD is functionally intact, and that waste avoidance is a priority, then the software based enhanced data wiping from Blancco is the path that CKS would recommend.
2. Otherwise using a SEAP approved Verity degausser to electromagnetically disrupt the storage substrate is the recommended path. This technology has traditionally been used for tape and floppy media, but has recently been extended to cover disk drives – once dismantled from the PC chassis. Unfortunately drive damage is highly likely so reuse isn't a realistic option in this case.
3. In cases where Blancco fails, through more subtle disk problems such as bad sectors, or obscure / bleeding edge drive technology, then revert to degaussing and write the drive off from a reuse perspective.

Simple. It is according to the Directory of INFOSEC Assured Products from CESG, the Information Assurance (IA) arm of GCHQ. The relevant section is not very thick and the current choices are even slimmer than that publication suggests. For greater security opt for multi-pass erasure, but note that this has a cost / time impact.

These solutions all have costs associated with their use and, as with any tool, both operator skill and consistency of surrounding process are critical to risk minimisation. At least in the case of the software option there is the potential for detailed "evidence" and resultant destruction certificates – foundational elements to compliance-based record keeping for many organisations. Done properly by a reputable commercial partner, you can expect per claim insurance underwriting to the tune of £2 to £10 million per claim against each hard disk drive by manufacturer's serial number.

Take care however, Blancco usage is increasingly claimed but not delivered. Ensure your disposal partner's claims are confirmed by commercial payment of fees to Blancco in proportion to the processing rates. Ask Blancco who they trust... the extra transactional loop with them has an important role to play in process validation.

The next issue for you to determine is how you want these services delivered. Trusting individual users is not an option. Drive technology changes too fast to not engage specialists with a close engineering relationship to Blancco, and subject to regular, instant spot checks and audits from customer security assessors. If you find the right partner, they may even come to you, removing risks in transit and allowing onsite oversight.

For servers, life is potentially more complicated. Blancco's capabilities with respect to drive arrays is expanding rapidly but so too are the options for SAN infrastructure where direct control is abstracted away from the server. Drive substitution into an accessible enclosure may help, and in some cases there is little alternative but to follow manufacturer's own processes to effect a level of deletion. Realistically, where Blancco isn't an option you may need to carefully consider the concept of server reuse and redeployment as a potential area of business risk. Degaussing of the individual drives may be the only safe alternative. Consistent evidence collation and record keeping can be a challenge due to these variances, so again, an encompassing business process is essential.

Finally, many businesses don't have an integrated approach to repair and service that is aligned with end-of-life processing. These issues are as relevant to the maintenance replacement of component parts as to computer reallocation around staff moves and merger and acquisition activity. Increasingly, responsible customers are taking end-of-life processes back into their mainstream in-life and even beginning-of-life configuration management practice.

CKS can help you reduce risk and realise cost benefits throughout your asset's lifecycle.

CKS Group provides a range of other services in addition to secure data destruction. We operate a refurbishment, reuse and resale service from our Rushden facility. Also we do WEEE recycling at our Cinderford plant. By combining these resources we offer our clients a complete solution for the disposal of redundant IT equipment.

**For more information about our Rushden services and data wiping please contact :  
01933 41 14 16 or e-mail [jhollis@cksgroup.co.uk](mailto:jhollis@cksgroup.co.uk)**

**For more information about our WEEE recycling please contact :  
01344 307788**

#### Options for data destruction

On-site	<p>Our engineers will visit any site in the UK.</p> <p>Typically our engineers can delete between 40 and 60 machines per engineer / per day completing 3 wipes of the hard drive. Other options are for 1 or 7 wipes, completing 1 wipe will destroy the data and more machines can be processed in a day</p> <p>3 wipes is enhanced level data wiping to DoD and CESG standards. 1 wipe is a baseline standard and is still covered by the full liability insurance.</p> <p>All our engineers are security vetted.</p> <p>Before leaving the site our engineers will provide a printout of the desktops / laptops processed with serial numbers of the machines and whether the machine has been Blancco data wiped or degaussed.</p> <p>CKS charge per engineer / per day and the costs of the Blancco licences for the data deletion. Minimum costs are ½ day labour and the Blancco licence costs.</p>
Rushden	<p>Our site in Rushden typically process over 100,000 machines a year.</p> <p>The options for the equipment after the data wiping are either refurbishment and redeployment in your company, resale depending on the equipment specification, or WEEE scrapping.</p>