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PowerBook 190, 500, & 5300: Formatting ATA PC Cards (10/95)

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TOPIC -----

How do I format an ATA PC card for use with a PowerBook 190, 500, or 5300 series computer? Do I just pop the card in and use the system 'Erase Disk' command, or do I use the IDE HD Format Utility?

DISCUSSION -----

Macintosh-Formatted Card

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To format a ATA (rotating media) PC card (also called PCMCIA card), simply insert the card directly into the computer (PowerBook 190 or 5300 series) or into the PCMCIA expansion module (PowerBook 500 series only) and use the 'Erase Disk' command under the Special menu. An ATA PC card can be reformatted with PC Exchange active if it has already been formatted as a Macintosh volume.

DOS/Windows-Formatted Card

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Most storage PCMCIA cards (PC Cards) are pre-formatted as DOS volumes. Macintosh PowerBook 190, 500, and 5300 series computers have the ability to mount these volumes because of the Macintosh PC Exchange software that ships installed on every PowerBook.

For correct results, it is necessary to use PC Exchange version 2.0.2 or greater (included with System 7.5).

Installing PC Exchange

To install a newer version of Macintosh PC Exchange

Step 1

Drag the PC Exchange icon into the Control Panels folder of your System Folder and click "OK" to overwrite the older version of PC Exchange.

Step 2

Restart your Macintosh.

Reformatting a DOS PC Card

If the PC card has been formatted for DOS (as most are when purchased) Macintosh PC Exchange needs to be turned off before the card can be reformatted.

While you can use Macintosh PC Exchange to read and write data from/to DOS volumes and erase data from PC cards, it cannot be used to alter the format of a PC Card (from DOS to Macintosh or vice versa).

Macintosh PC Exchange will not allow you to reformat a Macintosh-formatted PC card as a DOS-format PC card. To do so you should use a DOS/Windows computer.

If you wish to change a DOS-formatted card to a Macintosh-formatted card, follow these steps:

Step 1

Eject the PC Card.

Step 2

Disable the PC Exchange control panel by opening the PC Exchange control panel and select the Off option.

Step 3

Insert the PC card. You will be prompted to reformat the PC card as a Macintosh volume. Click Initialize.

Step 4

Once the PC card is reformatted, you can turn PC Exchange back on from the control panel by opening the PC Exchange control panel and select the On option.

IDE HD Format Utility

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The IDE HD Format Utility cannot be used to format PC cards. If you launch the IDE HD Format Utility on a PowerBook 500 Series computer, a dialog appears stating that this application cannot be used with this PowerBook. You will not get this dialog on either a PowerBook 190 or 5300 series computer, but you still cannot use this utility to reformat a PC card.

A Note On Ministor PC Cards

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Some PC Cards from Ministor contain factory-installed compression software that is specific to DOS/Windows computers. This compression software consumes usable disk space and should be deleted for use with PowerBook computers. Select the "Erase Disk..." command from the Finder's Special menu in order to delete this software.

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