

OpenPuff 4.0 keeps files from prying eyes, and maybe even from you



By [Mike Williams](#) Published 10 months ago

When you need to keep confidential files away from prying eyes then encryption is the most obvious answer. But it's not always appropriate.

If others share your hardware, in particular, then the presence of password-protected files alone might attract attention. And so in some situations you might be better off using a steganography tool, like [OpenPuff 4.0](#), to move your data entirely out of view.

The program works by taking your documents, shredding them, encrypting them, and storing the fragments in carrier files. There's support for a wide range of formats (BMP, JPG, PNG, MP3, WAV, MP4, MPG, FLV, SWF, PDF and more). And as a result, even if someone examines that USB key you're carrying, say, they'll only see the video, audio or whatever other carrier file you used. Which will look and play just as it always did, with no clue that it contains any extra information.

While this sounds good, setting it up can be a challenge -- OpenPuff is more concerned about maintaining the best possible security, then being quick and easy to use.

And so, for instance, by default the program demands that you protect your data with three passwords, each of which must be at least 8 characters long, and significantly different from the others. (Although if that's too much hassle then you can reduce that to a single password.)

If you spread your data across several carrier files then you have to remember their order -- forget and you won't be able to extract their contents later.

And of course you'll need to provide enough carrier files to hold your data. Typically you'll need to provide roughly 5MB of carrier files to hold every 1MB of content, although this can be tweaked for each carrier file type.

The program does include a sizeable PDF file to explain all these issues, though. And so if you're looking for an alternative to regular encryption, [OpenPuff](#) could prove very useful: it's powerful, configurable and packed with features, yet also fully portable so the program is easy to run just about anywhere you like.

