

Re: XP (SP2) user passwords

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- *From:* IceMage <IceMage@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Mon, 10 Mar 2008 20:04:00 -0700
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Safe Mode requires an administrator to log on the machine. If you're not an admin, you can't run safe mode. I think this is the behavior as of SP4 W2k (don't quote me guys) and SP2 XP Home.

Having worked in PC repair for a while, I'd always get people who forgot their password. After verifying that they were indeed the owner of the computer, I'd reset the password for them. (I'd hope all PC Repair shops were as honest as I was...)

There are legitimate uses of the software, that's why it exists... but there are always those that abuse such software. The methods I gave here are a bit extreme, but I wanted to leave it up to the owner of the machine how secure he wants his machine to be, and I'm sure if he follows my instructions he will find the appropriate level of security for him. The more secure you make something, the less convenient it is to get to and use. That's as close to a law of physics as you can get without using fancy-dancy formulas. I always suggest checking who has Admin accounts, and ensuring that the true administrator account has a password on it tho, these are two things that will only cause you trouble once.

Scott

"Gene E. Bloch" wrote:

He did say they cracked the administrator password, but I forgot that he also said something about "downloading software which cracks it".

I tend not to D/L such software and not to try to crack people's passwords, so I don't know much in that area.

BTW, is it possible to set up the computer in XP/MCE so that only the administrator can install or run programs, even in safe mode? My YL's work computer has that property, but it's Win 2000. This could help the OP, maybe.

I say let's ask the OP to clarify :-)

Re: XP (SP2) user passwords

On 3/10/2008, IceMage posted this:

I think it's more likely they rebooted into safe mode to gain access to the administrator account, which normally does not appear, and in SP2, I don't believe it will let you log on if there is no password set, but in Safe Mode, no such security policy exists. In that case, they gain complete control over the machine from that point on.

I can't remember how many machines I exploited due to the fact there was no Admin password by default in college (Bad, I know.) SP2 fixed this, in that computers can't access your computer over the network if you don't have an admin password, but not locally.

Scott

"Gene E. Bloch" wrote:

Your reply made me think (that's a bad habit, I know).

I wonder if Douglas just had a very obvious password, like his kids' names (oh, let's say BillyBob, assuming he's got two sons Billy & Bob), so that his kids were just able to guess it pretty quickly, rather than crack it in the usual sense.

If so, Douglas, make up a new password (oh, say R23i0*g6^foo – but not this one, choose another one that's equally weird but not public), and store it somewhere where only you can find it – you do have to write it down, because such passwords are hard to remember and guess.

On 3/10/2008, IceMage posted this:

Windows passwords can't be cracked that easily. Steps to prevent this are:

1. Scold them, this is obviously unacceptable behavior. Let them know that this is not just wrong, it's also ILLEGAL, and can lead to jail time.
2. Banks have to keep dishonest people out too. To further prevent them from getting on your computer, physical security of the machine will have

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to be on your side.

2.a Get a case lock for your computer, so it can't be opened up.

2.b Get into your computer's BIOS and put a password on it. Make it a startup password if you don't want them on the computer at all, or an access password to ensure that they can't change these settings (The case lock is so they can't open it up and clear these settings)

2.c Remove any bootable devices from the boot sequence besides your hard drive (Most password crackers work by having to boot to the media itself)

3. Time to secure windows, your children should be using a different account than you, hopefully.

3.a If you're using Windows XP Home, please reply back, and I'll change the details so you can use this information, however, it appears you're using XP MCE.

3.b Right Click on My Computer, and click on the box that reads Manage...

3.c There is a tab that reads, local users and groups.

3.d Ensure that you have an account for everyone listed there. Now right click on your administrator account, and set the password. You should also have an account for yourself, set that password as well. You need to ensure that your children's accounts are not administrators, so double click their names, and remove all groups that they belong to except "Users"

This should harden the computer enough that they shouldn't be able to just pop on and off without a good deal of trouble. In fact, it'd leave me stumped for quite a while, especially with a case lock on it, just don't forget your passwords, or lose the key.

Scott

"Douglas" wrote:

Re: XP (SP2) user passwords

My teens crack our XP
administrator password with
ease using safemode
startup, or downloading
software which cracks it.
What's the point of
passwords if it's this easy?
Can I prevent this? --

Confused old guy

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Gene E. Bloch (Gino) letters617blochg3251
(replace the numbers by "at" and "dotcom")

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