

FAT32 Formatting for Multiple Operating Systems

FAT32 is a unique file system for the reason that it is compatible with just about every OS on the market; including many that aren't! In other words, FAT32 allows you to move a disk and exchange files freely between Mac, Windows, DVR, Cable Boxes, and even next-generation Game Systems!

Of course, every convenience comes at a cost. There are two main down-sides to all of this flexibility:

- FAT32 was designed in 1996, when 4 GB drives were considered huge! As a result, it is pretty slow; *especially with drives over 32 GB in size!* Don't expect ultra high-speed file-transfers on a multi-terabyte FAT32 drive!
- FAT32 is *technically* considered an obsolete file system! As a result, it can be hard to format a large (over 32GB) drive in FAT32. In fact, Windows Disk Management will only allow you to create a FAT32 drive if it is *under 32GB!* Mac OS X however does not have this limitation. As a result, owning a Mac (or borrowing one from a friend) is the only *easy* way to do it!

There are various third-party software programs that allow you to create large FAT32 drives. But, we'll just show you how to do it the free way! We will actually give you *two ways* to format to FAT32 within this guide; the easy way and the hard way.

- *The easy way:* The Mac Method
- *The hard way:* The Windows Method

The Mac Method

Some Windows users may rebel against the idea of borrowing a Mac for this procedure. But, it really does make the process amazingly fast and easy!

1. Connect your Cavalry drive via USB to a Mac running OS10.3 or later. Take this moment to disconnect any other external storage devices from the Mac. This will make it easier to find your Cavalry drive in Disk Utility.
2. Power both drive and Mac on and wait for the boot-process to complete.
3. To open the Mac Disk Utility: Click an empty space on the Desktop. Select from the top of the screen: Go> Utilities> Disk Utility.
4. Once you have opened Disk Utility, look for your Cavalry drive in the left-hand column. It will have the phrase "DMI" in the title. You can verify that it is your Cavalry drive by checking that the capacity is close to that of your drive. *Ex., a 1TB drive will appear as a 931.51GB "DMI" drive.*
5. Now, select the top-most entry for the Cavalry drive.
6. From the row on the right, select the "Erase" tab.
7. Choose "Volume Format: MS DOS (FAT)" from the drop-down menu.
8. Click "Erase..." from the bottom of the window.
9. Wait for the drive to finish erasing by monitoring the status at the bottom of the window. *It usually takes a minute or so.*
10. Congratulations! Your FAT32 drive is now complete. You can begin transferring files between multiple operating systems!

The Windows Method

Since Windows no longer supports FAT32, we will have to use a somewhat circuitous and very time-consuming method in order to format a large FAT32 drive. This means we will need to use the Command Prompt to format the drive using DOS commands.

The Command Prompt will not recognize a blank unallocated drive. It requires a "drive-letter". As a result, you will actually need to format your drive to NTFS first (if you haven't already), *before you can use this guide*. You will also need to write-down the "volume label" from Disk Management. The Disk Management window with your Cavalry drive info will look something like this:

```
Disk 1* | D:*(Drive Letter), New Volume*(Volume Label)
        | 931.51* GB(Capacity), NTFS (File System)
        | Healthy
```

*Of course, your drive's specific disk number, drive-letter, volume label, and capacity will probably be different!

Refer to our online guides, "What is a Disk Management Utility?" and "Disk Initialization and Formatting", for instructions on finding new disks and using Disk Management.

<http://www.cavalrystorage.com/manuals.aspx>

Once you have written-down the correct drive-letter and volume label, you can refer to them using your DOS commands within the Command Prompt. **Warning!** The Command Prompt is *case sensitive*. So, be careful to copy all information using the *exact* case-lettering as you found it.

1. Connect your Cavalry drive via USB to a PC running XP or later.
2. Click "Start". Select "All Programs> Accessories."
3. Right-click "Command Prompt" and select "Run as Administrator". You may need to enter your Administrator password if you are not already logged-in under an Administrator account.
4. Once the Command Prompt opens, carefully type the sentence in step 5. Do not include the parenthesis or quotation marks.
5. "format (insert your drive letter here): /FS:FAT32"
6. If prompted, enter the volume label which you previously copied from Disk Management.
7. If prompted, select y for Yes; as in, "Yes I would like to proceed with format."
8. Now watch and wait. The Command Prompt will give you the progress in the form of a "percent complete". For a 1 TB drive, this may take 8 hours or more!
9. Carefully minimize the Command Prompt screen and make sure that nobody interferes with the computer and drive until the format is complete (which could take a day or so).

Check back with your computer the next day. If the format went as planned, the Command Prompt will display a message saying "Format is Complete".

Now, look for the drive letter in (My) Computer. You are now ready to transfer files at will!

Contact us at:

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Or call:

1 800 238 4453, Monday through Friday,
8:30am to 5:30pm, Pacific Time