

Re: decryption without a password key

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*Source:*

[http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/WinXP/microsoft.public.windowsxp.help\\_and\\_support/2007-12/msg01784.htm](http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/WinXP/microsoft.public.windowsxp.help_and_support/2007-12/msg01784.htm)

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- *From:* "Patrick Keenan" <test@xxxxxxx>
  - *Date:* Thu, 20 Dec 2007 11:47:19 -0500
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"Amy" <Amy@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message  
<news:283D3376-0F15-4FAE-B9CD-8B33EC4786C0@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>

"Patrick Keenan" wrote:

"Amy" <Amy@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message  
<news:8902292C-B94C-4419-910E-A0BDE291D4DD@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>

Is there a possible way to decrypt files without a password key??? I formatted my PC and forgot to save the key...I know that you dont believe me but its the truth, I swear.

So you're trying to decrypt the encrypted backup? You used EFS?

EFS relies on the account credentials. The "password key" isn't enough. If you invoke EFS, you must export the account credentials and store them securely. Unfortunately, this step is not mandatory.

There are some alternate methods involving a designated recovery agent. However, it's unlikely that this was done, and it's much too late now.

For the most part, if you don't have the certificates, and can't get them, the data is not retrievable.

Sorry, there are very seldom happy endings to this question.

HTH  
-pk

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EFS? Whats that?

EFS is the XP Encrypting File System. If you used the built-in XP encryption, this is what you used.

Alternately, you encrypted with a 3rd party product, or, you did not encrypt the data, but merely marked it private.

And if you just marked it private, google "Take Ownership XP" and this will tell you how to regain access rights.

Marking private, however, is *\*not\** encrypting data; it's a totally different thing.

I know

I'm not actually sure that is correct. You may hope that this is the case, but your hope is not actual knowledge.

that someone knows how to decrypt without a key,

If you did use XP EFS encryption but do not have the certificates and did not designate a recovery agent, you could maybe ask for time on NSA systems.

That's about the start of where recovery becomes a possibility. And this will probably not be characterised as inexpensive or practical.

even you maybe,

Yes, that's why I am telling you the methods – and where they end.

but people dont wanna talk about that because they dont wanna get fired or something but there is a way I know

Yes, there is. And that way is to import the certificates that you backed up when invoking encryption the first time. Or, by connecting to the recovery agent system.

Otherwise, the short answer is no. The data is gone.

Virtually every time a question like yours is posted, the data is

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permanently irretrievable, because the user did not complete the tasks needed to provide a way to decrypt the data.

...4 sure there is...

Sorry, but XP encryption is very strong, and if you used it but did not back up the certificates or designate a recovery agent, consider the data permanently gone, and move on.

MS did a great job at making strong encryption easily available. They didn't do such a great job at making clear the consequences or responsibilities that go with it.

You should do the reading on the EFS system, if it is in fact what you used. It is excellent protection, but it carries risks and imposes responsibilities on the users who choose to invoke it.

But again, you may simply be mistaking ownership and permissions for encryption.

HTH  
-pk

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