

# An OPCUG Product Review

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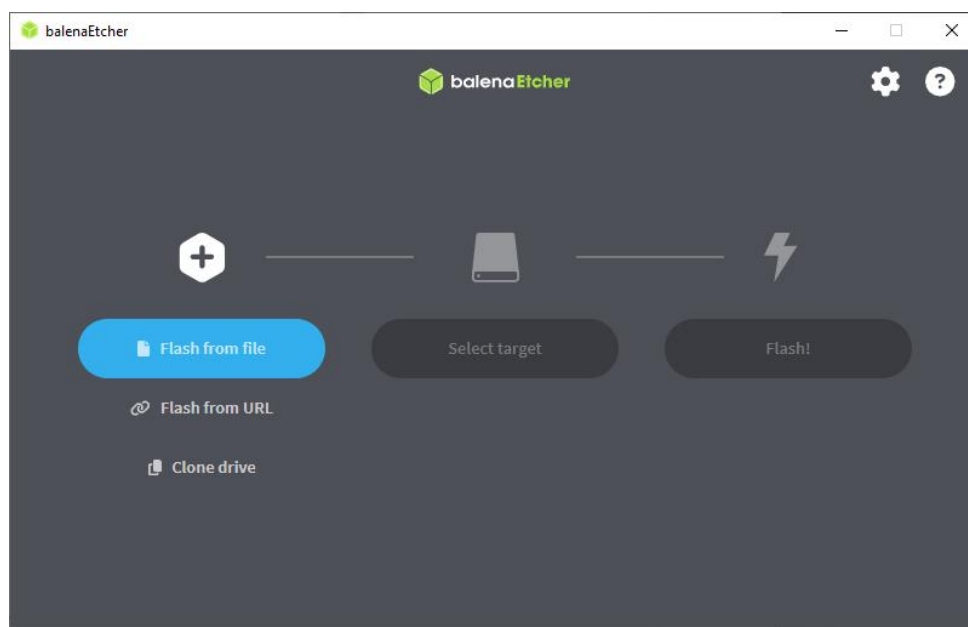
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## Etching a Bootable USB Drive

by Alan German

Balena Etcher may just be the easiest software to use if you want to create a bootable USB flash drive. The software only writes a single image of an operating system to a flash drive but, if that's all you need, it does so intuitively and with style.

When downloading the software you can choose from versions for Windows, macOS and Linux. The Windows version is downloaded as an EXE file which is a portable version of the package. Consequently, there is nothing to install. Simply double-click the executable file to launch Etcher.



The main program window shows the three steps involved in flashing an image to a USB drive. First, click on *Flash from file*, navigate to the directory where the disk image for your chosen operating system is located, and select the ISO file. Secondly, plug in the USB flash drive that is to become the bootable disk. Click on *Select target* and choose the USB drive from the list of drives displayed. A User Access Control dialogue will request authorization for the app to make changes to the USB drive.

Note that there are no further warnings. If you select *Yes*, and the flash drive wasn't initially empty, the target flash drive will be overwritten and any previously stored files destroyed. So, make sure that the flash drive you use doesn't contain any data that you wish to retain!

Now, click on *Flash!* A progress bar will initially indicate the percentage completion for the image writing process. A second progress bar similarly indicates the degree of validation. Finally, the display screen will indicate *Flash Completed!* Your USB flash drive can now be used to boot your computer.

So, there we are. Three simple steps to create a bootable USB drive. What could be easier?

Bottom Line

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Balena Etcher (Open source)  
Version 1.19.21  
<https://etcher.balena.io>



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