

Ghost Laptops

Tech Talkers

February 20, 2026

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# Disclaimers

1. In no way do I encourage or condone anyone doing anything illegal or improper with a laptop modified this way
2. If you open your laptop and start using wireclippers you may brick laptop. I assume no responsibility for anything that goes wrong.

# What is a Ghost Laptop?

Ghost Laptop is a laptop that has been setup to be harder to tie to an individual

## Major Steps in the Process

- Laptop acquired carefully
- Hardware Modifications
- Special Software running on it
- You have to be careful with it

# What You Need?

You'll need the following

- Donor Laptop
- Write lockable USB drive(s)
- USB Wifi Adapters
- Replacement Ram for system

# Where to Buy a Donor Laptop?

## Do Not

- Buy at a retail store. New or Used
- Buy Amazon/New Egg, etc. New

## Do

- Yard Sales, Garage Sales, Flea Markets, Pawn Shops
- Ebay (possibly)
- Craigslist (possibly)
- Auctions (buy a bunch, of same model)

# Donor Laptop

Things to look for in a potential ghost laptop donor

- Intel X64, no Arm, no Apple Silicon
- More generic the better - HP better than Alienware
- Removable Ram
- Not a laptop you'll feel bad about customizing
- One that you can get into the BIOS on

# Modifying the Hardware

You are going to make the following modifications

Do Not Boot the PC - before Hardware Mods

Physically Remove the following

- Remove Microphone/Speakers/Camera
- Remove Hard Drive(s)
- Remove Wifi Adapter, disable
- Remove Bluetooth, disable
- Go into the BIOS and set to boot off USB

# Preparing the USB Stick

Get your OS ready

- Set the write protect slider to write
- Copy the Tails OS <https://tails.net> onto the USB stick
- Set the write protect slider to read-only

Do not touch the write protect slider until you're ready to upgrade tails, better yet use a new USB stick

# Getting Ready To Boot

## Getting Ready to Boot

- Put in Tails USB stick
- Put in Wifi USB adapter
- Boot PC - Hit F12/F9/F2 if needed
- Be someplace with free wifi and few cameras

# Do Your Work

Boot your PC and do your work

Tails provides a good set of tools

- Web Browsers, editors
- GPG tools
- Miscellaneous

# Clean Up

## Shutdown the PC

- You can do a regular shutdown, tails does clean so recommend that rather than power off
- Remove the USB Ethernet adapter and dispose/destroy it
- Put in new USB Ethernet adapter
- Open the machine and replace the RAM with new ram, destroy the old RAM

Ready for next use

# Summary

This is a pretty paranoid setup

I do have a "ghost laptop"

It has had the hard drive removed and I've removed the wifi adapter and bluetooth adapter wires are cut

Do not flip out the ram/ethernet adapters on a regular basis

# Links

## GhostStart's Youtube Page

- <https://www.youtube.com/@GhostStrats>

## Tails Home Page

- <https://tails.net/index.en.html>

## IFixIt

- <https://www.ifixit.com/>