My favourite software: MobiPassword

Have you ever forgotten a user name or password for a web site or e-mail account that you needed to access? If you are anything like me then the answer will be yes! Unfortunately, the common solution of having the same password for everything is neither good practice nor safe. Moreover, restrictions on password length and characters vary between sites so it is not even possible to reliably use the same passwords for a variety of sites.

Never fear, help is at hand in the form of some award-winning software called MobiPassword. MobiPassword is a small program that can be downloaded in a few minutes over an ordinary dial-up connection. It comes in three flavours, Palm OS, Pocket PC or a Windows standalone version. It runs on a desktop or laptop but, as the choice of flavours suggests, can also be loaded onto a handheld (Palm or Pocket PC) for additional functionality.

MobiPassword is essentially an encrypted database. It allows you to store logins, passwords or indeed any other sensitive information under 128-bit encryption. All you need to do to access the information is remember a single password of your choosing.

That sounds pretty straightforward and it is. But why is MobiPassword different from a number of other similar programs for both desktop and handheld? Well, MobiPassword has a very useful feature that I have yet to find anywhere else. It will allow you to link logins and passwords to the relevant web site then, as long as you have MobiPassword running in the background, it will log you on automatically, even clicking the OK button for you. You will no longer have to fumble around trying to remember which login or password to use where and, after a while, you will wonder how you ever managed without it.

If you use a handheld your password list is kept up to date every time you perform a Hotsync and so you will always have your passwords with you. If you need a login or password when you are away from your usual computer, you can look them up very quickly on your handheld. The handheld data are also stored under 128-bit encryption and the same password provides access to both the handheld and the desktop data so you still only ever need to remember one password.

As with any software, MobiPassword has a number of additional bells and whistles. You can create a folder structure that will allow you to group categories of data together, e.g. details of e-mail accounts in one folder, work-related sites in another and shopping sites in a third. If you are worried about security you can protect individual folders with a second password – effectively doubling the level of encryption. In fact, the software supports up to five levels of 128-bit encryption should you ever wish to use it. There is also a useful password generator, which allows you to select password length and the type of characters that can be used. It will then generate a password for you. You now have no excuse for using feeble passwords that are easy to guess.

The only thing that MobiPassword cannot do is log you on to sites that ask you for a third piece of information. You know the ones – what is your mother’s maiden name or what is your favourite place? There aren’t too many of them (mainly the online banks) and, as some ask you a different question each time you log on, it is probably not easy to overcome this. This is not a great problem, however, as you can set MobiPassword up to fill in the login and password but not click the OK button; you are then left to fill in the third box and log on in the usual way.

For maximum security, MobiPassword has a ‘Real-time’ mode. When operating in this mode data are stored only on the handheld, which obviously needs to be connected to a desktop for the automatic login to work. However, for most people this is probably overkill and you will probably prefer to use it in the standard mode.

How do you get hold of it? The software is downloadable (about 2.7 MB) from www.MobiPassword.com. A time-limited trial version is available and to register it you have to part with $29.95 for the Windows/Handheld version and just $14.99 for the Windows standalone version. I would urge you to try it out; it really is as simple as it sounds and it is one of the few bits of software that I have continued to use after the trial version expires.

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