

LESSON 62

FAT32 FILE SYSTEM

WHY USE IT - HOW TO USE IT

Windows 98 brought with it several improvements over Windows 95, including a utility that converts an existing Fat16-based computer file system to a newer and more efficient FAT32-based file system. When you boil all of this down to plain, simple, geek-free English, the FAT32-based file system does a better job of storing computer information on a hard drive.

For example, with FAT16-based file systems, the size of the minimum information storage unit, a cluster, grows larger as the capacity of a hard drive is increased. A 6 Gigabyte hard drive stores information in clusters that are up to 8 times larger than clusters on a 200 Megabyte hard drive. The result is a waste of hard disk space.

FAT32-based file systems use 4 byte clusters as a minimum unit of storage. If you convert your hard drive from the Fat16 to a FAT32-based system, you may see as much as a 30% increase in available disk space. Here's how to measure, in a Windows 98-based computer, just what storage space you can recapture by converting to the FAT32 system.

You'll need a Windows 98 CD-ROM disk in your computer's CD-ROM drive. Click on Start and then on Run. Now type the following, using your CD-ROM drive letter to replace the D that I use in my example. The lines are `ÿD:\tools\reskit\config\Fat32win.exeþ` (without the quotes) and press Enter or click on OK. The FAT32Win utility program will let you select which drive(s) to check, and then it will calculate the amount of disk space you can recover or reclaim by converting to the FAT32-based file system.

You cannot use disk compression on a hard drive that has the FAT32-based file system enabled. There are some hard disk utilities that may not work with FAT32. Nonetheless, using FAT32 will make your computer faster and free up a considerable chunk of hard disk space.

If your computer uses a FAT16 file system and you decide to convert to a FAT32 file system, here's what to do. Click on Start and then on Programs. Click on Accessories and then on System Tools. Select Drive Converter (FAT32) and just follow the instructions.

