

Re: deleting files with linux

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Date: 04/22/03

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Date: Tue, 22 Apr 2003 14:59:15 +0100

Whoever wrote:

> *On Mon, 21 Apr 2003, G. Wolfe Woodbury wrote:*
>
>> *The "standard" Linux filesystem (ext2/ext3) remove files by removing the*
>> *pointer to the 'i-node' in the directory file. The i-node is then*
>> *released for re-use, and the disk blocks in use by the inode are added*
>> *back to the list of free blocks.*

Not quite true .. "rm" decrements a "reference count" (the number of "links" to the inode). The node and it's space are only freed when..

- the reference count drops to zero (ie: no more links)
- and - the file is closed by any processes that have opened it.
- and - the file system "syncs" it's buffers

```
>> ls -l <filename> #to get the length of the file
>> dd if=/dev/zero of=<filename> count=<length> #to write zero's
>> dd if=/dev/urandom of=<filename> count=<length> #to write random data
>> bytes rm <filename>
```

Nope - wont work (well - may not work) because dd truncates and re-allocates the file space, which can wind up moving it (or bits of it).

Keep it simple - use the "shred" utility which is specifically designed to do what the OP is after (ie: "in-place" zapping of the file).

Chris

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