Passwords Are Unexpectedly Assigned to User Accounts After You Upgrade to Windows XP

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SYMPTOMS

When you upgrade or install Microsoft Windows XP, passwords may be assigned to user accounts that previously had no password or you did not assign passwords to any user accounts during the installation process. As a result, you cannot log on to the computer.

CAUSE

This behavior occurs if Windows XP Setup does not complete properly. Setup assigns temporary passwords to user accounts during the upgrade process, and is supposed to remove the passwords when Setup is complete. The temporary passwords are written to the Setupact.log file that is located in the folder in which Windows is installed.

RESOLUTION

To resolve this behavior, retrieve the password from the Setupact.log file, and then use the password to log on to the computer. You must search the Setupact.log file for the following line, where *Username* is the name of the user account and *xxxxxxxxxxxxx* is the password for that account:

>   Random password for *Username* is *xxxxxxxxxxxxx*

To do this, use one of the following methods, as appropriate to your situation.

Windows XP Is Installed on a FAT32 Partition

To retrieve the password from the Setupact.log file if Windows XP is installed on a FAT32 partition, follow these steps:

1. Insert a Microsoft Windows Millennium Edition (Me) startup disk or a Microsoft Windows 98 Startup disk into the computer's floppy disk drive, and then restart the computer.

   NOTE: If you do not have a Windows Me or Windows 98 Startup disk, click the article numbers below to view the articles in the Microsoft Knowledge Base:

   > 186300 (http://support.microsoft.com/kb/186300/EN-US/) How to Create a Windows 98 Startup Disk from MS-DOS

   > 267287 (http://support.microsoft.com/kb/267287/EN-US/) How to Create a Startup Disk in Windows Me

2. Type the following line at the command prompt, and then press ENTER, where *drive* is the drive on which Windows is installed.

   > **edit *drive*:\windows\setupact.log**

3. Locate the following line, where *Username* is the name of the user account and *xxxxxxxxxxxxx* is the password for that account:

   > Random password for *Username* is *xxxxxxxxxxxxx*

4. Make a note of the password exactly as it appears in the Setupact.log file, and then quit the text editor.

5. Restart the computer, and then log on to the computer with the user account by using the password that you retrieved.

   After you are logged on to the computer, reset the password for the user account by using User Accounts in Control Panel.

Windows XP Is Installed on a NTFS Partition

To retrieve the password from the Setupact.log file if Windows XP is installed on an NTFS partition, follow these steps:

1. Configure the computer to start from the CD-ROM drive or DVD-ROM drive. For more information about how to do this, please see the computer's documentation or contact the computer manufacturer.
2. Insert the Windows XP compact disc (CD) into the computer's CD-ROM drive or DVD-ROM drive, and then restart the computer.
3. When the **Press any key to boot from CD** message is displayed on your screen, press a key to start the computer from the Windows XP CD.
4. When the **Welcome to Setup** screen is displayed, press the **R** key to start the Recovery Console.
5. Select the installation that you need to access from the Recovery Console.
6. You are prompted for the Administrator password. If the Administrator password is set to use a blank password, just press ENTER.
7. At the command prompt, type the following line and then press ENTER:

   type setupact.log

8. Locate the following line, where *Username* is the name of the user account and *xxxxxxxxxxxx* is the password for that account:

   Random password for *Username* is *xxxxxxxxxxxx*

9. Make a note of the password exactly as it appears in the Setupact.log file.
10. Type **exit** at the command prompt, and then press ENTER to quit the Recovery Console and restart the computer.
11. Log on to the computer with the user account by using the password that you retrieved.

    After you are logged on to the computer, reset the password for the user account by using User Accounts in Control Panel.

MORE INFORMATION

For additional information about the Windows XP Recovery Console, click the article number below to view the article in the Microsoft Knowledge Base:

314058 (http://support.microsoft.com/kb/314058/EN-US/) Description of the Windows XP Recovery Console

307654 (http://support.microsoft.com/kb/307654/EN-US/) HOW TO: Install and Use the Recovery Console in Windows XP

APPLIES TO
- Microsoft Windows XP Home Edition
- Microsoft Windows XP Professional

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