What is a Bootable Asset Report and what can I do with it?

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Description:

The bootable asset report (BAR) is a small report generated by Blancco Drive Eraser providing basic computer information, it is visible upon rebooting the machine after the data erasure is complete. The BAR is meant to provide a high level information of the computer and is useful during the resell process. This functionality is turned off within Blancco Drive Eraser by default, when switched on the BAR is written on any data storage drive successfully erased.

FAQ:

- I had a machine that was functioning normally, but all of the sudden I have started seeing this report! What should I do?

Background:

The vast majority of computers run in "UEFI mode", this is a low level layer that allows your computer hardware to interact with your operating system during the booting. The "UEFI" ancestor was called "BIOS", the latter is not used very much nowadays. While old machines may still run in "BIOS mode" (a. k.a. "Legacy mode"), new machines run mostly in "UEFI mode", but a lot of machines still offer support for both modes. You can change this mode via accessing the BIOS/UEFI settings during the machine booting.

Operating systems are nowadays installed on machines configured in "UEFI mode". It is important to understand that, on these machines, the "BIOS mode" (if supported) cannot see the operating system. In addition to this, UEFI installations may not write anything on the first sectors of the installed drive for backwards compatibility reasons, meaning that those sectors will be ignored by your operating system.

Finally, on machines set in "BIOS mode", the BAR is written on the first 200 sectors of a drive.

Possible cause:

Why do you see the BAR and not your operating system? You may have a BAR written in "BIOS mode" and an operating system installed in "UEFI mode", both coexist and ignore each other.

- Your machine was most likely erased by Blancco before you purchased it. When the data erasure happened, the machine was configured in "BIOS mode", and a BAR was also written as part of the process.
- After the erasure, the machine was reconfigured in "UEFI mode" before the operating system was installed, and this installation did not write anything on the sectors that the BAR occupies.
- For some reason, your machine is now back in "BIOS mode" and you are seeing the BAR, instead of your operating system.

How to resolve this:

The easiest is to switch the machine back to "UEFI mode": if you don't see the BAR anymore and boot into your operating system without issues, you can consider your problem solved. Make sure that your machine always stays in "UEFI mode".

If the previous does not work and you still see the BAR or you cannot load your operating system, there might be a problem in your computer and we recommend taking it to a repair service.

How can I get rid of the BAR permanently?

The BAR is a static snapshot of the asset information of your computer and does not do any harm. Most of the time, the BAR will be overwritten during the installation of a new operating system. But if you still see the BAR on your machine and want it gone, follow the steps below:

- Option 1: If your machine does not contain data, install a new operating system on the machine. Do this if you are certain that no operating system exists on the machine (empty). You may want to use the same machine mode the BAR used ("BIOS" or "UEFI"), otherwise do a full drive format during the installation.

- Option 2: Erase the machine data, before reinstalling a new operating system. Make sure that you back up all the important data before doing this. If you use Blancco Drive Eraser, make sure that the option "Bootable asset report" is turned off.

- Option 3: There exist techniques to overwrite specific drive sectors in order to make sure that the BAR won't be visible again. Nevertheless, they involve destroying data, are not reversible, and can cause more problems than benefits, so we don't recommend using them.