Active@ Password Changer

User Guide

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1 Product Overview

Active@ Password Changer is a solution designed for resetting local user password and account attributes on Windows NT / 2000 / XP / Vista / 2003 / 2008 / 2012 /Windows 7 / Windows 8 and Windows 10 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 an 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 wizard-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. Moreover you can create a Registry (SAM) backup before resetting user's passwords/attributes, and you can restore user's attributes later on back to the original state.

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

Professional version actually resets passwords and changes attributes. FAT16 / FAT32 / NTFS / NTFS5 file systems are supported. Windows NT / 2000 / XP / Vista / 2003 / 2008 / 2012 / Windows 7/ Windows 8 and Windows 10 operating systems are supported for password recovery, both 32 and 64-bit MS Windows operational systems are supported.

2 Operating Procedures

2.1 Program Start and Search Options

Start Active@ Password Changer:

- from the Start menu
- from the command line:
  - Windows: go to the directory where software is located and type:

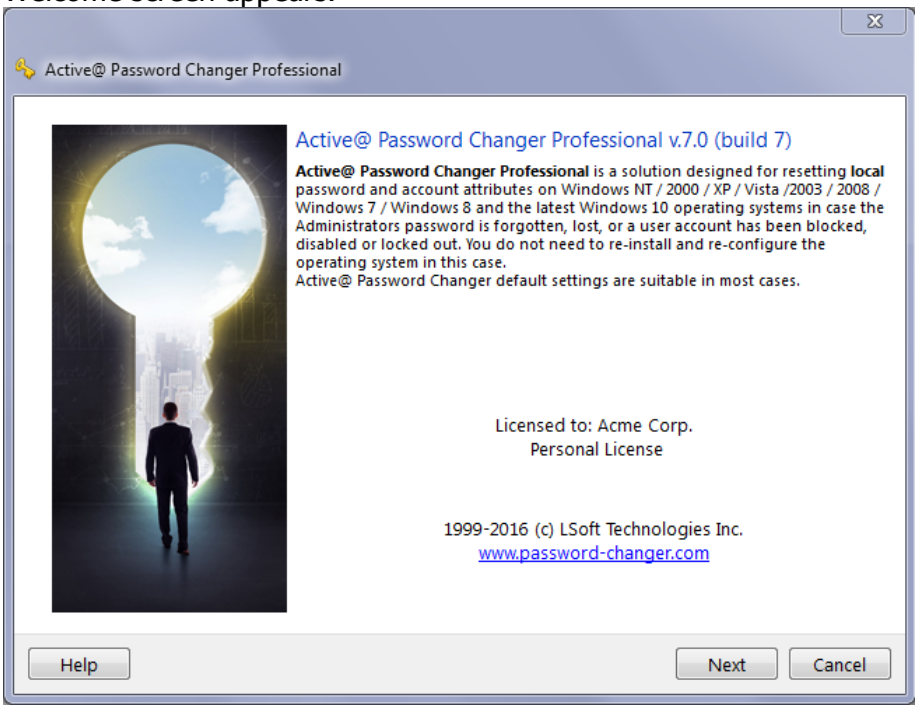
    > PasswordChanger.exe

  - Linux: go to the directory where software is located and type:

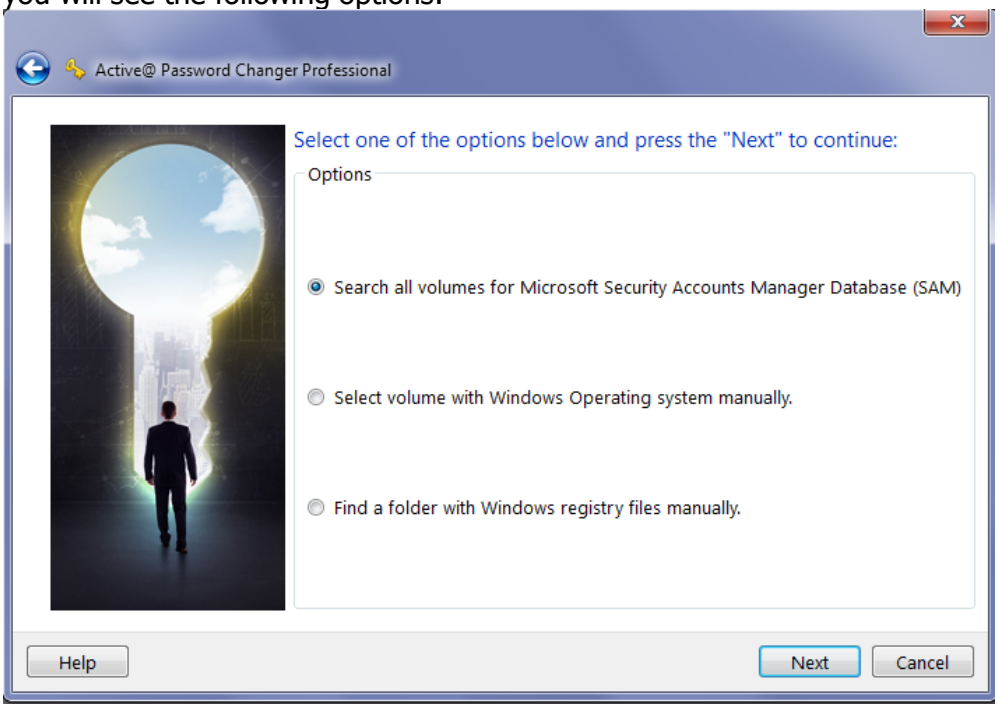
    > sudo ./PasswordChanger

    In Linux software must be launched under Super User account

Welcome screen appears:



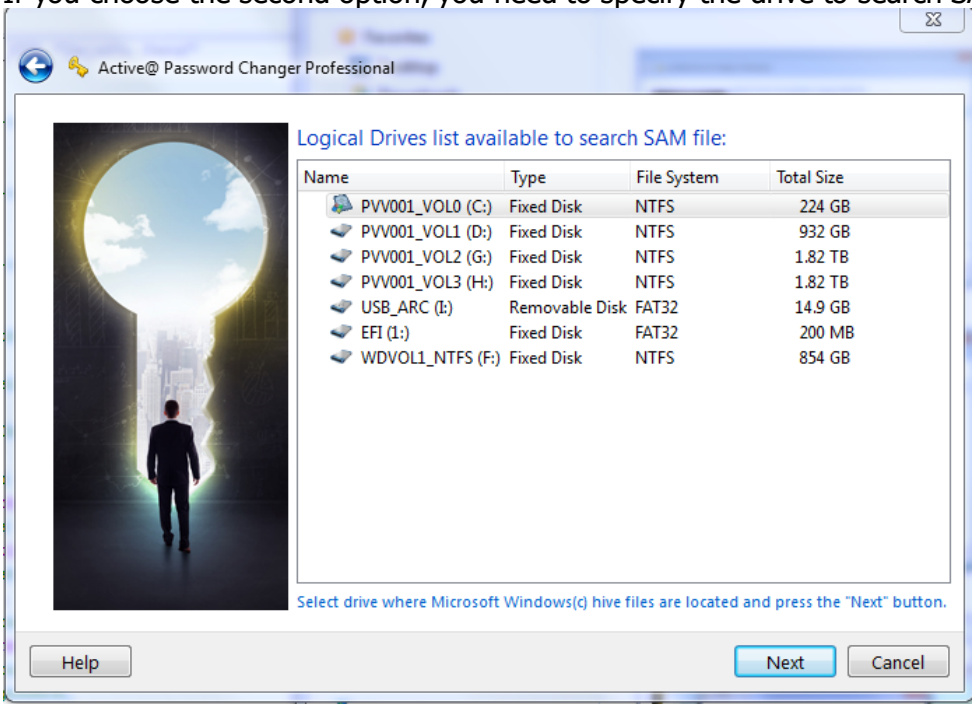
Program starts and you can read short explanations, on the next page of the Password Changer wizard you will see the following options:



You can either choose a particular logical drive to search SAM database on, or choose to search on all hard disks and logical drives. If it is impossible to reach a Windows system drive directly you can copy SAM hive file from "C:/Windows/System32/Config" folder to a flash drive (or other external drive), then attach this drive to you computer and reset the password in this SAM file with the third option.

Click **Next** to go to the next step.

If you choose the second option, you need to specify the drive to search SAM database on:

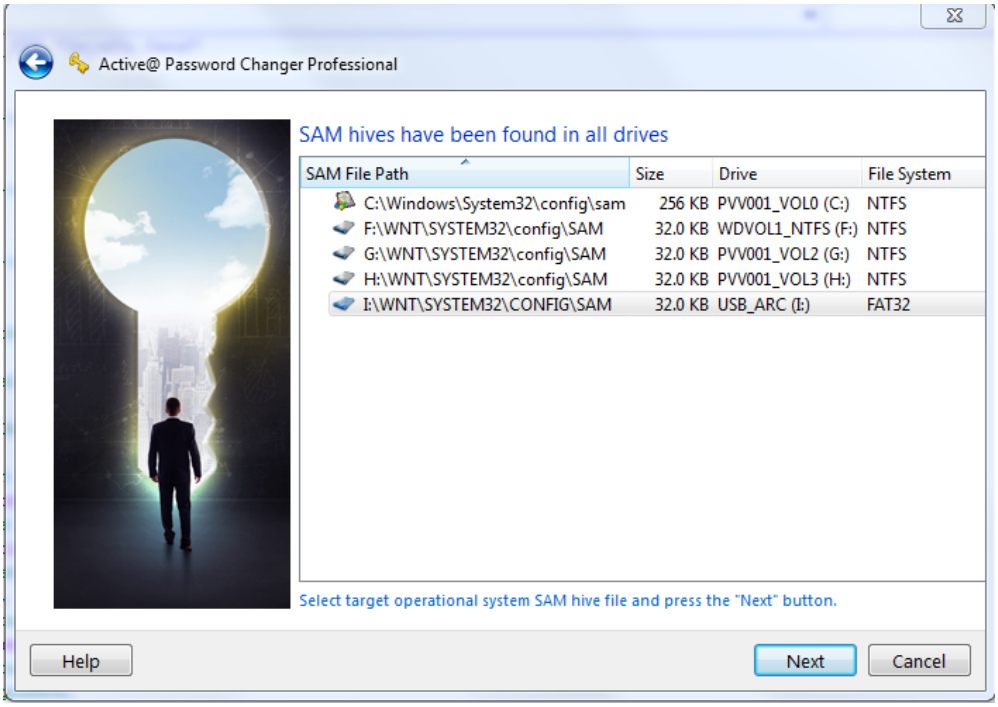


Choose a drive and click **Next** to go to the next step.

2.2 SAM Selection

SAM (Security Access Manager) - a database where information about local users, their rights and passwords is stored.

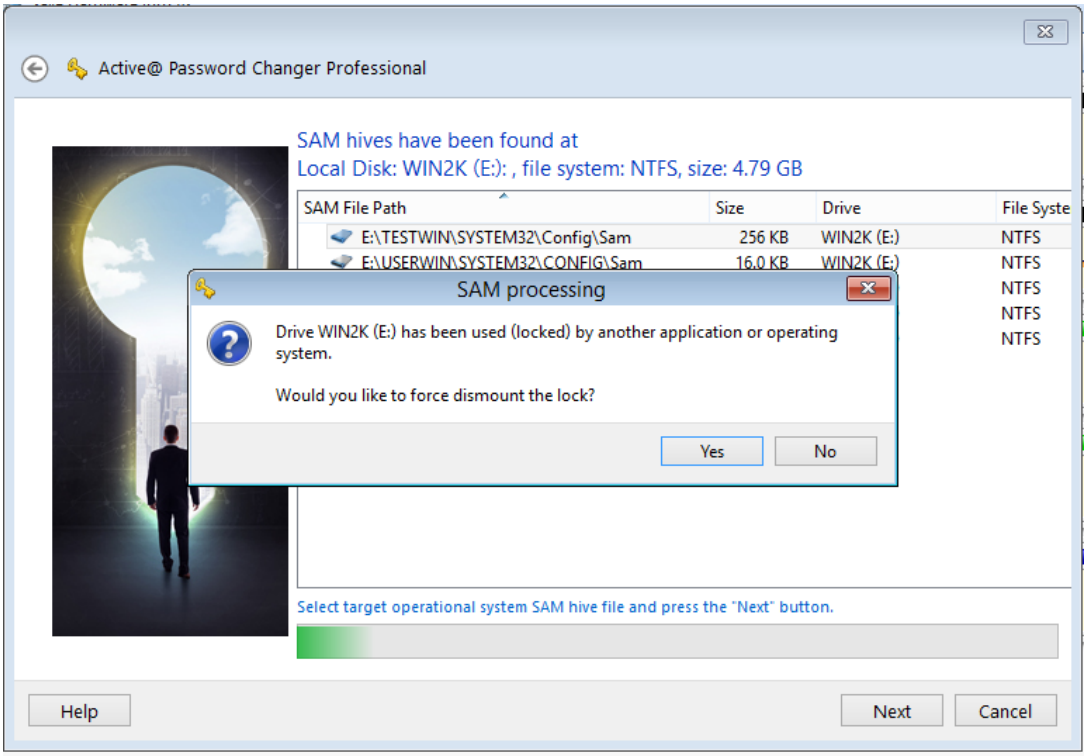
If several SAM databases found - you need to choose a proper SAM database to reset proper account password and attributes. Normally SAM is located on a drive where operating system is installed in the folder :\WINDOWS\SYSTEM32\CONFIG.



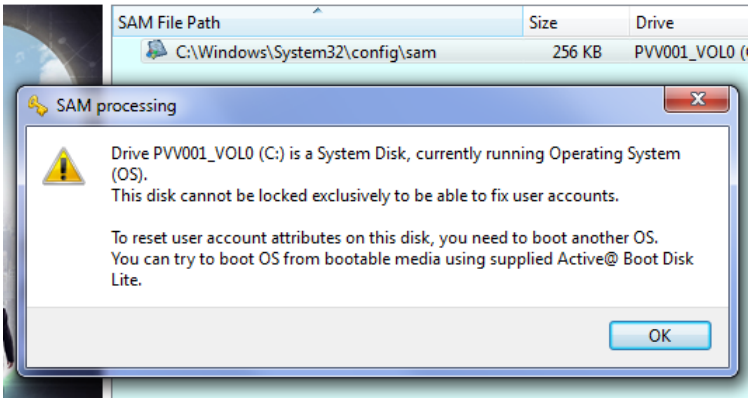
Note: Please do NOT try to change account attributes for the operating system currently running (which SAM is located on the same drive from where the Windows is started). It is not possible, see the note below. To change account attributes and reset the password you either need to boot from bootable CD running Windows PE, or attach another HDD having Windows installed and boot from there.

Important

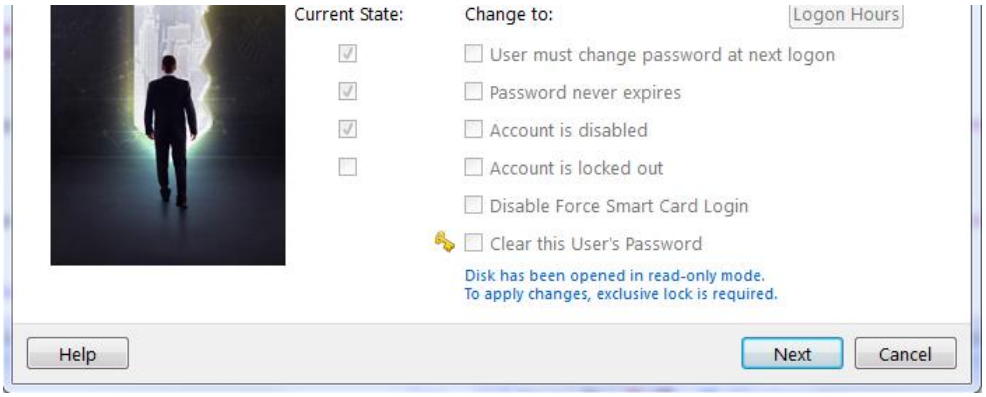
As long as you need to change system account attributes, drive where SAM is found must be locked exclusively before changing. Exclusive lock means that no one (including Windows) except Active@ Password Changer has full access to the account. This also means that if you try to change local account attributes for the system currently running, you will NOT be granted exclusive access to the drive and will not be able to reset account attributes. The following messages might appear:



or

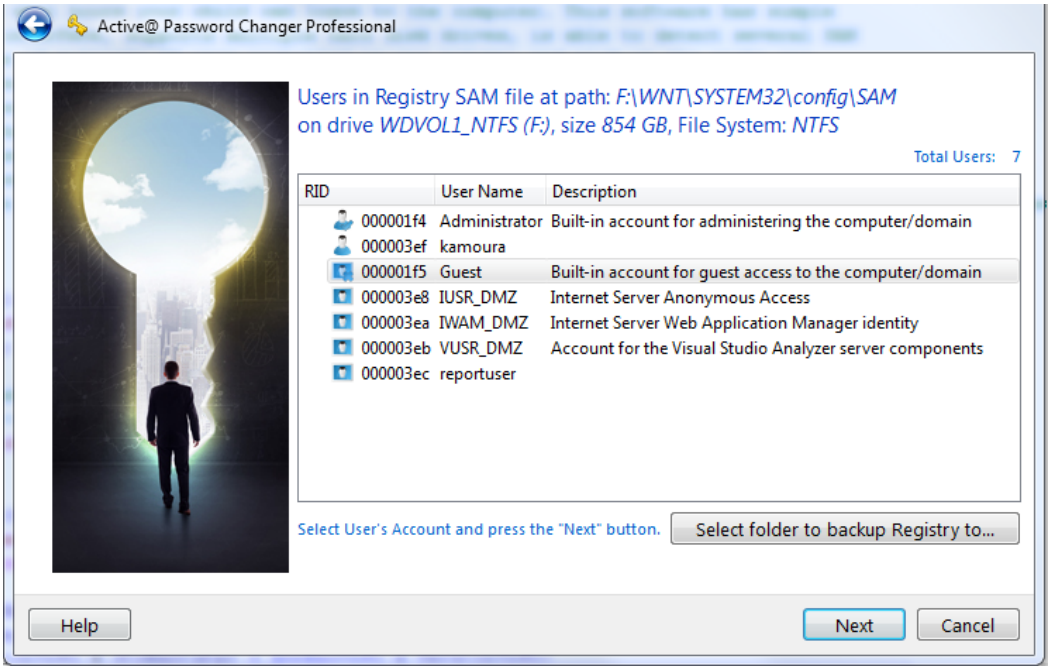


If selected drive cannot be unlocked by some reasons, current system drive is used by operating system, for example, User Account parameters will be opened in Read Only mode.



2.3 Local User Account Selection

After you've chosen SAM database you will see the list of local user accounts with descriptions:



Choose a Local User Account to reset password and attributes for and click **Next** to go to the next step.

Note: Primary **Administrator**'s account (even if renamed) is always placed on the first place and has icon.

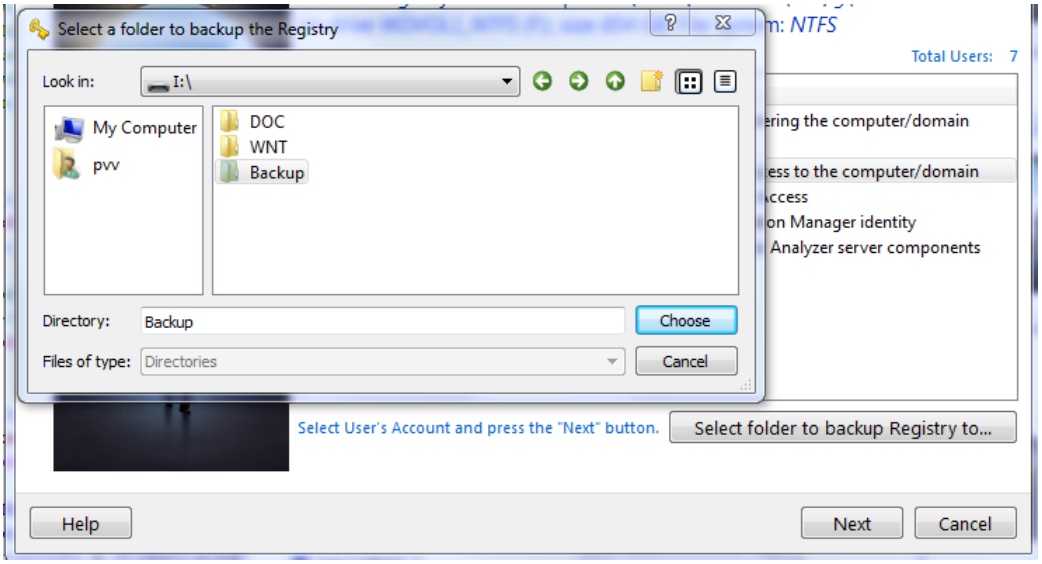
Other **Administrator** accounts are marked with icon.

Non-Administrator accounts (Users, Guests, etc...) are marked with icon having blue background.

Disabled/Locked accounts are marked with a cross.

2.3.1 Select Registry SAM file Backup folder

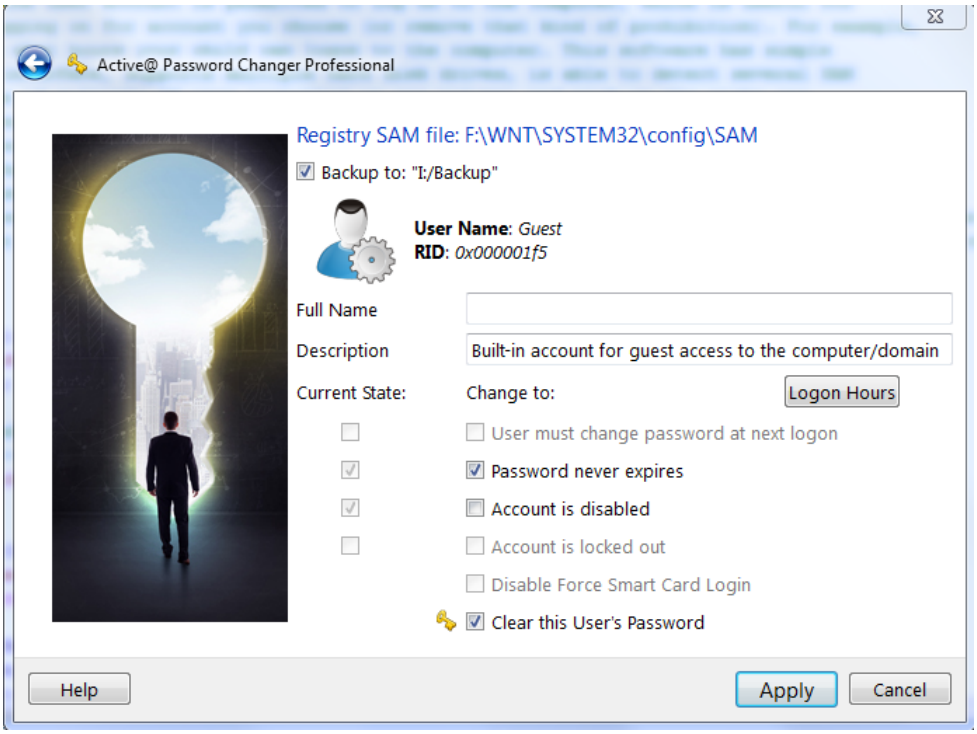
If you like to save backup copy of Registry SAM file, you have to press **Select folder to backup Registry to...** button and select a desire save place such as external HDD or Flash drive:



Path to selected backup will be pointed at the bottom of this page and on the next step where you can change selected account parameters.

2.4 Change Account's Password and Attributes

After you've chosen the Local User Account you will see account description and attributes:



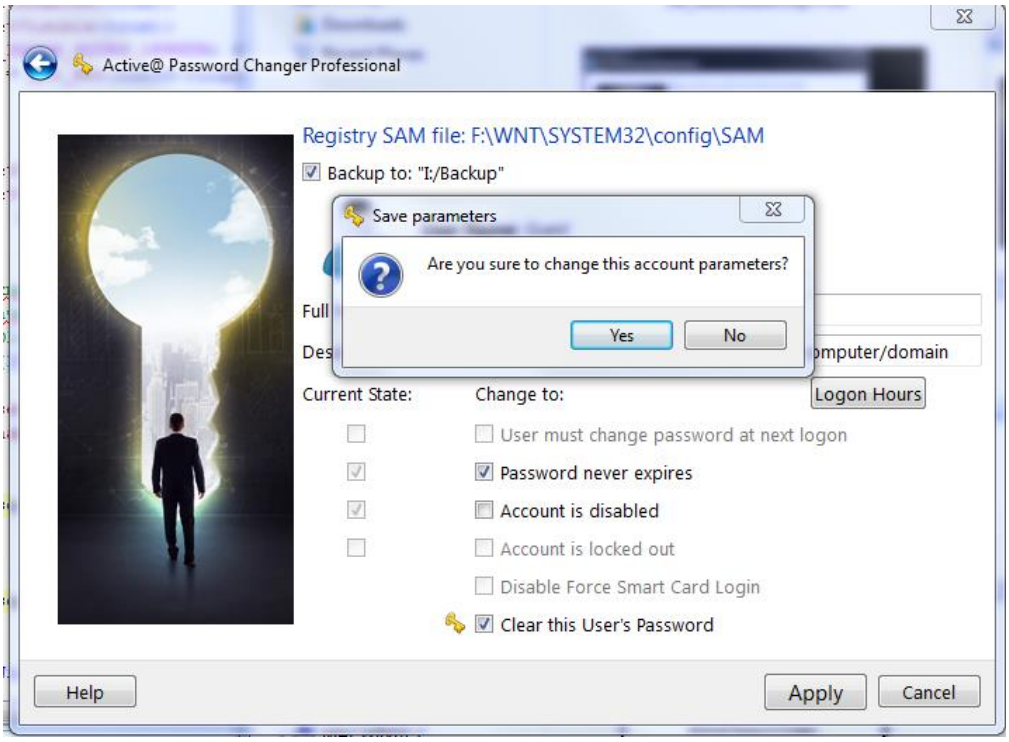
In the left column you can see the account's current existing attributes.

In the right column you can set new values for these attributes. Default values are acceptable for most cases and guarantee to be able to logon to the system without password.

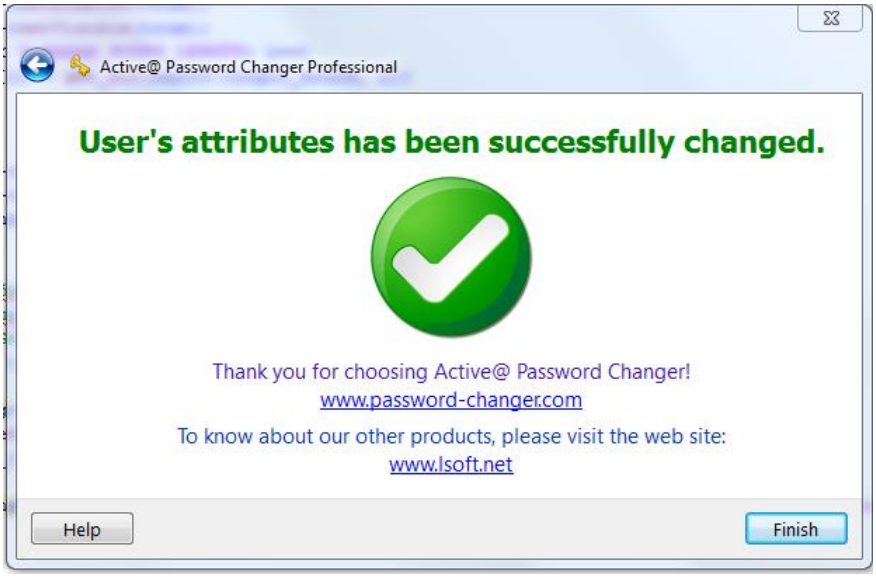
To reset Account's password - make sure that ***Clear this User's Password*** option is selected.

To agree to save backup Registry SAM copy - just check ***Backup to:*** checkbox or uncheck it otherwise.

Click **Apply** to store changes back to the SAM database. You'll be asked for action confirmation:

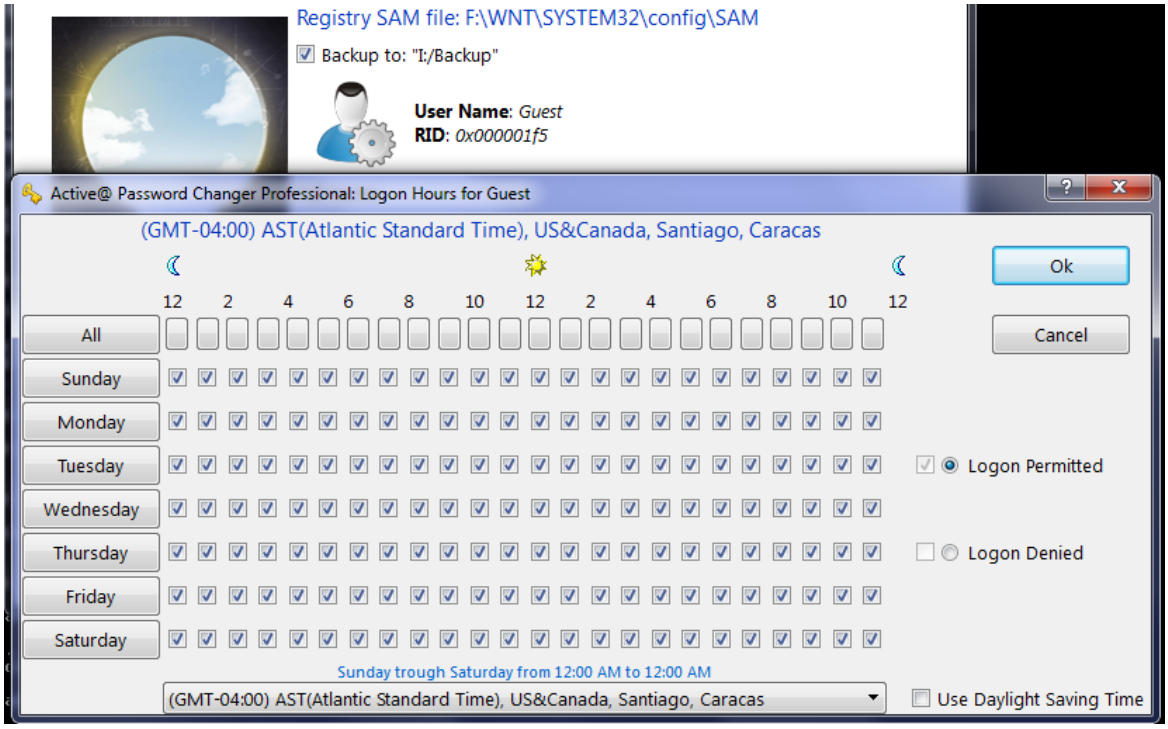


Click **Yes** to change the SAM file and go to final wizard page:



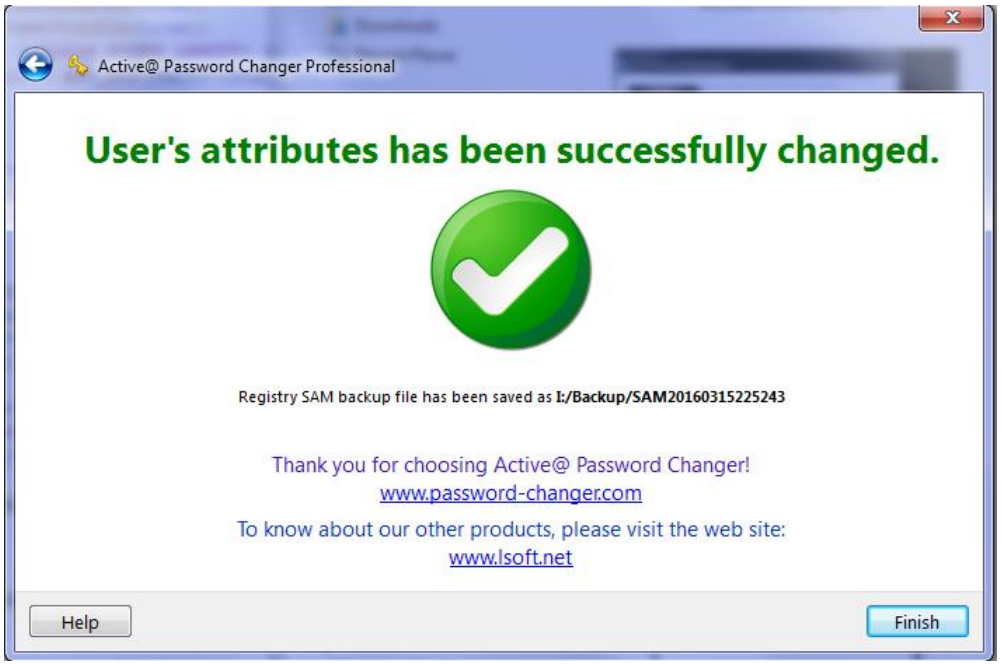
Click **Finish** to finish the Wizard and exit the program.

Note: If Logon Hours limitations exist for the particular account you'll see the **Logon Hours** button and would be able to change the Logon Hours limitations.



Specify logon hours, click **OK** to close the dialog and **Save** account's attributes.

Note: If you set path for Registry SAM backup file and set mark in checkbox **Backup to:** the final page will show full path and name for the backup file.



Backup file name has a timestamp at the end: **YYYYMMDDhhmmss**
where YYYY – year, MM – month, DD – day, hh – hour, mm – minutes, ss – seconds when this backup SAM file was saved.

3 Knowledge Base

3.1 Sales Questions

How to buy your products without a credit card? What are the payments terms?

The preferred method to order for our software is through online ordering using a credit card. Using this way you can download the software instantly without any delays saving you much precious time. Software download link is sent via email.

If you wish to pay without a credit card you can send us a Bank Money Order, Certified Cheque, PO (on orders of 500$ US or more), Bank Money Transfer along with the completed order form which you can download by clicking the link below: www.password-changer.com/downloads/OrderForm.pdf

Usually it takes up to 10 business days to complete your order offline using this method.

For additional information click here:

www.password-changer.com/orderfax.htm

How is your product delivered?

All our password recovery products are delivered electronically online only. So there are no shipping charges. After order completion the invoice and software download instructions are sent to the email address provided during the registration process within a few minutes of registering. After payment, the software can be immediately downloaded via our Web-store.

Is there a way to re-download the purchased copy of Active@ Password Changer and install it again?

You can download your licensed software again anytime within support period using our Clients Center free of charge: https://secure.lsoft.net/clients/

What do I need to do to get the latest software updates for Active@ Password Changer?

You can get latest software updates for Active@ Password Changer from our Clients Center by clicking the following link: https://secure.lsoft.net/clients/

3.2 Technical Questions

I do not have Administrator account on my logon screen in Windows 10 (or 8 or 7 or Vista). Does this account exist in my system?

Built-in Administrator account is created in Windows 10, 8, 7 or Vista, but it disabled by default and you can't see it and use it. If you have to troubleshoot something in your system and cannot logon to your operating system with any other account you can enable it with our Active@ Password Changer as it described in the manual above. Remember – built-in Administrator account is always placed in the first row in the User Account list.

You can disable this Administrator account later after you do not need it anymore. You can use Password Changer again to do that or just open a command prompt in your system and type the following command:

net user administrator /active:no

If you decided to leave the Administrator account enabled do not forget to assign a password to it.

I've saved backup Registry SAM file as SAM20160315230333 in my flash drive. Why do I need it?

If your system became inoperable after you use Active@ Password Changer you can roll back all changes to the square one. To do this you have to:

1. Boot your computer with our Active@ Boot Disk (with Password Changer).
2. Find the folder "C:\WINDOWS\System32\config".
3. Move file "SAM" from this folder to any temporary folder - "C:\Temp" for example.
4. Copy your backup file from the flash drive (or other storage where you have it) to folder "C:\WINDOWS\System32\config"

5. Rename backup Registry file to SAM (just remove numbers at the end of the file name).

6. Reboot your computer.

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.

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.

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 have Windows 2012 server and it is a Domain Controller, and I have erased the Administrator's password, but my server does not allow me login to the system with a blank password. Does Active@ Password Changer reset the DC's local Administrator's password?

Active@ Password Changer can reset the local Administrator Password. It is very important to log in to your server immediately after you reset a password, so boot your server with our boot disk, reset the Administrator's password (***Note:*** *leave all checkboxes as they set by default, just press "Apply" button to reset the password*), instantly after that reboot your server in **Directory Services Repair Mode** (press **F8** while boot up and choose this option) and when the login screen appears, log on as Local Administrator. You now have full access to the computer resources, but you cannot make any changes to Active Directory.