

Re: cannot format floppy

Source: <http://unix.derkeiler.com/Newsgroups/comp.unix.bsd.freebsd.misc/2003-11/0939.html>

From: Bill Vermillion (*bv_at_wjv.comREMOVE*)

Date: 11/14/03

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In article <1068747686.433793@ente.ipberlin.com>,

jpd <read_the_sig@do.not.spam.it> wrote:

>In article <HoAtuB.1EIq@wjv.com>, Bill Vermillion wrote:

>[snip]

>>

>> *IRQs which are essential in multi-tasking OSs have to be set in
>> many cases in DOS but ARE NEVER USED as they poll the devices
>> instead. I've seen instances of broken interrupt HW that works
>> in the MS world, but would never work in the *n*x world.*

>Notably shoddy printer cards. Some of those even have all the support but
>miss a single wire from a pin on one chip to a pin on the other.

>OS/2 suffered a lot there, too. Same problem.

>Back to floppies, I agree with Bill: floppies are bad and best to be
>avoided. I've tried formatting and re-formatting when they /nearly/ but
>not really failed, and you can even get them to somewhat recover for a
>while. But the best remedy is to throw them away at first sign of
>trouble. They simply are not worth the effort and frustration. Some
>people buy afresh for each (very rare) occasion they need them and
>throw them away afterwards.

There are times when you do need floppies. I never trust them
new.

What I did was take a pure DOS distribution disk – one that had
never had it's write protect removed – and dd'ed the first
track to a file.

Then I just had a small script that looped, formatted the disk
under whatever *n*x system I was using [I've been doing this since
the late 1980s], and then dd'ed the DOS boot track onto the first
track, then it paused and beeped.

If I saw a bad verify on the format it went into the trash, stick
in a new disk and hit enter.

I do this while doing something else and I >KNOW< I have disks that have been formatted and verified completely, and not done on some high-speed formatter at a factory cranking things out.

While high-speed formats usually work, it's just not worth the frustration and time lost trying to copy something to a floppy that did not work.

And when [on an old Esic V.3 system] I had to use floppies to store many things, I'd tar to the floppy and used a program called checktar - from alt.sources around 1990 or 1991. You would tar the files and then checktar would do a bit level verify to ensure that the floppy matched the HD image. I never did get around to modifying it for FreeBSD [it is an old SysV3 thing] as I don't use those anymore except for emergency boot things.

But - 2 or 3 years ago I grabbed all the 3.5" disks from about 1988 thru 1993 and spun them off to CD. I had one file on one disk that was not readable. I attribute that to my own QC before using them.

I've been working with magnetic media all of my life [so far] and am comfortable with it as I've learned all it's foibles. Putting in 70+ hours/week for several years in a recording studio environment you see almost everything that can be done wrong - and it translates to all media in all environments.

I got so I could tell the brand and model number of the tape I was using just by the smell.

Bill
hi

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Bill Vermillion - bv @ wjv . com