Data Safety:

help us help you help the planet

Preamble

In the digital age, many, if not most, products we use and interact with have some sort of data on them. Sometimes or even often, that information is personally identifiable and can be used by a malicious actor to invade your privacy.
While we at Green Star wipe the data from electronics that come in, we get it if you want to delete data from your computer or phone before dropping it off at the FNSB Central Recycling Facility (CRF). In fact, we applaud your caution and proactiveness. Here are a few tips and tricks to ensure that your information is gone and that your device gets the most out of its usable lifetime before heading to recycling.

How do we handle data at GreenStar?

Every device we receive from the CRF is wiped or destroyed before we refurbish or recycle it, respectively. Phones are wiped or crushed, computers have their hard drives removed whenever possible, and are wiped with specialized software regardless. Spinning hard drives (HDDs) are wiped and then disassembled or crushed, while solid-state hard drives (SSDs) are securely wiped and reused. We do our best to securely erase any data that may be left on your devices, but if you erase your device yourself, you won't need to trust us to get it done for you.

So what's the big deal?

More and more, modern devices have stricter anti-theft measures built into the software and hardware. These measures will render a device unusable (brick it) unless it is wiped *correctly*. At Green Star, we do our best to reuse, refurbish, and resell devices whenever possible, and a device that is wiped incorrectly can *only* be recycled. It is not even useful for spare parts in many cases. Whether this is a deliberate move on the part of the manufacturers or simply an unintended byproduct of better anti-theft techniques, it is unfortunate and unavoidable.

Erasing the device correctly will ensure that your device can live a second or third life before finally being recycled.

When we receive a device that has not been wiped, it usually still has a password or passcode enabled, preventing us from wiping it correctly. Some computers (looking at you, Apple) can't be fiddled with, wiped, or forcibly wiped without the password. This is amazing for anti-theft, and terrible for every other scenario. Even when the device allows forcefully wiping without a password/code, the only option is to forcefully wipe it, bricking it and necessitating that it be recycled rather than reused.

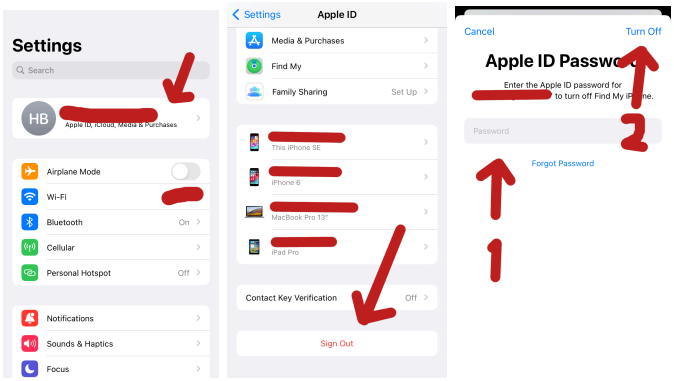
Wiping your device before dropping it off at the CRF is objectively better for your privacy, our ability to reuse electronic devices, and the planet by way of new devices not needing to be manufactured in the first place.

With all that said, let's get into *how* to erase your device in such a way that it can live a second life through Greenstar and Reuse IT:

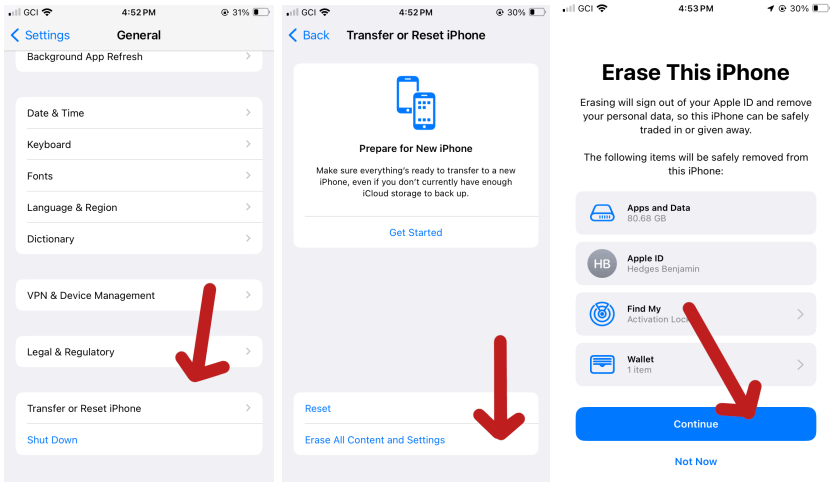
iPhones/iPads:

Apple's Instructions

- The first and most important step is to sign out of your iCloud account before wiping the device. Failure to do so will cause the device to be bricked regardless of whether or not you do everything else correctly.
- Go to iCloud settings at the top of your settings app, scroll all the way down, and sign out.
- Enter your iCloud password and follow the prompts to turn off Find My and sign out of iCloud.



- Next, go to General, scroll all the way to the bottom, and tap on “Transfer or Reset”, “Factory Reset”, or whatever it is called on your particular version of iOS.
- Choose “Erase All Content and Settings”
- Follow the prompts to wipe all data off your device.



- When you’re done, your device will go back to how it was when you purchased it (called the out-of-box experience by tech nerds).

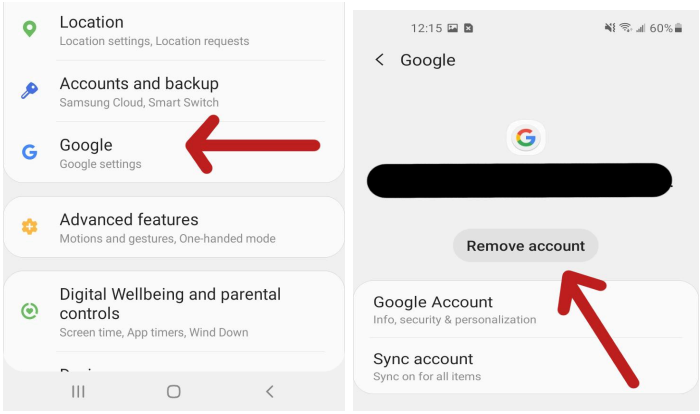
Android phones:

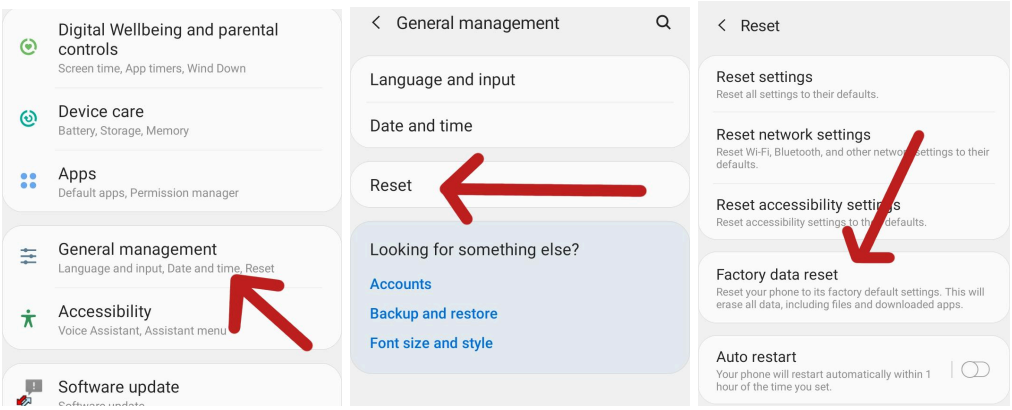
Google Instructions - Samsung Instructions

The first and most important step is to sign out of your Google account, as this is what will prevent the device from being bricked.

- In your device’s settings app, go to “Accounts” or “Account Settings”. Sign out of your Google account and any other accounts you have integrated into your phone’s OS, such as a Samsung account or Facebook account.

- Second, go to “Reset your Device” and follow the prompts to wipe and factory reset your device.
- Alternatively, go into your phone’s recovery mode and factory reset your device in that way.
- **Warning!** Failure to sign out of your Google account(s) before wiping will trigger your phone’s anti-theft measures and brick your phone unless you sign back into your Google account(s) during the set-up process…which isn’t something that we can do after you recycle your phone.



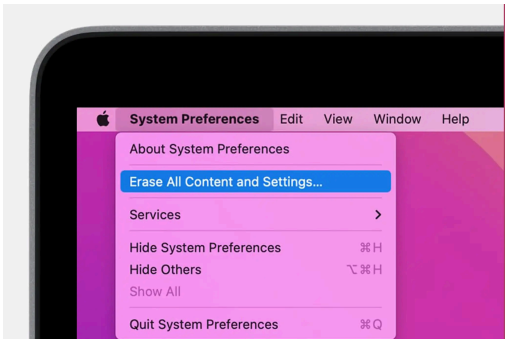


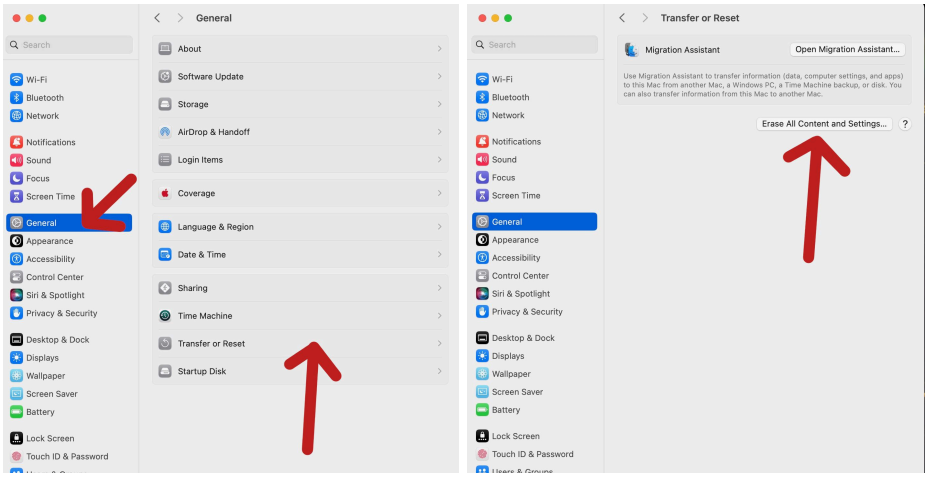
Macs: (MacBooks, iMac, Mac Mini, etc)

[Apple’s instructions]

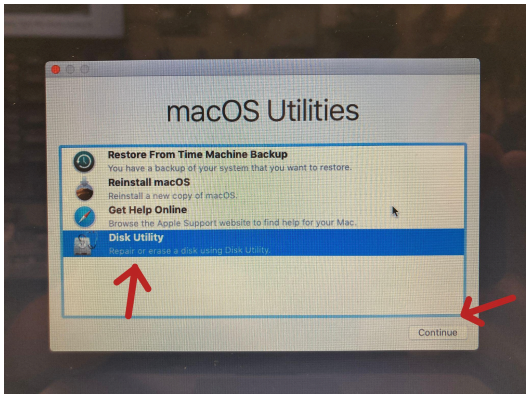
- On newer T2 and M-series Macs (non-glowing logo), there is a dedicated setting to wipe the drive similar to iOS devices.
    - First, sign out of your iCloud account in iCloud settings.
    - Second, go to “Erase All Content and Settings” in the System Preferences menu bar. Then, follow the on-screen prompts to factory

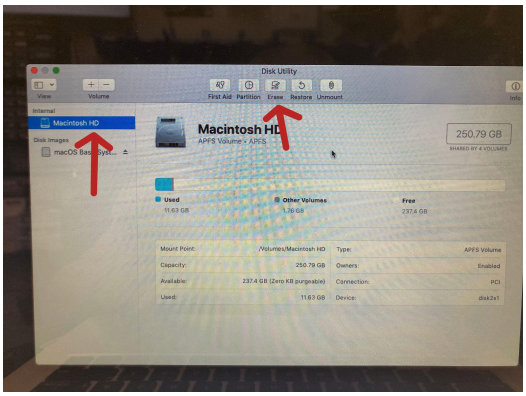
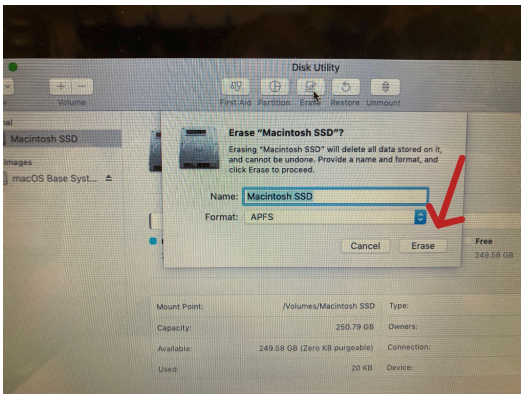
reset your Mac. You'll know you're done when you're sent back to the "Hello" screen.

- This will only work on Macs that have maximum Boot Security. If you have manually decreased the b.s., follow the instructions for older Macs.
- 

Location in macOS Monterey
- On MacOS Ventura and later, this setting is located in General > Transfer or Reset > Erase All Content and Settings.
- 

- On older Macs (The glowing Apple logo kind), you will need to enter Recovery Mode to wipe the disk.
    - It is not strictly necessary to sign out of iCloud on older Macs, but you may want to deregister it anyway if you're a big iTunes user.
    - Boot the computer *while holding down* Command-R until you see an Apple logo and/or a loading bar.
    - Once the computer is booted into Recovery Mode, select Disk Utility.

-  

- Select the computer's drive (usually named Macintosh HD) and select Erase.
-  

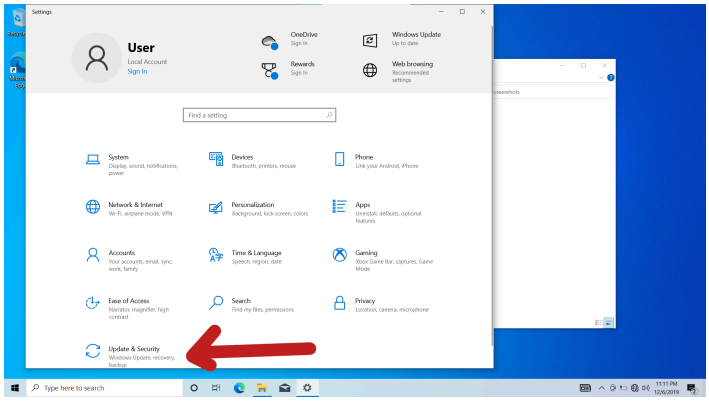
- Be sure to name the drive something humorous or whimsical to make our techs laugh while working on it later.
- Once the erase process is complete, you're done.
- Reinstalling the OS is not necessary, but is appreciated.

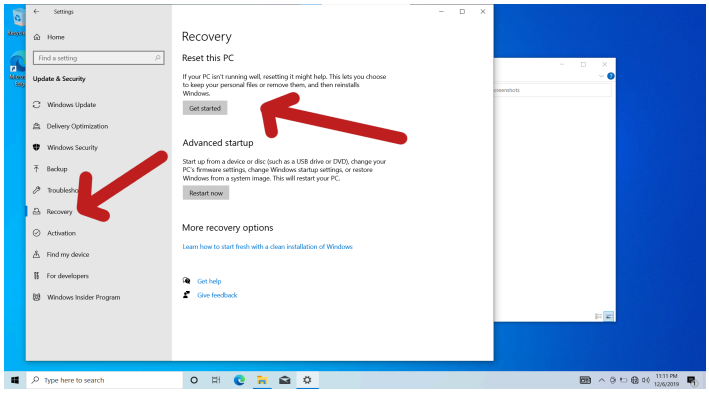
Windows Computers:

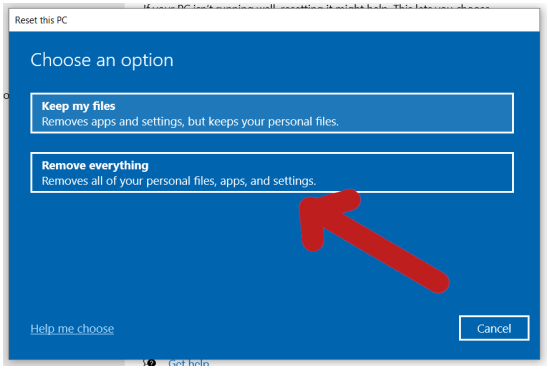
[Microsoft's Instructions]

- The majority of PCs are not particularly fussy about being reset or wiped.
- They can be reset by going to the settings app and navigating to:
  Updates and Security > Recovery > Reset This PC, (Windows 8/10)
  or System > Recovery > Reset This PC (Windows 11)
- Alternatively, a third-party tool like ShredOS will also work, and is what we use to wipe drives that cannot be physically pulled out of the PC.

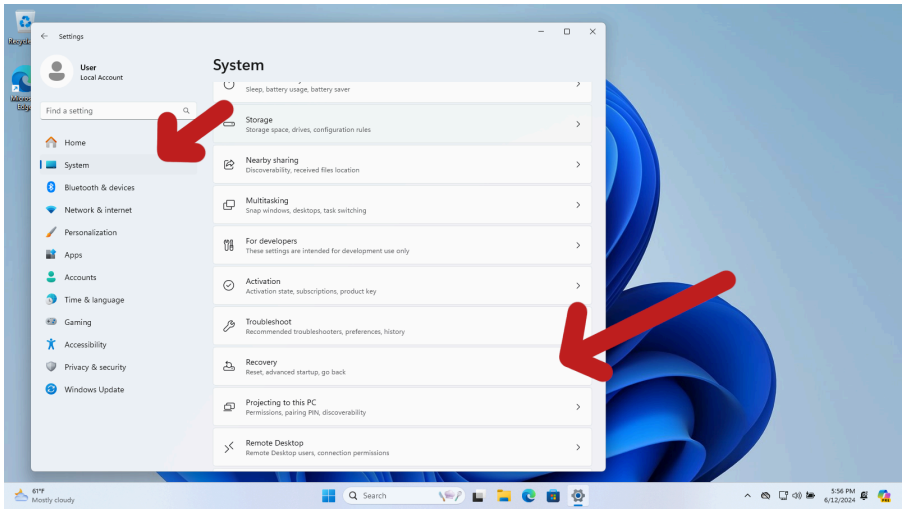
- **Windows 10:**


Settings
User
Local Account
Sign In
OneDrive
Windows Update
Rewards
Web browsing
Find a setting
System
Devices
Phone
Network & Internet
Personalization
Apps
Accounts
Time & Language
Gaming
Ease of Access
Search
Privacy
Update & Security
Type here to search


Settings
Home
Find a setting
Update & Security
Windows Update
Delivery Optimization
Windows Security
Backup
Recovery
Activation
Find my device
For developers
Windows Insider Program
Recovery
Reset this PC
Get started
Advanced startup
Restart now
More recovery options
Get help
Give feedback
Type here to search


Reset this PC
Choose an option
Keep my files
Removes apps and settings, but keeps your personal files.
Remove everything
Removes all of your personal files, apps, and settings.
Help me choose
Cancel

- **Windows 11:**


Settings
User
Local Account
Find a setting
Home
System
Bluetooth & devices
Network & internet
Personalization
Apps
Accounts
Time & language
Gaming
Accessibility
Privacy & security
Windows Update
System
Storage
Storage space, drives, configuration rules
Nearby sharing
Discoverability, received files location
Multitasking
Snap windows, desktops, task switching
For developers
These settings are intended for development use only
Activation
Activation state, subscriptions, product key
Troubleshoot
Recommended troubleshooters, preferences, history
Recovery
Reset, advanced startup, go back
Projecting to this PC
Permissions, pairing PIN, discoverability
Remote Desktop
Remote Desktop users, connection permissions

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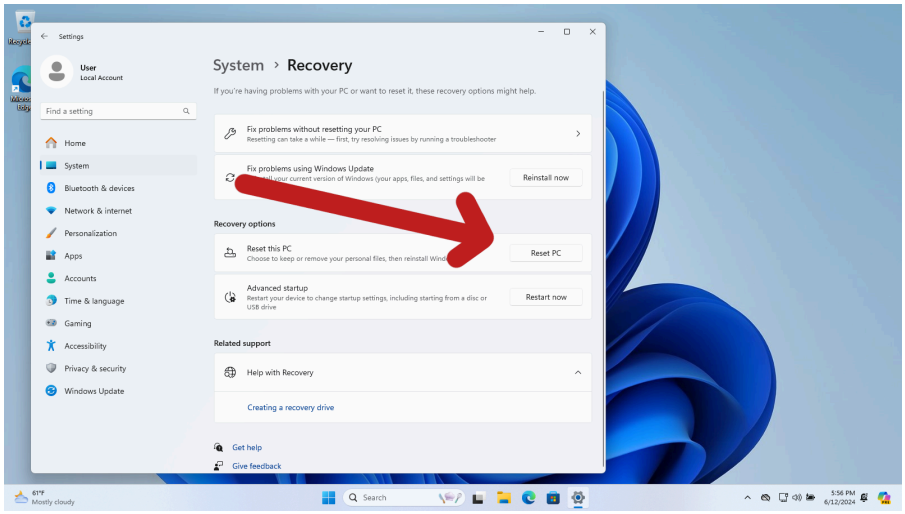
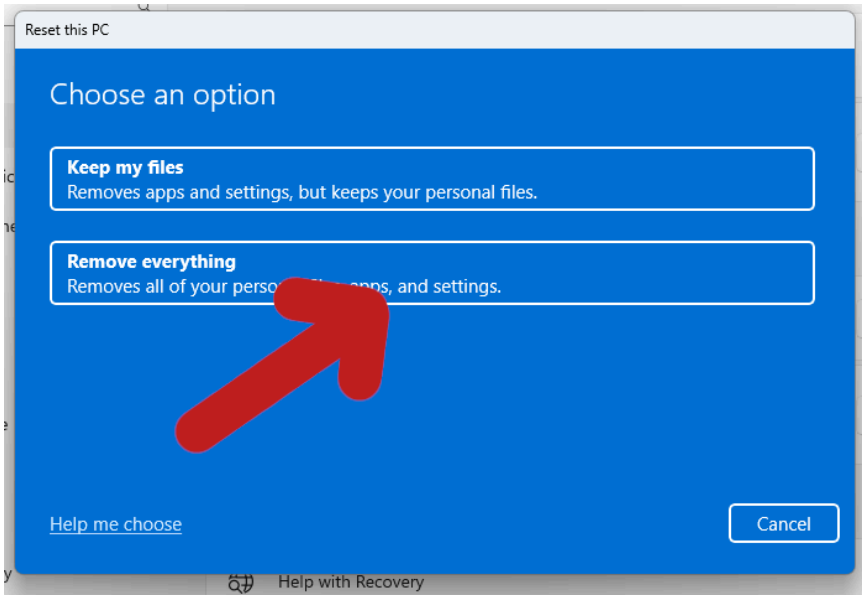
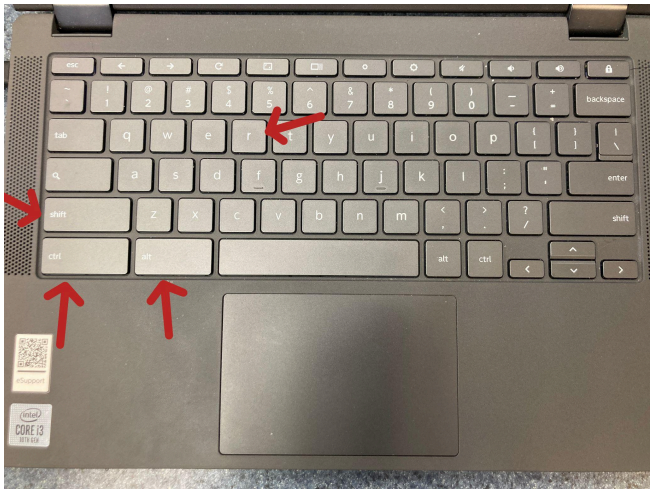
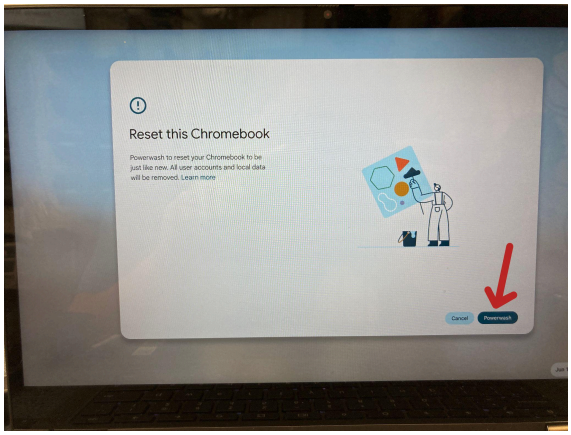
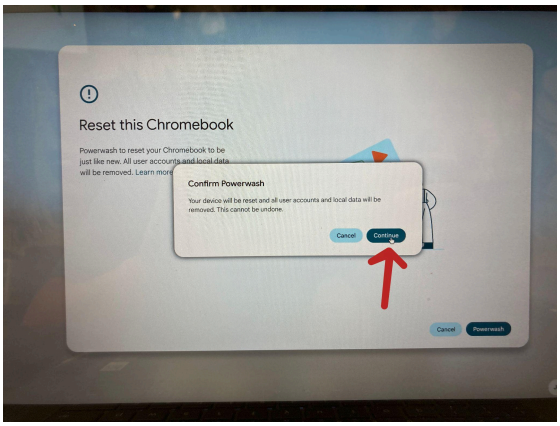

Settings
User
Local Account
System › Recovery
If you're having problems with your PC or want to reset it, these recovery options might help.
Fix problems without resetting your PC
Fix problems using Windows Update
Reinstall now
Recovery options
Reset this PC
Reset PC
Advanced startup
Restart now
Related support
Help with Recovery
Creating a recovery drive
Get help
Give feedback


Reset this PC
Choose an option
Keep my files
Removes apps and settings, but keeps your personal files.
Remove everything
Removes all of your perso
pps, and settings.
Help me choose
Cancel
Help with Recovery

Chromebooks:

[Google's Instructions]

- Ensure that your Chromebook is running the latest version of ChromeOS that it supports.
- While the Chromebook is on the lock/password screen, press the key combination Shift-Control-Alt-R to activate Powerwash mode.
- 
- Follow the on-screen instructions to complete the "powerwash" of your Chromebook.
- 



Linux Computers:

- If you're using Linux, you probably already know how to wipe your drive. Use whatever method appeals to you.
- Methods of erasing your primary drive will vary depending on your distribution. Pop!_OS includes a built-in recovery partition that you can reach

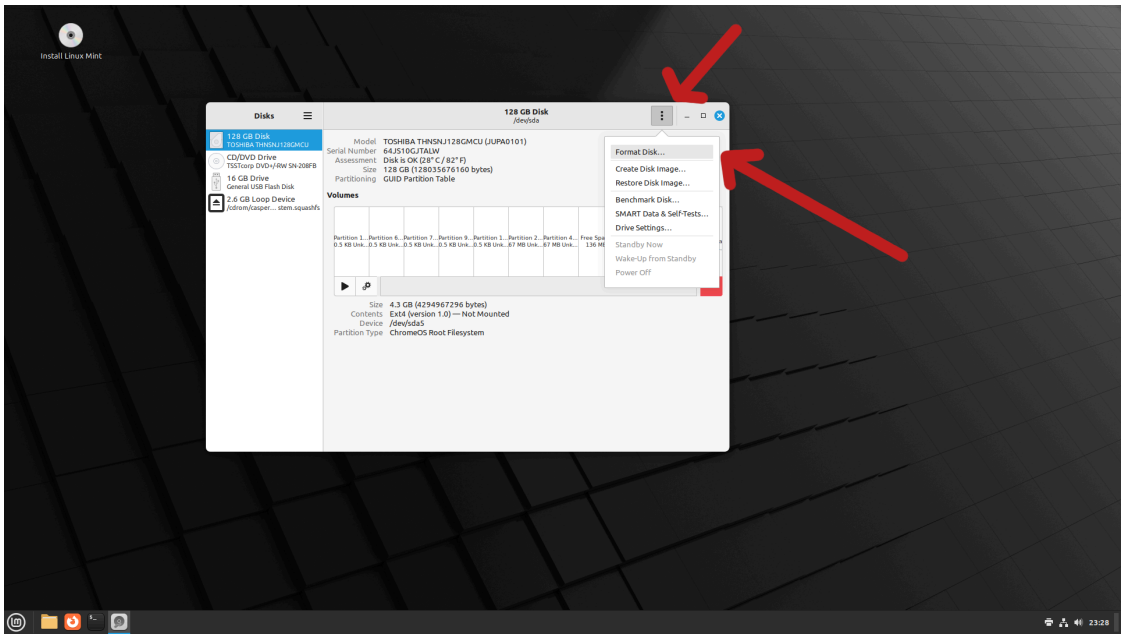
by holding down the spacebar while booting and restoring the system to factory settings like that. For many distros, you're on your own.

- One easy method is to use the terminal command:

  `sudo rm -rf / --no-preserve-root`

  - (This is your one chance to use that command and have it *not* be someone trying to troll a noob! It's so liberating!)
- Alternatively, you can wipe the drive from an external live environment or by using a third-party tool such as ShredOS.
  - My preferred method is to overwrite the disk with random data using `dd` for single-pass erases or shred for multi-pass erases:

    `Sudo dd if=/dev/urandom of=/dev/[your drive] bs=4M status=progress`
  - `Sudo shred -v -z -n3 /dev/[your drive]`, modifying the number to indicate the number of passes you want to perform.



A Linux Mint Live CD is being used to format the internal storage of a desktop computer.