

Re: How safe is my BIOS Power-on Password?

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- *From:* Tim Slattery <Slattery_T@xxxxxxx>
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pat_mc <p_surname@xxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

Hi –

A short while ago I learnt that if I transfer my data from an NTFS to a FAT32 harddrive I lose all my security features on the files.

That's right, NTFS supports many security features that FAT32 does not.

Since I use a BIOS power-on password to protect the data on my laptop I am now wondering if there is any point to doing so at all. Could an unauthorised person not simply access my PC with a bootable Linux CD such as Knoppix and copy all of my files over to a FAT32 external drive?

Yes, that's certainly possible.

Or will BIOS be smart enough and prevent the evil-doer from doing this? If yes, how? If no, is there anything else I can do to be safe against data theft in case of laptop theft?

There are several products that encrypt the entire disk drive, and won't kick in unless your machine is properly booted with userid/password. That would mean an XP userid/password, not the BIOS userid/password. If a malefactor removed your disk and connected it to another computer, or used a Knoppix or other boot disk, your drive would appear as gibberish.

My agency, which is concerned with exactly this scenario, uses Pointsec. It works, but it does slow things down a bit. Just how much

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it slows things down is somewhat debatable.

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Tim Slattery

MS MVP(Shell/User)

Slattery_T@xxxxxxx

<http://members.cox.net/slatteryt>

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