Preventing the use of USB Storage Devices

IN WINDOWS VISTA

1. In the Group Policy Editor[1], navigate to Computer Configuration → Administrative Templates → System → Device Installation → Device Installation Restrictions.
2. Double click and enable the setting "Prevent installation of devices not described by other policy settings".
3. To allow administrators to install devices and update drivers, double click and enable the setting "Allow administrators to override Device Installation Restrictions".
4. Navigate to Computer Configuration → Administrative Templates → System → Removable Storage Access.
5. Double click and enable, "Removable Disks: Deny Read Access" and "Removable Disks: Deny Write Access".

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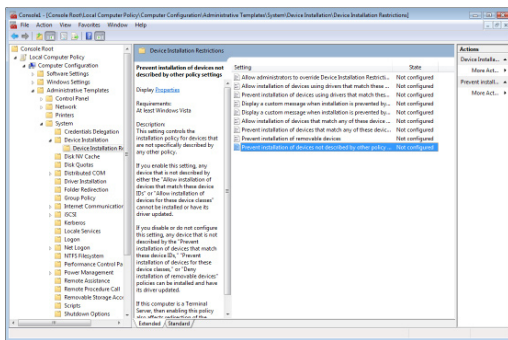
[1] For a stand-alone Vista machine, use Start → Run → gpedit.msc (Vista Home Basic and Premium do not have this snap-in). For enterprise group policy management, Microsoft recommends upgrading the Group Policy administrator's workstations to Windows Vista. For more information see the Microsoft online article: Deploying Group Policy Using Windows Vista.

disabling
USB Storage Drives

Windows
Linux
Solaris 9 & 10
Mac OS X

National Security Agency
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Warning:

Do not attempt to install any of the settings in this guide without first testing in a non-operational environment.

Note that "USB storage devices" is a general term which includes, but is not limited to, devices such as USB memory sticks, USB cameras, and USB hard drives.

Disabling USB Storage

IN WINDOWS 2000/XP (NOT HOME)/2003

Remove all USB storage devices from the system.

1. Log on as an administrator.*
2. Using Explorer, navigate to the machine's %systemroot% folder. (On Windows 2000: WINNT, on Windows XP and 2003: Windows)
3. In the Tools menu, select Folder Options.
4. Select the View tab and click on Show hidden files and folders.
5. Under the View tab, ensure the Hide extensions for known file types is unchecked.
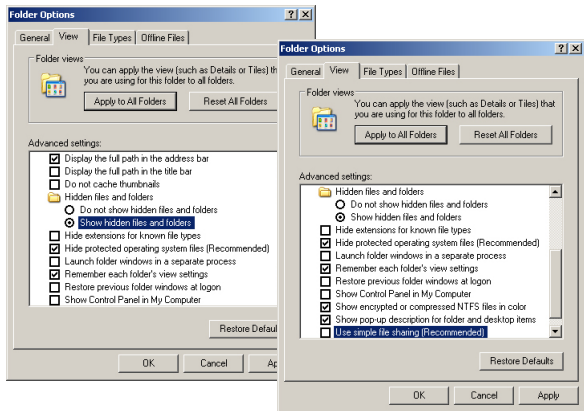
6. Scroll to the bottom of the Advanced settings list and ensure the checkbox Use Simple File Sharing (Recommended) is not checked. Remember the original value of this field (checked or unchecked). The value needs to be reset in step 14. Click OK.
7. Open the properties for the file %systemroot%\Inf\Usbstor.inf.
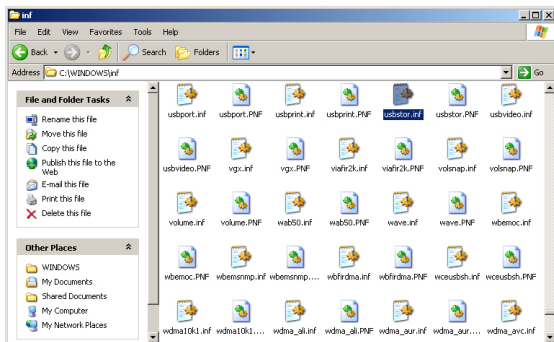
8. Select the Security tab and check deny for all options for all users - including SYSTEM and Administrators. Click OK.
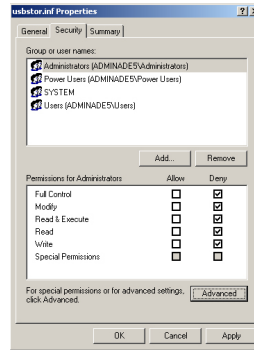
9. Repeat steps 7 and 8 for the file %systemroot%\Inf\Usbstor.pnf.
10. Use regedit.exe to open the registry key HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Services\UsbStor. **Note**: This registry key will not exist if no USB storage device has ever been used on the machine. If the key does not exist, ignore steps 10 thru 13.
11. In the right pane, double click Start.
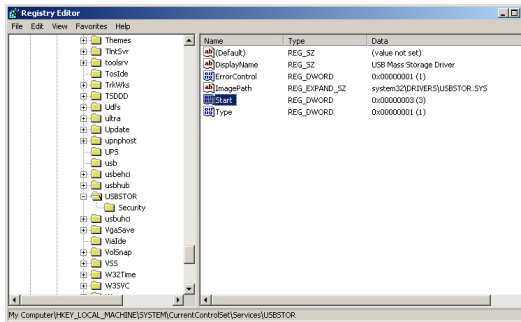
12. In the Value data box, type 4 and then click OK.
13. Close the registry editor.
14. Reset the value of Use Simple File Sharing (Recommended). See Step 6.

Disabling USB Storage

IN SOLARIS 9&10

1. Execute the following commands as root.* Either switch to the root account using `su -` or use `sudo` if it is available.
2. Add the following lines to the /etc/system file:
```
exclude: scsa2usb
exclude: usba10_scsa2usb
```
3. Reboot.

Disabling USB Storage

IN LINUX

1. Execute the following commands as root.* Either use `sudo` for each command or switch to the root account using `su -`.
2. Add the following line to /etc/modprobe.conf to prevent the loading of the USB storage module:
```
install usb-storage /bin/true
```
3. To prevent even administrators from inserting the USB storage module manually, delete it using the following commands:
```
cd /lib/modules
find . -name 'usb-storage.ko' -exec rm '{}' \;
```
4. Reboot the system or issue the following command to remove the active module:
```
rmmod usb-storage
```
5. Step 3 will need to be repeated each time a new kernel is installed including when it is done through `yum`, `apt`, or `rhnsd` as part of regular patching. **Note**: The above advice will not work if USB-storage has been compiled into the kernel, but this is typically only the case for custom-built kernels.

Disabling USB Storage

IN MAC OS X

1. Log on using the administrator account.*
2. Open a Finder window and go to the /System/Library/Extensions folder on the partition or drive where the operating system is installed.
3. Drag the file `IOUSBMassStorageClass.kext`, located in this directory, to the Trash.
4. Drag the file `IOFireWireSerialBusProtocolTransport.kext`, located in this directory, to the Trash.
5. Rpeat steps 2 - 4 for each drive or partition containing a copy of Mac OS X.
6. Empty the Trash and reboot the machine.

All external USB and FireWire mass storage devices should now be disabled.

*If you do not have administrative or root privileges on your computer, request support from your local system administrator.