

Entering and Transmitting Passwords Securely

Gamze Canova, Melanie Volkamer, Simon Weiler | TU Darmstadt, Germany

Motivation

- Users access many services through the web: forums, shopping, banking, mail, etc.
- Mostly password-based user authentication
- Users tend to reuse passwords [1]

→ Protecting passwords is crucial

Problem Statement

- Ideally web page with password field https protected and password transmitted using https
 - But: On many web pages no https at all or only password transmission secured
 - No browser warning in these cases
- Passwords are often not adequately protected and users are not aware when this is the case

Our Goal

- Support users in detecting suboptimal condition for password entering
- Warn users with a mixture of passive and active warning method to avoid interruption and annoyance in case of login intention is expressed
- Provide understandable texts with recommendations on how to proceed

Our Approach

Highlighting password fields and displaying a non-blocking warning dialog only in case password field is focused

Highlight Password Field

- In [2], we showed that combination of red background and yellow warning triangle is well perceived as security warning in the considered scenario




- Password field might not be of type "password"
- Also: positive feedback for user




- Ideally individualized icon to prevent attacks

HTTPS Available (short version)

It is insecure to enter a password here!

 Your password could fall into the hands of an unauthorized person and could be used to access your personal data [\[less\]](#)

 You should always use a secure mode (https) to open this website by clicking on „HTTPS for this site“

 [More Information](#)


[HTTPS for this site](#)


[Close warning](#)


- Texts based on a (pre-)user study

HTTPS Not Available (long version)

It is insecure to enter a password here!

 Your password could fall into the hands of an unauthorized person and [\[more\]](#)

 This website does not provide a secure mode (https). In case you decide to log into this website anyway, you should at least use different passwords for different websites [\[less\]](#)

 [More Information](#)
This website does not provide the option of entering and transmitting your password securely (via https). In case you use the same or a similar password on different websites, and if your password is intercepted on an unsecured website (e.g. this one), it can be used for other services as well [\[less\]](#)

[Add an exception](#)

[Close warning](#)

Future Work

- Conduct a field study
- Enhance Add-On: e.g.
 - Consider further field types, e.g. credit card information
 - Consider website type (e.g. online banking) to be more precise about the possible risks

Literature and Related Work

- [1] Sun, Hung-Minet al. "oPass: A user authentication protocol resistant to password stealing and password reuse attacks.", *Information Forensics and Security*, 2012
- [2] Kolb, Nina, et al. "Capturing Attention for Warnings about Insecure Password Fields—Systematic Development of a Passive Security Intervention.", *Human Aspects of Information Security, Privacy, and Trust*, 2014
- [3] Maurer, Max-Emanuel, et al. "Data type based security alert dialogs." *Human Factors in Computing Systems*, 2011.

Further Information

