

## Re: Nonstandard low-level formats and USB floppy drives (is linux capable?)

*Source:* <http://linux.derkeiler.com/Newsgroups/comp.os.linux.misc/2005-02/1068.html>

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*Date:* 02/11/05

Date: 11 Feb 2005 19:25:21 GMT

On Fri, 11 Feb 2005 12:39:43 +0100, Robert Heller staggered into the Black Sun and said:

> "Luser" <[azquzcudlcrh@mailinator.com](mailto:azquzcudlcrh@mailinator.com)>,  
> In a message on 10 Feb 2005 16:08:12 -0800, wrote :  
>> Interesting points. Is it possible to low-level format USB floppies  
>> under Windows? I don't have a Windows computer of my own to test  
>> with. I also don't feel very qualified to reverse engineer a USB  
>> protocol, but then again, I could at least try.  
>>  
>> When I mount a 1600KB floppy, for example, in my USB drive, it looks  
>> just like things would look if I mounted a normal floppy drive with  
>> the same disk, but by using the "fdnH1440" device. That is, the  
>> file names and other things are corrupted looking or not displayed  
>> correctly.

Ah. If that's the case, it's probable that the USB floppy is making a assumption that the disks it's reading are 1.4M, and that assumption is causing problems. @#\$. There aren't any USB floppy drives sitting around here at work, and nobody had one at the LUG meeting last night, so I'm sort of stuck unless I go down to Worst Buy and buy one.

I checked pricewatch.com for "USB floppy" and found that those drives with specs listed said "1.44M, 1.25M, and 720K capacity". It's possible that the drives' firmware is set up such that they only grok the common formats. <sarcasm>Wonderful.</sarcasm>

>> I have never tried writing a floppy mounted with the incorrect device  
>> because I assume it would corrupt both the low and high-level  
>> formats.

Probably correct.

>> So I guess a USB floppy drive really isn't as good as a real floppy  
>> drive. I guess I need to dig an old motherboard and drive out of the  
>> attic. It is a shame to lose functionality like this.  
> Is it true that the new motherboards actually lack the floppy

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> *controller? Or just that the system simply lacks the drive itself?*

That probably depends on the exact motherboard. I'm sure there are some boards that lack a floppy controller and don't have the 34-pin connector. I have a recent motherboard (manufactured Oct. 2004, best guess) that has a floppy controller and 34-pin header to plug things into, though. YMotherboardMV, but if there's no floppy controller, a useful tool could be <http://www.ultimatebootcd.com/>, which has a lot of neat stuff on it including a Knoppix-like Linux environment in the "full" ISO.

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Matt G|There is no Darkness in Eternity/But only Light too dim for us to see  
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