CloneBoy[26] Is This Safe?

26.1 "Yeah Buddy" · a Nick's Tech Shop joint · *little bandit, big backups.*



Fair question. CloneBoy[26] erases and writes whole disks, so here is straight what it is, why Windows warns about it, and how to check that the copy you have is the real one.

Why Windows warns you

CloneBoy[26] is **not code-signed**. Signing costs money every year, and this is a small shop's tool. So the first time you run the installer or the program, Windows shows **"Windows protected your PC"** and, after that, **Unknown publisher**. Click **More info**, then **Run anyway**, then **Yes**. That warning means "Windows doesn't know who made this yet", not "this is malware".

It asks for administrator rights because it reads and writes whole disks. Windows only lets a program do that as administrator.

Check that your copy is the real one

Every release has a **SHA-256 fingerprint** next to the download on the website (the file `SHA256SUMS.txt`). If even one byte of the file were changed, the fingerprint would be completely different.

To check yours, open PowerShell in the folder with the download and run:

```
Get-FileHash .\CloneBoy26-Setup-26.1.exe
```

(or `certutil -hashfile CloneBoy26-Setup-26.1.exe SHA256` in a Command Prompt). The long number it prints must match the one on the website, letter for letter (capitals don't matter). If it doesn't match, don't run it: download it again from the website, and tell Nick's Tech Shop.

The virus scan

Each release is uploaded to **VirusTotal**, which runs it through about seventy antivirus engines. The report link is next to the download on the website, so you can read it yourself. A scan is a check, not a guarantee: no one can certify a program "malware-free", and we don't claim that. Now and then one engine flags a new, unsigned disk tool by mistake. If Microsoft Defender ever does, Nick's Tech Shop reports it to Microsoft as a false positive.

What CloneBoy[26] will never do

- **Erase without asking.** Anything that erases a disk shows you the disk, says so in red, and waits for you to type `GO`.
- **Write to the Windows you are running from.** That disk shows in red. The only exception is a deploy onto this PC that you asked for, which happens after a restart, outside Windows.
- **Erase the wrong disk.** Right before it erases, it reads the disk again and checks its serial number. If anything changed, it stops.

- **Phone home.** No account, no tracking: it sends nothing about you or your PC anywhere. It goes online for two things only. When it starts, it reads one small file on **cloneboy.171rev.com** to see if a newer version is out (it never downloads or installs anything by itself). And when you press **DOWNLOAD WINDOWS 11**, it talks to Microsoft, for Windows; that download is checked against the SHA-256 Microsoft publishes before it is used.
- **Get around Windows activation** or any other Windows protection.

Everything it does is written to a log in `C:\ProgramData\CloneBoy26\logs\`.

What's inside

CloneBoy[26] is Nick's Tech Shop's own program. It uses three well-known free parts: **Ventoy** (it makes the USB stick bootable; GPLv3, unchanged from its official release), **Windows PE** (Microsoft's own small Windows that the stick boots into), and **Microsoft .NET** (what the program runs on). The details and licences are in `THIRD-PARTY-NOTICES.txt` in the program folder.

Questions

Ask Nick's Tech Shop. Knox the raccoon: *"little bandit, big backups."*