

CREATING AN ENCRYPTED DISK IMAGE ON OSX



For file encryption on a Mac, the FileVault option on OSX is a pretty decent feature built into the System Preferences. The one downside is that it automatically encrypts your entire Home directory which can be very cumbersome if you have a large amount of data stored there.

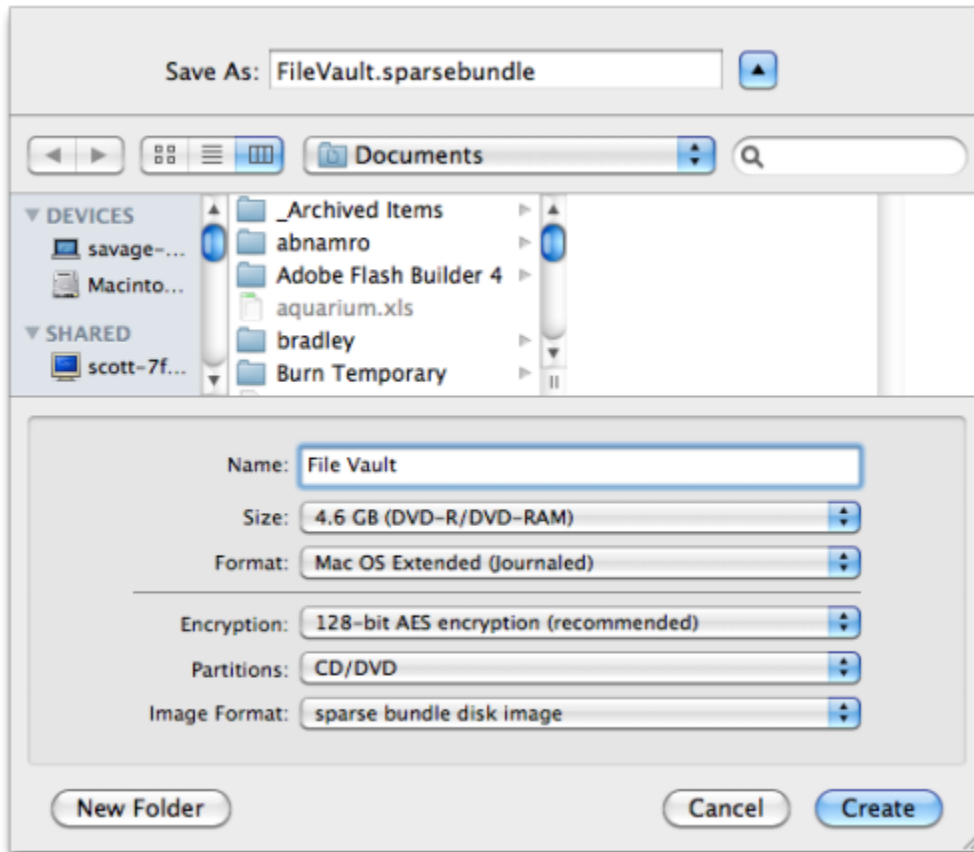
So, I had been looking for an alternative solution that would provide me the flexibility of only encrypting a targeted folder of data. As I searched around, I found there are a number of utilities out there that do just this. However, the one option that I happened upon, that I was not previously aware of, is a feature provided right in the Disk Utility that allows you to create an encrypted disk image. This is actually a simple solution using a built-in utility.

How To Create an Encrypted Disk Image with Password Protection

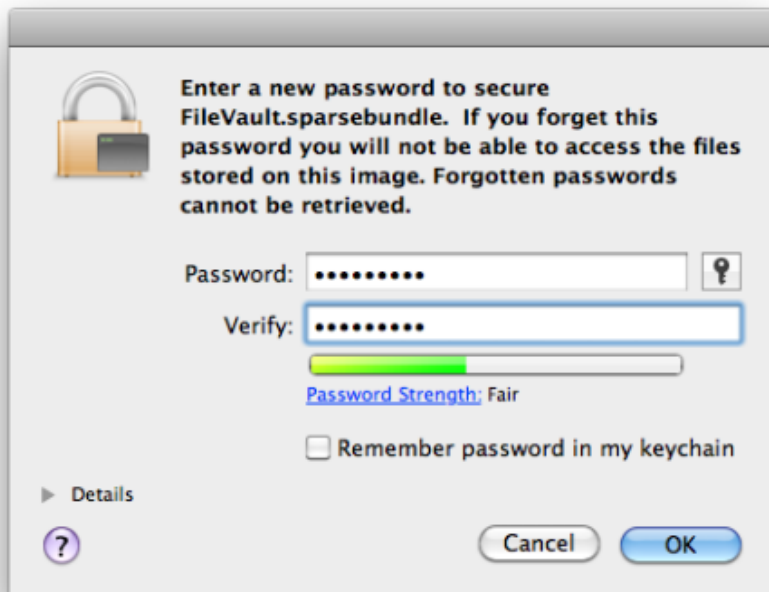
- Open the Disk Utility app which is in the Application > Utilities folder.
- Click the New Image button.
- Enter a name for the Encrypted Disk Image you want to create and choose where you want to store it.
- Select a Volume Size to meet your needs. I chose 4.7GB so it is large enough and can be burned to DVD for backup.
- The default filesystem format is the Mac OS Extended (Journaled) which should be sufficient.
- In the Encryption field you have 2 choices. I would recommend 128-bit AES for better performance. If you are ultra paranoid choose the 256-bit option.
- In the Partitions field, I selected CD/DVD as I plan to backup this disk image to DVD at some point. If you don't ever plan to burn to disc, then Intel-based Mac users should select GUID Partition Map and PowerPC-based Mac users select Apple Partition Map.
- In the Image Format field, I recommend you select the sparse bundle disk image. This provides an image file that dynamically grows as you add content and supports more efficiency for performing

Time Machine backups. Macs running OSX earlier than 10.5 should use sparse disk image for compatibility.

- Click the Create button.



- Enter a strong password that is different from your Mac login.
- **IMPORTANT:** Unselect the checkbox to Remember password in my keychain. If you store the disk image's password in the keychain, then anyone that gains access to your desktop would be able to open this image and view the files.



The disk image will now be created in the location you configured. All you need to do is double-click on the image file and open it up. Then drag and drop the files you want onto the disk image window. When you close the disk image window and eject the drive, the data remains in the encrypted volume and only accessible when the correct password is provided. OSX will ask you to remember the password in the keychain every time you open the volume. Do not select that option. Now as long as you have your Time Machine backup setup, you should be good to go. Otherwise, once you have your important files moved into the encrypted disk image, it would be wise to burn a backup copy to CD or DVD.

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