

So you think you can delete? AVAST knows better

July 9 2014, by Nancy Owano



Credit: Peter Griffin/Public Domain

Nice. You have decided to give your old Android phone a second life more noble than the junkheap and so you delete all your files and wish the phone well with its new owners. Reality alert. Read the new AVAST study first. Every day Americans are selling away their identity by selling their smartphones, found the study. Sending an older phone off for resale or to charity is a frequent practice but the phone's data wipe tools

might not do the job. That is the news from Prague-based security software company AVAST, which did a study announced Tuesday. The test was able to demonstrate the risk people take when selling their used smartphone. The AVAST team recovered, from just 20 phones they bought online, some 40,000 pieces of information that included personal photos and emails and, in some cases, even the identities of the sellers. Jude McColgan, president of mobile at AVAST, said that the company, in obtaining various Android devices from U.S. sellers, used "readily available recovery software" to dig up information on the phones,

All this information was information which the owners assumed was deleted. The team at the mobile security provider were surprised by how quickly they were able to find data on phones that had been reset. "From just 20 phones," he stated, "we found over 40,000 pieces of information." Everybody who sold their [phone](#), he added, thought that they had cleaned their data completely. "The take-away is that even deleted data on your used phone can be recovered unless you completely overwrite it," said McColgan.

He noted that "More than 80,000 used smartphones are for sale daily on eBay in the U.S. Along with their phones, consumers may not realize they are selling their memories and their identities. Images, emails, and other documents deleted from phones can be exploited for identity theft, blackmail, or for even stalking purposes," he added. Selling your smartphone may be a great way of making extra money, but it's a bad way to protect your privacy, he said.

Among the types of items the AVAST team were able to see were family photos of children, selfies, Google searches, emails, text messages, contact names and addresses, a completed loan application, and in four cases, the owners' identities.

AVAST had this advice in their video of the findings: If you are going to

sell or trade in your cellphone, AVAST recommended you follow these steps: Go to the Google Play store and install a free app like AVAST Anti-Theft which will not only erase but overwrite your old data. Activate the thorough wipe feature. "Wipe the phone, Now your phone is safe to sell." Tom's Guide said there are a few third-party tools that will properly wipe your [phone](#).

More information: * [www.businesswire.com/news/home ... 5945/en#.U7yRR_kZMhY](http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20140709005945/en#.U7yRR_kZMhY)

* [press.avast.com/en-us/avast-de ... ing-used-smartphones](http://press.avast.com/en-us/avast-deleting-used-smartphones-recovers-40000-personal-photos-and-emails-from-phones-bought-online)
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