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Guidelines for Media Sanitization

The modern storage environment is rapidly evolving. Data may pass through multiple organizations, systems, and storage media in its lifetime. The pervasive nature of data propagation is only increasing as the Internet and data storage systems move towards a distributed cloud-based architecture. As a result, more parties than ever are responsible for effectively sanitizing media and the potential is substantial for sensitive data to be collected and retained on the media. This responsibility is not limited to those organizations that are the originators or final resting places of sensitive data, but also intermediaries who transiently store or process the information along the way. The efficient and effective management of information from inception through disposition is the responsibility of all those who have handled the data.

The application of sophisticated access controls and encryption help reduce the likelihood that an attacker can gain direct access to sensitive information. As a result, parties attempting to obtain sensitive information may seek to focus their efforts on alternative access means such as retrieving residual data on media that has left an organization without sufficient sanitization effort having been applied. Consequently, the application of effective sanitization techniques and tracking of storage media are critical aspects of ensuring that sensitive data is effectively protected by an organization against unauthorized disclosure. Protection of information is paramount. That information may be on paper, optical, electronic or magnetic media.

Sanitization refers to a process that renders access to target data on the media infeasible for a given level of effort. This guide will assist organizations and system owners in making practical sanitization decisions based on the categorization of confidentiality of their information. It does not, and cannot, specifically address all known types of media; however, the described sanitization decision process can be applied universally. The attached zip file includes:

- Intro Page.pdf
- Terms and Conditions.pdf
- Guidelines Media Sanitization.pdf