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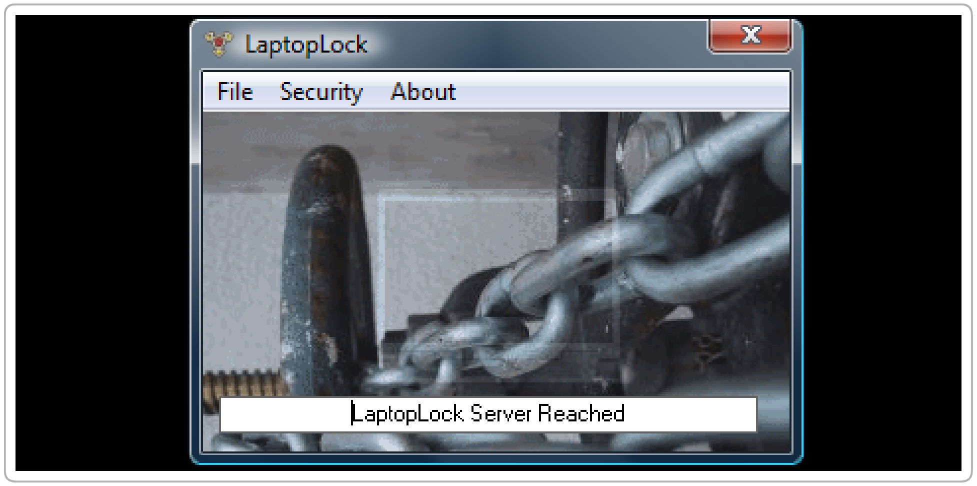
lh special

HACK ATTACK

Secure your laptop with the LaptopLock



LaptopLock Server Reached

Don't let the creep who stole your computer paw through your private files, passwords and personal information. Free data protection and computer recovery service LaptopLock can keep sensitive files safe and prevent identity theft or worse after your computer's been lifted.

697 diggs

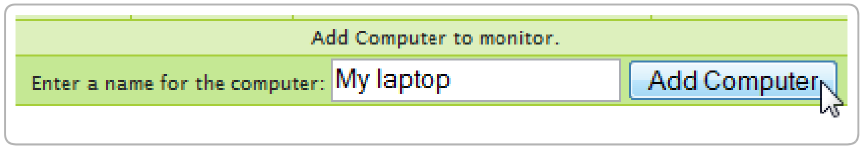
digg it

As soon as you report your computer stolen on their web site, the free

Windows-only LaptopLock agent can wipe sensitive files into oblivion, encrypt files, launch programs, track IP addresses, or even send messages to the thief. Read on to see how.

Get started with LaptopLock

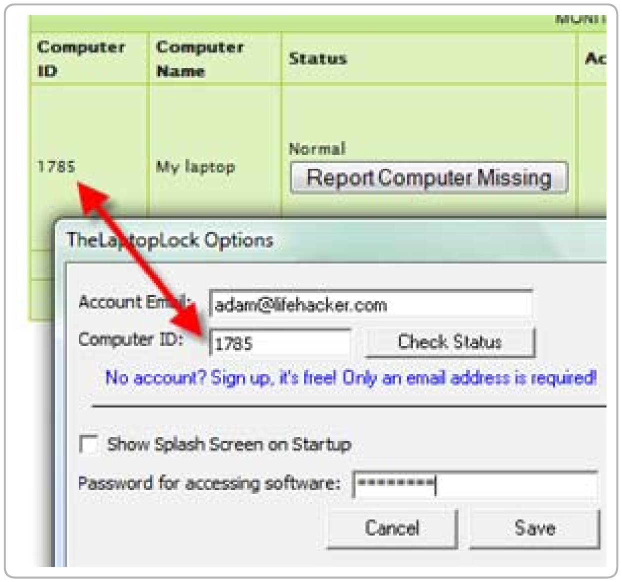
LaptopLock is Windows-only software. (Mactop users can get a saucy security feature by using their iSight as an FTP backed up security camera). To get started, head to the LaptopLock homepage and sign up for an account. It's completely free, requiring an email address and a password.



Add Computer to monitor.

Enter a name for the computer: My laptop

Once you've signed up, you'll want to add the computers you're going to use LaptopLock with to your account, so just pick a name and go with it. After you add a computer, download the LaptopLock agent to that computer (the download link is available on the site's Control Panel page), run the installer, and launch LaptopLock. Now it's time to match your computer with your LaptopLock account.



Computer ID	Computer Name	Status	Ac
1785	My laptop	Normal Report Computer Missing	

TheLaptopLock Options

Account Email: adam@lifehacker.com

Computer ID: 1785

No account? Sign up, it's free! Only an email address is required!

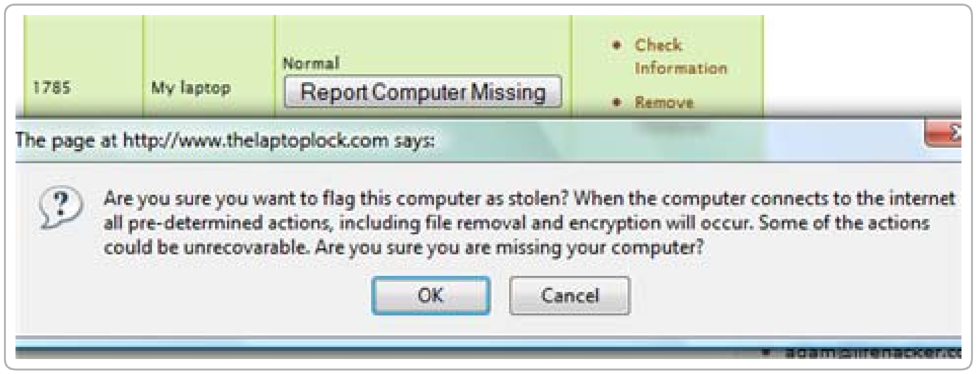
□ Show Splash Screen on Startup

Password for accessing software: *********

To do this, you need to enter the email address you registered with and the Computer ID generated by the LaptopLock web site. You should also set a password for accessing the LaptopLock software so that it's not easy for just anyone to mess with your settings.

That's pretty much all there is to getting LaptopLock set up for use on your computer. Now whenever you log on, the LaptopLock agent will check with the LaptopLock servers to see if you've reported your computer stolen. If it hasn't, the LaptopLock agent does nothing. If you *have* reported your laptop stolen, LaptopLock can do all sorts of useful things, from deleting or encrypting sensitive data to displaying a message to your laptop's thief.

How to report your computer missing

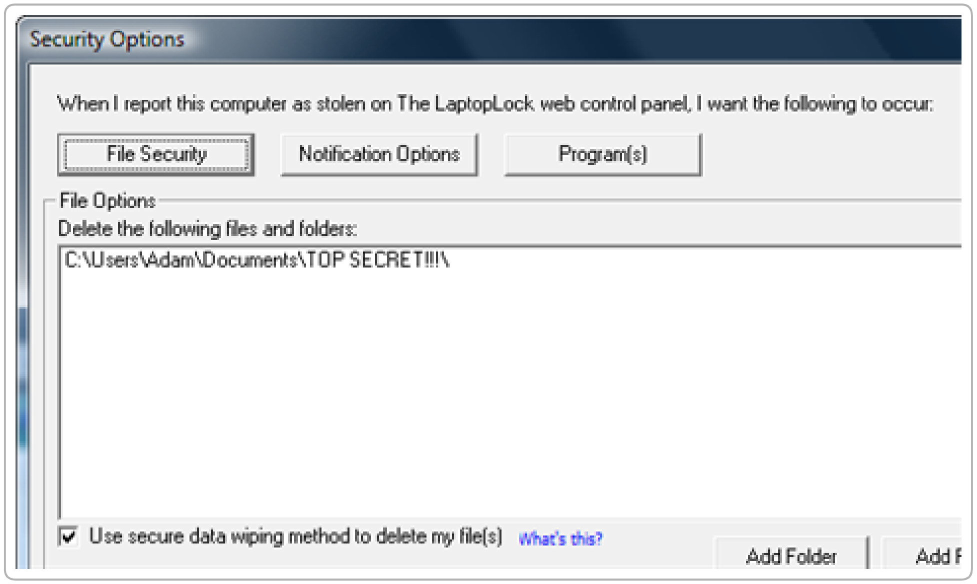


The page at http://www.thelaptoplock.com says:

Are you sure you want to flag this computer as stolen? When the computer connects to the internet all pre-determined actions, including file removal and encryption will occur. Some of the actions could be unrecovarable. Are you sure you are missing your computer?

As soon as you computer goes missing, head to the LaptopLock web site, log in, and go to the Control Panel. Find the computer that's been stolen and click on the Report Computer Missing button to launch your security plan into motion. Next time your lost or stolen computer restarts and connects to the internet, whatever actions you've set up below will be executed. Read on to see exactly what you can set up LaptopLock to do.

File security



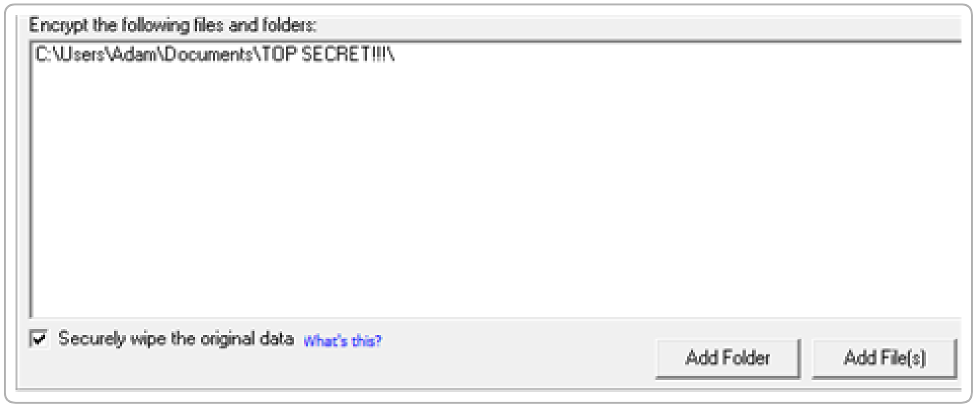
When I report this computer as stolen on The LaptopLock web control panel, I want the following to occur:

Delete the following files and folders:

C:\Users\Adam\Documents\TOP SECRET!!!\

☑ Use secure data wiping method to delete my file(s)

The File Security option panel allows you to define files or directories you'd like deleted or encrypted as soon as you report your laptop stolen. When files are deleted, the LaptopLock agent securely wipes the files so that they can't be recovered. The documentation isn't altogether clear about what methods it uses, but it claims to prevent recovery of any information from your wiped files.

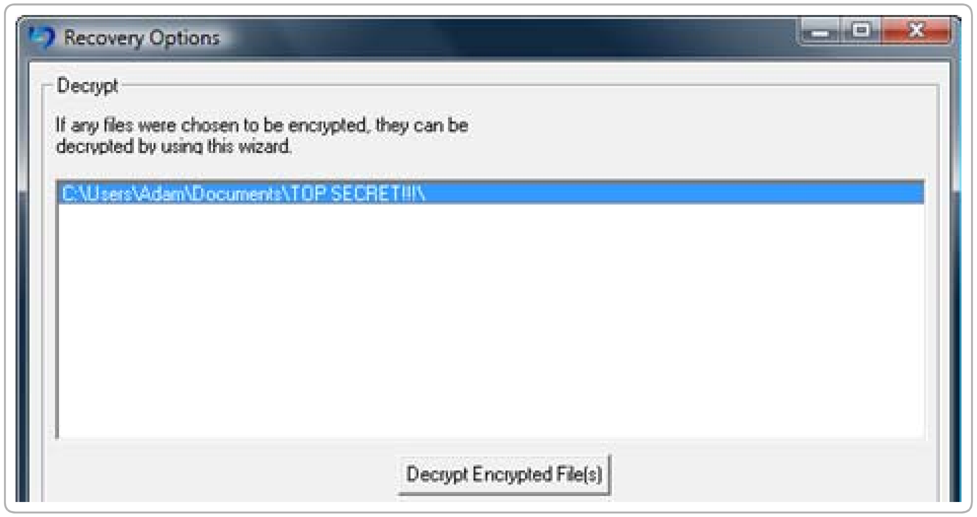


Encrypt the following files and folders:

C:\Users\Adam\Documents\TOP SECRET!!!\

☑ Securely wipe the original data

Similar to the data wipe, the encryption method used isn't described in detail. Likewise, if you choose to encrypt files and folders, you can have the original data wiped so there's no trace of the unencrypted data.

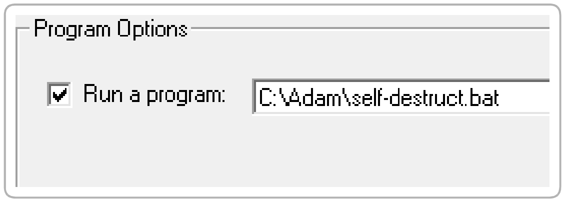


If any files were chosen to be encrypted, they can be decrypted by using this wizard.

C:\Users\Adam\Documents\TOP SECRET!!!\

If you're lucky enough to get your laptop back after you've reported it stolen, you can decrypt the data through the LaptopLock agent by going to Security -> Recovery options. Whatever files were encrypted by LaptopLock will automatically show up for decrypting.

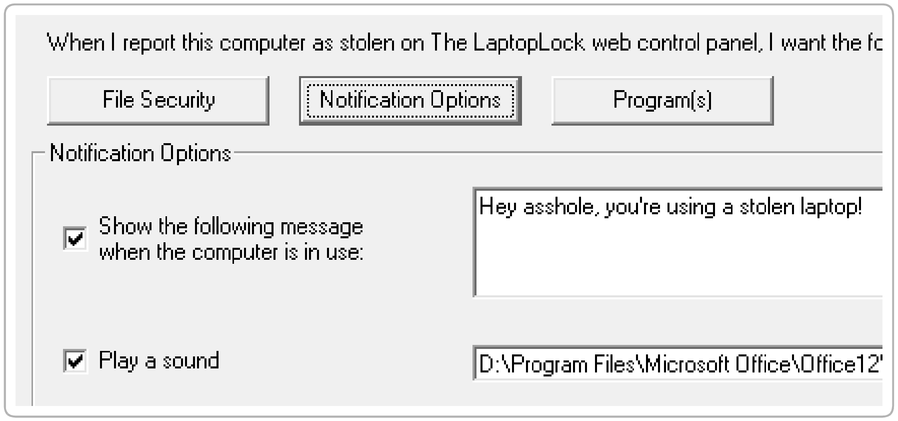
Launch programs


Program Options

☑ Run a program: C:\Adam\self-destruct.bat

You can also set the LaptopLock agent to run a program when it's been reported missing. I'm not sure why, but it only allows you to add one program to the list, so if you were to use this, you might want to put together a batch file of self-destruct tools or something along those lines (though the file deletion and encryption should take care of a lot of that).

Notification options



When I report this computer as stolen on The LaptopLock web control panel, I want the fc

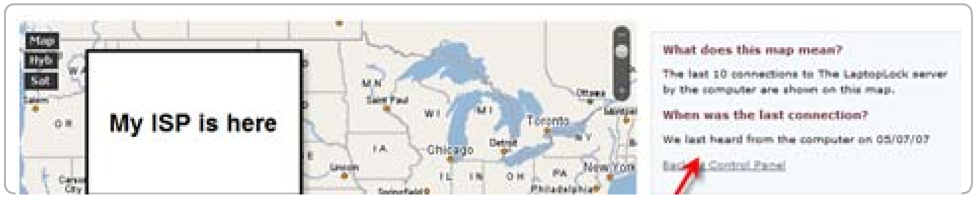
Notification Options

☑ Show the following message when the computer is in use: Hey asshole, you're using a stolen laptop!

☑ Play a sound D:\Program Files\Microsoft Office\Office12'

This isn't the most useful tool if your laptop actually has been stolen (at best you can get out an impotent message of aggression), but if you suspect that your laptop has gone missing because you've misplaced it, and someone might be holding onto it until they figure out how to contact you, you could add a message with your phone number or email address asking them to contact you. If your laptop goes missing, report it stolen, and the next time someone runs the computer they'll get your lost computer SOS.

Find your IP address



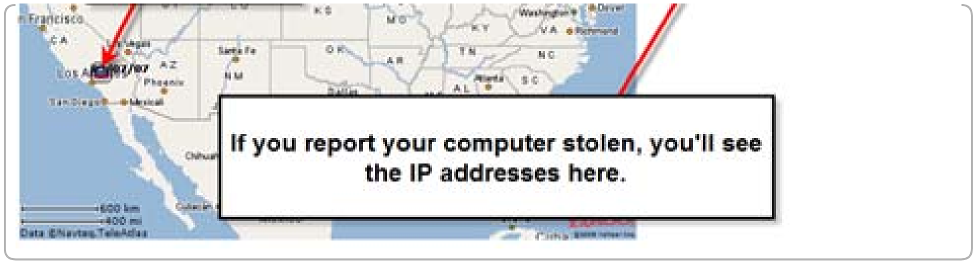
What does this map mean?

The last 10 connections to The LaptopLock server by the computer are shown on this map.

When was the last connection?

We last heard from the computer on 05/07/07

Back to Control Panel



If you report your computer stolen, you'll see the IP addresses here.

The LaptopLock site tracks you IP address each time your computer starts up, meaning that you can get the IP address of your stolen laptop and report it to the ISP and police department and cross your fingers that you'll see some results. Of course, that's sort of a pipe dream, so I wouldn't count on that. However, you could use the IP to SSH into your computer and wreak whatever havoc you deem necessary.

NOTE: Keep in mind that in order for LaptopLock to work, the thief has to connect to the internet after you've reported your computer as stolen. There are a number of ways a person could get around LaptopLock's security measures (e.g., not connecting to the internet, formatting your hard drive without ever starting Windows, disabling LaptopLock before connecting to the internet), so the application is far from foolproof. It's really just an extra precaution you can take to secure your data. If you're really serious about protecting all of your data, you should look into a full-featured encryption solution.

Let's hear how you add an extra layer of theft security to your laptop in the comments. — ADAM PASH

***Adam Pash** is a senior editor for Lifehacker who believes in being prepared. His special feature Hack Attack appears every Tuesday on Lifehacker. Subscribe to the Hack Attack RSS feed to get new installments in your newsreader.*