

PRODUCT REVIEW



DESLOCK+ 3.2.7 FROM DATA ENCRYPTION SYSTEMS LTD

It's quite remarkable that hardly a week goes by without us hearing about yet another government department losing data or another laptop containing vulnerable personal information, being stolen or left in a taxi. Encryption is one of the many solutions that can ensure this data is kept secure and DESlock+ shows just how easy it is to implement.

DESlock+ uses symmetric encryption which gives it a big performance boost over the more common solutions that use public key encryption. Its modus operandi is quite different though, as it encrypts data using either a password or a key; for the key, you use a software token, or a USB token, and either can store up to 64 encryption keys. The USB pack includes a second token which you use as a backup device. The keys are password protected and data encrypted and each key can only be decrypted with the same key.

Installation on our Windows Vista test clients was easy enough and you also get options for Outlook and Notes plug-ins, allowing email to be encrypted and a tool for creating compressed, encrypted archives. You then assign a password to your key file and generate a default key. For the latter you can choose from 3DES, Blowfish or AES algorithms and the documentation provides explanations for each one. If you insert the USB key prior to installation, the routine will use it, but if it isn't present then a software Key-File will be created instead.

DESlock+ adds a new icon to the System Tray which provides easy access to all functions. When you activate the application, you choose a software or hardware key from the login screen and enter the associated password. From here on any encrypted data is decrypted on the fly and ready for use. If DESlock+ isn't active, then the encrypted data will be inaccessible.

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Using DESlock+ couldn't be easier as it adds an extra option to the Windows shell and the right-click menu in Windows Explorer. Pick a file or folder and decide whether to add it to an encrypted archive, place it in your documents folder, encrypt and email it or just encrypt it.

We encrypted a folder with spreadsheets, Word documents, graphics and text files, and moved them to another system without DESlock+ loaded. They were completely unusable with the document format no longer recognised by Word and the spreadsheet merely displayed as lines of garbage. The system that encrypted the file was also unable to access them without the USB key inserted and associated password provided.

Other useful features are the ability to allow an encrypted file or folder to be mounted as a new drive and this can be created on local, networked, or removable storage. You also get a new waste bin icon and any data dropped in here will be securely deleted.

To allow other users access to your encrypted data, you share your keys with them and control this process using Terminator and Group codes. The former is a value you enter during the key transfer phase that determines the number of copies that are allowed to be taken. To restrict access to specific users, you create a project key which has a Group code assigned to it, so only members of your group can access it - simple.

During testing we found DESlock+ extremely easy to use and for performance you wouldn't know it was in action as the decryption process is virtually seamless. When you have data security solutions this simple to implement and use, companies really have no excuse for failing to comply with regulations and ensuring sensitive data is secure no matter where it ends up. NC

Product: DESlock+ 3.2.7

Supplier: Data Encryption Systems Ltd

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Web site: www.deslock.com

Price: Hardware entry level £94.95, thereafter £49.95 per user. Software licence £47.95, all excluding VAT.

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DESlock+ 
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