Quora

Can someone program a USB that silently copies all the data from the laptop it is inserted into? If so, would the USB be able to copy the data if the laptop is locked?

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If the laptop allows to be booted up from USB then definitely yes. But the amount of data an USB drive would hold might be less than the amount of data on the laptop.

If the laptop doesn't allow booting up from USB then it generally depends on the operating system and if the OS will do an autorun of anything on the USB device once you attach it. That's because you still need to tell the program on the USB device to start executing. That's basically the problem with all malware anyways! You need something triggering the execution of the malware.

But in our modern world, many things can automatically trigger malware. The autorun feature on your laptop could thus trigger the program on the USB device. And it depends a bit on the security settings of the laptop and the operating system of the laptop.

So, it wouldn't work in all situations but in some cases, it might. Even if the computer is locked as the autorun feature might still operate in the background. (Very unlikely, unless the laptop was specifically manipulated to allow this kind of access.)

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Ziva Meyer   ✕
Deskside support technician · 7y

in theory this is possible in more than one way (auto run and malformed driver). typically the autorun is not or should not be executed automatically when locked and many antivirus block the autorun now. however a malformed driver and if the device is able to (still little sketcy on my memory of drivers.) request specific driver or install driver from self. it is possible a driver could be installed that grants access and allows certain functions.

this could create a backdoor and allow someone to copy data over the network or auto launch a program which could complete the transfer.
however i do not think most modern antivirus would allow this. and if you disallowed driver installation without admin approval you would not need to worry about this.

there are commands and configuration that will allow no new device to function without admin approval and the bios in many new laptops have securing functions for drivers and bit code.

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IT/Network Administrator · Author has **3.4K** answers and **14.3M** answer views · 7y

For the most part, the answer to your question is yes.

The only caveat is that while there are 512GB and larger flash drives these are very expensive, thus in all likeliness it is going to be 16–64 gb in size which is not big enough for your entire hard drive. Now focusing on your user profile folder and maybe some appdata/program data folders will be much more effective then downloading gigabytes of windows system files as well.

If your computer has USB Auto-run enabled (default) then the flash drive can execute code as soon as you put it in and it does not matter if the machine is locked or not.

If you intentionally disabled auto-run then the USB stick can not execute any code by simply plugging it in. However if you restart it and IF your computer tries to boot from the USB stick then it could install a virus to do anything.

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In all reality though if someone was using a random USB to implement a virus it would not download it onto the drive itself because that means the creator would have to obtain the USB drive again. Instead you just have it install a virus that silently uploads your files to the hackers server or just gives them remote access.

So in short, you should never plug in a usb drive that you find somewhere because you dont know what is on it. Even using a different computer to format it before use is still not safe as it can have a hidden partition that still has a virus on it.
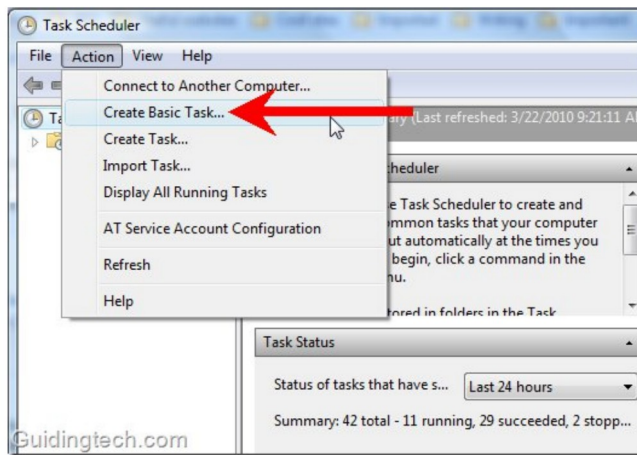
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Yes definitely. There are a few ways of doing this, but my personal favorite method is through the included Windows Tasks Scheduler.

I personally have a Task set up so whenever I connect my phone to my computer via USB, it will begin backing up files from my phone to my computer. I also have a USB-storage device that I house a lot of my work files on. When I plug that into my office computer, it copies files from a certain folder to that USB device.

Here's one walkthrough: Automatically backup files to USB Drive on mount

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Robert Ilbrink   ✕
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Yes this is possible and already done by criminals, but I hope that the others are not going to help you any further as your goals need to be analysed first. Call me an idealist, but I don't like to support potentially criminal behaviour.

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Albert Tu   ✕
Have been using computer before hard drive time · Author has **64** answers and **116K** answer views · 7y

Short answer, yes. Long answer, depends.

What OS said program is targeted? What do you mean by 'all the data'? Do you mean the entire hard disk? Or just files associate with certain programs? Perhaps files with certain extensions?

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Yes, data grabber USBs exist, although they require physical access to the target and time to copy the data. The second part of your question depends on what you mean by "locked" and if the program allows for communication with its USB bus when locked.

Some do, most don't.

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Ok...

I think everybody is missing the question.

Sooooo... You want to do like they do on TV, when the fbi agent plug the usb key, and the software on the usb key copy the hard drive or install the spyware ?

So, on windows, you have the autorun solution, but even with the autorun, windows ask the user for confirmation to run it.

So, sorry, that's not like on tv.

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What type of data?

You can't copy system files when the operating system is in use.

The fact a laptop is locked doesn't prevent processes to work in background, it's only you can't get in.

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How do USB killers work?

The way it works is quite clever.

5V from the computer's USB port is used to charge high voltage capacitors through a DC-DC converter up to a predetermined value, something in the order of 100V or higher.

Once the caps are charged, a switch then dumps the stored charge back through the USB's signal lines and the cycle repeats until 5V is no longer available through the computer's USB port, indicating the host computer has been damaged - dumping the high voltage back into the 5V line will damage the killer device itself; not a very smart thing to do, hence the signal lines.

How much damage it will do to a computer will be determined by how protected its USB port is - in some cases the motherboard traces will act as a fuse, or the USB controller will fry, and in severe cases the motherboard will be damaged.

A few clamping diodes will actually be adequate to protect the system, but proper ESD protection takes space that's simply not available in modern slim-and-small devices.

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There are several methods for doing it. Here I'm mentioning the simplest of them. There are two different softwares which can do it easily. They are-

1. **AutoUSB-** Its a software which you could use for doing the same. It works like this-

   - Run this software and press **Start** Button (you can now close the settings dialog; it will continue to run in background).

   - Insert, at any moment, USB Flash Drive in your computer.

   - The whole process is automated and you don't need to do anything... All files will be saved in the Default folder.

2. **Secret USB Copier-** The Secret USB Copier enables you to automatically copy files from connected USB drives to your hard drive.

   - It detects plugged-in removable drives and scans their files without letting the owner know.

   - You can set filters depending on which files you want to copy. It provides lots of customization possibilities, such as file size, extension, date and more.

   - The tool can run completely invisible or imitate a fake USB Guard (Malware protection).

Hope this helps.

Thanks for reading,

Neetesh;)

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There's a few programs that you can use. The one I hear the most about (and thus assume is most popular and hopefully most updated) is SyncToy.

Here's a page with a quick walkthrough: How to Sync Files between PC and USB Thumb Drive?

If you're talking about a flash drive that hacks into a machine and downloads the contents of the hard drive, that's possible too. It's far from easy and only really reliable on machines that have not received security updates. For the sake of not getting in trouble, I'll leave it at "yes it's possible."

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If the user is logged in, yes, you could make such a malicious device. You would need a USB microcontroller that acts as a keyboard. It could then type the commands to exfiltrate all data from the machine.

There is currently no way to protect against such an attack. Of course, it's fairly complicated, and not something your regular script kiddie could accomplish. But it's not out of reach for a software engineer with knowledge of electronics.

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USB is just a cable, it doesn't do anything automatically. You could write a program that copies all the data from your C: user file to a different location (another hard drive), although that is gonna take a while to transfer lol. Make sure you use USB 3.0 if possible to increase data transfer rate. Although honestly it would probably be faster to just open the C: drive and do it yourself.

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A USB killer is a device(look similar to pen drives) **when attached to USB port of any device**(like PC, smart TV), **will fry up their components causing severe damage.**

Prior to answering, I`ll describe few terms which should be known to get better idea of its working.

- **Capacitor**: it is an electrical component that stores electrical energy and can be charged/discharged. It can take direct current and increases its potential(voltage).
- **USB pin configuration**: a typical USB connection has four pins, two pin for power supply(red& black, 5 volt, 1 ampere approx) and other two pins(green & white) are for data transfer purpose.
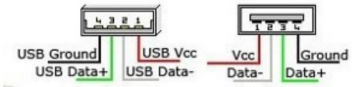

Image*:* google search

How do USB killer work?

USB killer device consist of high capacity capacitors which charges very quickly. So when it is inserted in USB port of host devices, it draws power from port and charges capacitors(inside it) to some 100~200 volts.

Once capacitors are fully charged to rated value(100-200 V) it discharges*(sends electric shock)* this 200 Volt & approx 150 milli ampere (approx) current directly to data pins of USB port— which in turn is connected to motherboard/main circuitry of PC/device.

Typical USB port rating= **5 V, 1 A** and

Power transferred by USB killer to port = **200 V and few milli ampere current.**

(And many of the components of motherboard are designed to work on < 10 V)

So you can imagine how much damage it can do.

This process of charging and discharging(sending high voltage shock)keeps repeating until USB port(along with other part) gets damaged & stops supplying power to USB killer.

In simple words it uses host`s electrical power and using some electric and electronic component it increases its(*capacitor of USB killer*) current and voltage. Then it sends this high voltage shock to different part of host via USB pins, causing frying/severe damage to various electronic parts of host device.

Image: google search

Square shaped component(brown ones) in above pic are capacitors.

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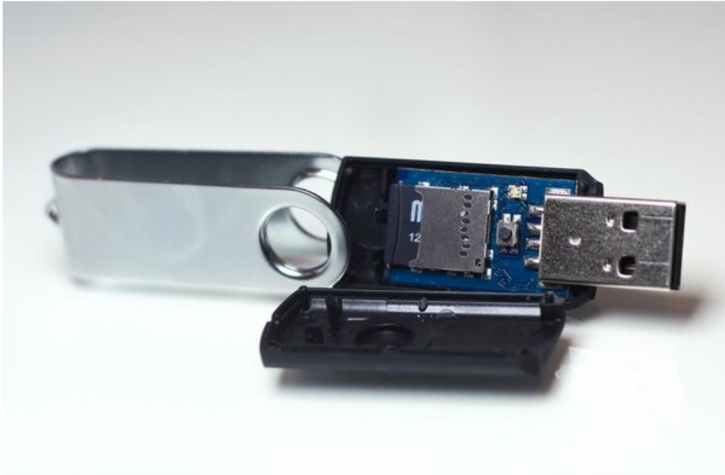

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Well, close :

source:How to Load & Use Keystroke Injection Payloads on the USB Rubber Ducky

This is a usb device that LOOKS like a usb memory stick, but besides the memory stick functionality behaves like a keyboard/mouse and types some commands just as a keyboard was attached.

Keyboard/mouses are trusted by the OS so automatically active.

The computer needs to be unlocked and ready to accept keypresses for this to work.

Of course the mini computer can type quite fast and install some software before you an intervine.

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Not possible. If they can read the data, it is already copied off the drive - just in memory. There's nothing to it for them to instead transfer it to some other drive in its unencrypted state.

Unfortunately this exact problem is not solvable. It is logically impossible.

It is one task where you actually need to control their computer, not just the USB stick. In fact the way many places do this (like banks and government agencies) is to not connect anything to a specific computer (no internet, no other drives), and only allow that computer to be able to decrypt the data (e.g. only it has something like a key file which needs to be there in addition to adding a password).

Then policing anyone coming close to the machine - constant surveillance and behind locked doors.

But giving a storage device to someone outside your control and then telling them the password means they have all of it. They can do with it as they wish. There is no way to stop them. They either have read rights, or they don't. Theres no such thing as read-only without being able to copy.

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If the document can only be read from the USB flash drive then after you disconnect the USB flash drive, the computer cannot have access to the contents of that document. The only content I know for a fact does get cached locally while viewing is web content; so if somehow this document is viewed via a web browser that would be a risk. But is easily solved by clearing the browser cache before you leave the computer.

That said, if the document is being opened in a program that keeps track of recently opened documents the name of the document might show up in an "Open Recent" menu. You say this might not be a big deal, but it depends on what the document is, what you are protecting and what damage might be caused if the name of that document is known.

For example, if someone take a USB flash drive to a local copy shop and use their computers to view the document. The next person could see that I opened a document named "Kris's Bank Account Info" and that potentially opens me up to be targeted by someone who either works

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Related **What kind of lock/encryption/protection could be used on a USB such that only when the USB plugged the people could use its data and executable but not be able to copy its data from the connected USB to hard drive?**
You literally cannot do that.

Using the data means the attached computer has access to it. From that point, you have no control over what the computer (or its owner) do to the data — once it is theirs to see, it is also theirs to save.

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That depends on what is connected to the USB port. In movies you see people plug in a USB device and somehow magically data starts moving to the USB device. It is possible to put software on a USB that runs every time it is plugged in. Presumably, if the computer doesn't

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- You will **certainly** lose the recent data you were writing. Depending of the specific filesystem and caching settings - all or just part of it.

- You will **most probably** damage logical structure of the file system (again,depending on caching and specific filesystem type). Might just require filesystem repair (optimistic) or a full wipe and reformat (pessimistic).

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Two conditions must exist for systemwide infection:

1. The machine should not have Autorun disabled. Autorun is enabled by default.

2. User access control must be disabled for systemwide infection. This is the Windows prompt added in Windows Vista asking you to allow administrative rights escalation to, among other actions, install software.

First condition often gets disabled on corporate computers by security policies.

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Not really no. As soon as someone can view it, it is effectively copied off into RAM. So it's a rather trivial task to copy it from RAM onto another disc.

Some attempts have been made to do just what you're after over several decades already. E.g.

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I had a virus passed to all my computers

via usb thumb drive;

I lost a 2008 imac, a linux-windows laptop

but I was able to save my data to the cloud

by usb-connecting my imac drive to a chromebook.

. here are the top advices I got

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up a drive with valuable information and leaving the company. Its good business to protect yourself and hardly "impossible" as Hayden Brutus might imagine. You can make a USB read only, no write or neither read nor write depending on the need. This can be done through

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Technically you usually have not much of a chance.

In some fairly rare cases you do have it though. It's depending on the Filesystem. The NTFS filesystem has a "Last Accessed" field, but the use of this field has to be turned on manually in the settings of the Operating System and is defaulted to off since it makes the filesystem slower. (and NTFS is rarely used on USB Drives...)

The exFat, UDF, and FAT32 have only Date, not Time

Look here for some more details on Windows.

File System Functionality Comparison - Win32 apps
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User makes good points about the security risk and anti-virus program behaviors regarding importing files via the Windows AutoRun behavior.

However if you are looking to import specific files from a specific USB device each time it is inserted it is quite possible through some commercial and certainly custom software to safely

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The hidden files and folders on a USB drive are defined as a group of items that take up disk space but don't show up normally. These files might be set as hidden in Windows by default, or these are made hidden by a virus.

In case neither the Control Panel nor the CMD help shows the hidden files, EaseUS file recovery

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When a USB flash drive is formatted, all the data stored on it will be erased. Formatting essentially prepares the storage device for new data by resetting the file system and directory structure. As a result, the previous data becomes inaccessible and appears to be deleted from

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Copying data from one storage to another normally is using free program, in the sense that you don't have to pay for the copier (you may need to pay for the operating system, but there

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Unlikely. I assume this is a friend and not an agent working for an industry competitor or hostile nation-state ?

Otherwise, in Windows if you blindly double-click icons to view files, you could run a program instead of reading data, and if you copy all files as-is and then subsequently blindly double-

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Almost any laptop can be opened up by using fundamental software and going into the BIOS . In fact it is a normal practice to resuscitate a dead Windows machine with a Linux image. However and this is what is important ...the information contained on the Hard drive might remain encrypted,and unreadable.

At this moment in time , I am bringing home two laptops , acquired for free at a dump, and I will expect to be able to turn them into Linux machines. .. I have already done this once before.

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