

Password overload creating problems

by Andrew Horan

RSA Security has announced the results of their second password management survey. One quarter of the respondents reported password-related breaches at one time or another. It also found that most end users are managing more passwords than they can easily remember. According to the survey, 18 per cent of end users manage more than 15 passwords but only five per cent can remember all of them easily.

In addition to all of this, multiple passwords also create a burden on IT Security efforts. 26 per cent of the respondents reported a security breach that occurred due to a compromised password.

Surprisingly, respondents from the US were the least aware out of all the participants with only 14 per cent of the professionals polled knowing of security breaches that occurred due to compromised passwords.

"While companies pour huge amounts of time and money into protecting sensitive information, business passwords remain one of the weakest links in the security chain, in large part due to the sheer number of passwords that end users are required to manage," said John Worrall, senior vice president of marketing at RSA Security said in a release.

"Little has changed since 2005 -- end users are still managing an overwhelming number of passwords, and this is resulting in behaviors which open the door to security breaches and potential compliance issues."

The survey polled respondents with jobs related to corporate password management on a number of issues related to compliance and overall IT security. 57 per cent said their company's desire to avoid end-user frustration prevents the organization from requiring frequent password changes and/or strong password policies.

Managing password-related issues also significantly increases an IT help desk's work load by 26 to 50 per cent. This is more prevalent for larger organizations than it is for small companies.

While 56 per cent of the respondents said that a master password would be extremely helpful, 86 per cent said that an added layer of protection is also extremely helpful. This is a significant increase from 2005, when 55 percent of respondents said an added layer of protection would be very important.

For more on the results of the survey, head to <http://www.rsasecurity.com/passwords>.



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