How to crack the problem of internet password security

Jack Schofield

It's a good bet that if you have 20 online accounts, you don't have 20 different passwords. In fact, according to a survey by Kaspersky Lab, most people (53% of us) only have between one and four passwords for 20 accounts. We are insecure. But recent developments mean we could be more secure in the near future.

While it's almost impossible to change people's behaviour, it's not too hard to fix the system so that only one to four passwords are actually needed. For example, you could get people to sign on to single service, and then ask other online services to consult that before letting you in. That way, you can safely use one password for 20 different accounts, because if they don't know what the password is, they can't use it.

This isn't a new idea, and it's how Hotmail has worked without the yüns. You don't actually log on to Hotmail: you sign in to Microsoft's authentication service, known as Passport. That tells Hotmail to let you in, and you can do the same job for many other sites. (Actually, Passport has been used Microsoft server under Microsoft's secret.)

But all is not lost. One of the editors of the OpenID community on authentic- tion systems like this are widely implemented and secure. CardSpace allows you to hold a number of ID cards. You can create your own, or they can be issued by websites, banks, government agencies, or anyone.

CardSpace is a platform-independent system capable of supporting any ID system. Vista users already have an implementation called Windows CardSpace, and XP users can download it. Others are becoming available.

You could, perhaps, use the address you use a web address that you control to sign on to any site that uses OpenID. You could, perhaps, use the address you use to sign on to any site that uses OpenID.

The lab machine that could spark an industrial revolution

Meet the open source, low-cost machine that can 'print' 3D objects for you at home

Michael Pollitt

Red Lipson would like you to make stuff at home rather than go shopping. As assist- ant professor of mechanical and aero- space engineering at Cornell University, he reckons that home manufacturing will spearhead a revolution — one that is pres-agrarian.

As a result, people will be able to use OpenID securely if they use if via InfoCard, which is a platforms-independent system capable of supporting any ID system. Vista users already have an implementation called Windows CardSpace, and XP users can download it. Others are becoming available.

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