

Active@ Password Changer for DOS

User Guide

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Contents

1. Overview	4
2. System Requirements	4
3. Operating Procedures	5
Bootable disk (startup disk) preparation	5
Program start	5
Logical Drive Selection	6
SAM Selection	6
User Selection	7
Password Reset and changing account parameters	8
4. Technical Questions	9
5. Glossary of Terms	10

1. Overview

Active@ Password Changer DOS-based solution designed for resetting local user password and account attributes on Windows NT / 2000 / XP / Vista / 2003 / 2008 and Windows 7 / 8 systems in case of Administrator's password is forgotten, lost or user account has been blocked, disabled or locked out. You do not need to re-install and re-configure operating system in this case. With Active@ Password Changer you can log in as a particular user with empty password. Active@ Password Changer also provides the ability to manage with days and times of the week that the user account is permitted to log on to the computer, which is useful for preventing the logging on for account you choose (or remove that kind of prohibition). For example, you can define in what hours your child can logon to the computer.

This software has simple FDISK-like user interface, supports multiple hard disk drives, is able to detect several SAM databases (in case if multiple OS were installed on one volume) and pick up the right one before starting recovery process. List of local users is displayed, you should choose the one to reset password or parameters. It can reset User is Disabled flag, Account is locked out flag, User must change password flag and sets Password never expires to avoid possible user blocking after password has been reset.

Demo version allows you to detect proper SAM database, view the user list and particular user attributes.

Commercial version actually resets passwords and changes attributes. FAT and NTFS file systems are supported.

Windows NT / 2000 / XP / Vista / 2003 / 2008 and Windows 7/8 operating systems are supported for password recovery, new 64-bit MS Windows operational systems are supported as well.

MS-DOS, PC- DOS, DR- DOS, FreeDOS, OpenDOS – any DOS can be a running environment.

2. System Requirements

Active@ Password Changer for DOS requires:

- AT compatible CPU with 386 or greater processor
- 640 Kb of RAM
- 1.44 Mb floppy disk drive, USB flash disk or CD/DVD- ROM drive
- EGA 640x480 or better screen resolution
- Bootable Floppy/USB or CD-ROM containing DOS, or startup disk for Windows 95/98

3. Operating Procedures

Active@ Password Changer operates from the floppy drive with a bootable floppy, USB or CD-ROM drive with a bootable CD in a Microsoft DOS environment.

The bootable floppy, USB disk or CD should have DOS system files and PWD_CHNG.EXE program file on it.

Please note that booting from CD is possible if your system has a CD burner to create CD and can be booted from CD.

Bootable disk (startup disk) preparation

1. Preparing a DOS- Bootable Floppy/USB Disk (Startup Disk).

If you do not have bootable disk, you can prepare such disk from MS-DOS, Windows 95/98 the following ways:

- If you boot in MS-DOS or in Command Prompt mode of Windows 95/98, insert blank floppy/USB and type:

```
C:\> FORMAT A: /S
```

and follow the instructions on a screen

- If you boot in Windows 95/98/ME, go to the "Control Panel" then "Add/Remove Programs", then switch to tab "Startup Disk" and click button "Startup Disk..." and follow the instructions
- If you boot in Windows XP, insert blank floppy/USB, right-click A: drive, choose "Format...", check "Create an MS-DOS startup disk" option and click "Start" button

2. Copying Active@ Password Changer.

Copy Active@ Password Changer (PWD_CHNG.EXE) to the bootable floppy disk.

Program start

- Boot from the floppy, USB or CD in DOS mode, or Command Prompt mode in Windows 95/98
- Run Active@ Password Changer by typing this command, along with [Enter]:

```
A:\> PWD_CHNG.EXE
```

- You will see the following options:

```

Active@ Password Changer v.4.0 (build 0100)

OPTIONS:

1 Choose Windows System disk
2 Search for MS SAM Database(s) on all hard disks and logical drives
3 Exit

Your choice: [_]

Press Esc to exit

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```

- Press [1], [2] or [3] key for the action you want to perform.
- Press [Esc] to exit the program.

Logical Drive Selection

- If you have chosen the first option on Options screen you may select a particular volume to scan for SAM detection.

```

Active@ Password Changer v.4.0 (build 0100)

Logical drives list:

-----
No|HDD|Partition| Type   | Disk Label| Size (Mb)
-----
0 (0)      (0)   FAT16   BO OT   203
1 (0)      (1)   NTFS   WIN2K   4902
2 (1)      (0)   NTFS   Test512 4094

Your choice (0..2 or All)[A]: [_]

Press Esc to exit

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```

- Press [1]...[9] key for particular volume selection, or [A] key to scan all volumes
- Press [Enter] to perform default action (scan all volumes).

SAM Selection

- If the only SAM database is detected, press [ENTER] to get users information:

```

Active@ Password Changer v.4.0 (build 0100)

MS SAM Databases at disk(1)partition(0)Label<Test512>, FS:NTFS

-----
No| MS SAM Database Path
-----
0 \WINDOWS\SYSTEM32\CONFIG\sam

There is one MS SAM database detected.
Press Enter to continue...

Press Esc to exit

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```

- If several SAM databases are detected you will be asked to choose the right one:

```

Active@ Password Changer v.4.0 (build 0100)

MS SAM Database(s) on all Logical drives:

-----
No|HDD|Partition| Type   | Disk Label| MS SAM Database Path
-----
0 (0)      (1)      NTFS      WIN2K  \WINNT\SYSTEM32\CONFIG\sam
1 (0)      (1)      NTFS      WIN2K  \TESTWIN\SYSTEM32\CONFIG\sam
2 (0)      (1)      NTFS      WIN2K  \USERWIN\SYSTEM32\CONFIG\sam
3 (0)      (1)      NTFS      WIN2K  \WIN_C\SYSTEM32\CONFIG\sam
4 (0)      (1)      NTFS      WIN2K  \WNT\SYSTEM32\CONFIG\sam
5 (1)      (0)      NTFS      Test512 \WNT\SYSTEM32\CONFIG\sam
6 (1)      (0)      NTFS      Test512 \WIN_C\SYSTEM32\CONFIG\sam

There are 7 MS SAM databases detected. Choose the one to process.
Your choice (0..6)[0]: [1]

Press Esc to exit

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```

- Press [1] ... [9] key for particular SAM database selection based on the appropriate database location and volume information.

User Selection

- After SAM database is scanned for all users the list of local users will be detected:

```

Active@ Password Changer v.4.0 (build 0100)

USER LIST
MS SAM path: \WINNT\SYSTEM32\CONFIG\sam      Total users: 0007
at disk(0)partition(1)Label<WIN2K>, FS:NTFS

-----
No| RID |User Name      | Description
-----
0 000001f4 Administrator  Built-in account for administering the comp
1 000003e8 puv           Senior Admin
2 000003ee EParsons      UrbanSoft Inc., Vice President
3 000003f2 KWhite       Network systems engineer (IT Department)
4 000003f3 MBrown       User support (level 1)
5 000001f5 Guest        Built-in account for guest access to the co
6 000003ec RBartolucci  CIO
7 000003ed LDomrowsky    Field engineer
8 000003ef MMeilleur    Liberal MPP for Ottawa-Vanier and Minister
9 000003f0 RPatten    RTA Business division security officer

Your choice: [1]

Press Esc to exit or PgUp/PgDown to scroll User List

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```

- Press [1] ... [9] key for particular user information display
- Press [PgUp], [PgDown] to scroll the users list.

Note:

- Primary (built-in) Administrator is outlined by **Cyan** color,
- Other users having Administrator's privileges are outlined by **Green** color,
- Users having Administrator's privileges but disabled are outlined by **Dark Green** color,
- Disabled Users are outlined by **Grey** color.

Password Reset and changing account parameters

- After user account is chosen you see its information form SAM database:

```

Active@ Password Changer v.4.0 (build 0100)

User's Account parameters:

MS SAM Database: (0) (1) <WIN2K>\WINNT\SYSTEM32\CONFIG\sam
User's name is "KWhite" (RID=0x000003F2)

Full Name : "Karoline White"
Description: "Network systems engineer (IT Department)"
Existing:  Change to:
[X]      [ ]      User must change password at next logon
[ ]      [X]      Password never expires
[X]      [ ]      Account is disabled
[ ]      [ ]      Account is locked out
          [X]      Clear this User's Password

PgDn to view or/and change permitted logon hours

Press Y to save changes and exit or Esc to exit without saving

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```

- Password changer shows Existing account's parameters in one column and recommended settings in another;
- If you defined this user as a user you need to change settings and reset password, just press [Y] to do that.
- You can also change default recommended settings and make your own choice. To choose desired option use arrows keys and [Space] key to mark or unmark it.
- To view and change permitted logon days and hours press [PgDn] key:
- To select and choose days and hours use arrow keys and [Space] bar. Please note that hours are pointed in GMT (Greenwich Mean Time) and you should take into account your time zone. NOTE: Default Windows system accounts may not have "permitted logon hours" options;
- Press [Y] if you like to save your changes or press [Esc] to save account intact and return to previous window (List of accounts)

4. Technical Questions

I've reset local Administrator's password, but after re-boot on Welcome Screen I do not see user Administrator, just list of regular users. I have Windows XP. How can I log in as Administrator?

Operating System Windows XP (Home and Professional Editions) when booting suggests only names of regular users on Welcome Screen by default. Administrator's account is hidden. Press key combination Ctrl+Alt+Del two times to display Login Dialog Window and you will be able to type both user name and password. Type Administrator and use empty password.

I'm unable to find user Administrator in the list of the users after selection of proper SAM database in Active@ Password Changer. Where it is?

Most likely local account Administrator has been renamed due to security reasons. Active@ Password Changer always displays built-in Administrator's account on top (even it was renamed). Write down this account name to be able to type it in later on, after its password has been reset.

Will the User Profile be saved, after user's password has been reset?

User Profile depends on User Name and Security ID (SID) so it cannot be spoiled by changing the user's password.

Will the file restrictions be saved, after user's password has been reset?

File and folder security settings are based on User Security ID (SID) that is produced during user account creation and does not depend on user password. You can change your password as often as you wish without files/folders security settings changes.

Do you have a Windows 98 version of Password Changer? Can Password Changer reset password in Windows 9x operating systems?

You do not need any software to remove local user passwords in Windows 95(98) operating system(s). Just find and delete the USERNAME.PWL file (where USERNAME is the name of a user account) and the user will have an empty password.

Can Password Changer help me in meeting the complexity requirements (such as digits, small and capital letters, and length of password) set by the PC's Local Security policy?

Local Security Account Policy affects the new passwords setting process in Windows environment, but not existing passwords, even absolutely empty ones. So you can reset the password for this account with Active@ Password Changer then logon with this user account name with the empty password.

I have erased the password using Active@ Password Changer on a system where the administrator is no longer with the company. The system is a NON ENGLISH (localized) version of Windows 2000. The Password Changer gave a message saying that the password was changed, but system is still asking me to type the password ("Wrong username or password").

It is possible that the Administrator account in your localized version is renamed (for example Administrateur in French version), or has national (non English) symbols. Try to start Active@ Password Changer and find out the real username for Administrator account. It has to be first in the user's list with RID = 000001f4. Write down this username and use it for login.

5. Glossary of Terms

boot record

- See boot sector.

boot sector

- The boot sector continues the process of loading the operating system into computer memory. It can be either the MBR (see MBR, below) or the partition boot sector (see partition boot sector, below).

cluster

- A group of disk sectors that contain file data. It is the smallest allocation unit for storing a file. For example, if the file size is 100 bytes and the cluster size is 4096 bytes, the file system reserves one cluster, or 4096 bytes for file data.

FAT

- File Allocation Table. An area that contains the records of every other file data and directory in a FAT-formatted hard disk drive. The operating system needs this information to access the files and define the data cluster's chain. There are FAT32, FAT16 and FAT versions.

HDD

- Hard disk drive.

logical drive

- A partition is a logical drive because it does not affect the physical hard disk other than the defined space that it occupies, yet it behaves like a separate disk drive.

MBR

- The Master Boot Record (MBR) is a small program that is executed when the computer is first turned on. Typically, the MBR can be found on the first sector of a disk. The MBR first reads the disk's partition table to determine which partition is used to load the operating system. The MBR then transfers control to this partition's "boot sector" to continue the process. Loading the operating system is called "booting" the computer.

MFT

- Master File Table. A file that contains the records of every other file and directory in an NTFS-formatted hard disk drive. The operating system needs this information to access the files.

NTFS

- NT File System. NTFS was created to provide a more reliable operating system, compared to the FAT file system.

partition

- A section of memory or hard disk isolated for a specific purpose. Each partition can behave like a separate disk drive.

partition boot sector

- On NTFS or FAT file systems, the partition boot sector is a small program that is executed when the operating system tries to access a particular partition. On personal computers, the Master Boot Record uses the partition boot sector on the system partition to determine file system type, cluster size, etc. and to load the operating system kernel files. Partition boot sector is the first sector of the partition.

partition status

- SuperScan gives each partition a rating depending on how likely it is to recover data on the partition. A status rating of 1 is very bad. A status rating of 8 is excellent.

physical device

- A piece of hardware that is attached to your computer by screws or wires. A hard disk drive is a physical device. It is also referred to as a physical drive.

root area (and root folder)

- An object that can contain a group of files in a FAT file system. In other words, a directory or folder. The root folder is the top-level folder that has no parent and can have children. A logical drive can have only one root folder. Its name is usually '.' (dot).

sector

- The smallest unit that can be accessed on a disk. Tracks are concentric circles around the disk and the sectors are segments within each circle.

volume

- A fixed amount of storage on a hard disk. A physical device may contain a number of volumes. It is also possible for a single volume to span a number of physical devices.