

Security means passwords, and passwords mean a growing productivity burden for users and employers. Single sign-on could be the answer, says **Julian Ashbourn**

Passwords and their effective management have become a real problem in the world of corporate computing. A possible solution is to adopt a single sign-on policy, whereby the user only has to remember one password in order to gain access to all their password-protected applications.

Most users will be able to re-

member a single password without writing it down in multiple places - a distinct step forwards from a security perspective. And users will not have to waste time looking up passwords or trying to remember some daft password refresh policy - an improvement from a productivity perspective. Lastly, users will not have to call

the help desk when their multiple passwords have been forgotten or locked out - a bonus from the support cost perspective.

All in all, there are some very strong arguments in favor of the single sign-on approach, especially for situations where access control to sensitive operational systems is involved.

Imprivata OneSign

Version	2.5
Supplier	Imprivata
Price	\$15,995 for 200 users.
Contact	www.imprivata.com



SC MAGAZINE RECOMMENDED One of the perceived issues in adopting single sign-on is the relative complexity of setting everything up, especially in larger organizations with a complex technical infrastructure to maintain.

Imprivata OneSign is a hardware-based single sign-on solution. It uses intelligent automation via its Application Profile Generator to create XML-based profiles for applications and store these in the hardware appliance, ready to be downloaded by client-side software when users authenticate themselves at a workstation.

The appliance is an attractive and robust 1U rack-mounted box with a small LCD screen and a few buttons to scroll through choices and change settings.

The idea is to deploy two units in a hot standby configuration, connected to each other (for syn-

chronization) and to the network. If the primary device fails, the standby unit automatically takes over and the administrator is notified.

This is not a luxury, but a key part of a single sign-on implementation to prevent absolute failure of the single sign-on functionality, so full marks to Imprivata for taking this approach.

The OneSign box is a little noisy, but not intrusively so compared to similar hardware. It booted up smoothly, with LED indicators showing HDD and LAN activity. Having set up the IP and gateway addresses via the built-in two-line display, communication was established, with detailed configuration undertaken via a web browser.

The web-based administrator interface is logical, clear and very attractively presented. It also has printed manuals, and these are con-

cise and clear.

Imprivata One Sign integrates with existing directories and can support roaming users. In an emergency, the administrator may lock an individual user out of all applications with a single click.

Alternative primary authentication methods are also supported, including Secure ID tokens and fingerprint biometrics.

It is a serious and professionally presented product for those who need to provide enterprise level single sign-on functionality.

SC MAGAZINE RATING

Features	★★★★★
Ease of use	★★★★☆
Performance	★★★★★
Documentation	★★★★★
Support	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★☆
OVERALL RATING	★★★★★

FOR Hardware-based, automated approach.

AGAINST Very little.

VERDICT A robust, enterprise-level, single sign-on solution.



A robust, enterprise-level, single sign-on solution.

Julian Ashbourn

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