



In these days of high-priced programs, many are striving to receive what others have spent much to obtain. Some people are simply curious about another's business and feel the urge to snoop into files or computers that aren't theirs.

Like in the days of yore, when the knight on horseback came to save the day, disk, folder, file protection and encryption programs have emerged onto this twisted scene.

One of the better & just slightly expensive programs is FileGuard, a security application that has received an excellent review in MacWorld¹ & a 5- mouse rating in MacUser².

As soon as I opened the package, I was impressed with the manual's thoroughness. Well-written and easy to read, this 66 page manual stands out as an example of good writing.

After reading it through, I was just 4 double-clicks and a restart away from protection.

Starting out

Assigning Privileges to the different users was a breeze, (all the functions are explained in the book). Some privileges are:

- Inserting Disks
- Protect Volumes and Applications
- Protect Folders & Files
- Erase Disks
- Copy Applications
- Moving Icons in Protected Folders
- Decrypt Files Permanently
- Make Invisible Files
- View User Log (Yourself or all users)
- Create Files on Hard Disks
- Automatic Dialog when Saving Files

FileGuard's operation is almost invisible. Its only sign (besides the startup icon) is a menu item named "Protection."

Under this Menu the functions of FileGuard are made available. This Menu is accessible in every application that can access DAs, (not Font/DA Mover). You can hide this menu if you like, but it stays hidden only until the next restart.



File Encryption

Whenever you create a new file or do a Save As..., FileGuard pops up a dialog box asking if you want to encrypt the file.

Files that have been encrypted can be opened just like any other kind of file. Just click on them, they launch FileGuard- which asks for the password, & then it opens the application that created the original file.

¹June '91 Pg. 122-129

²April '91 Pg. 80-81

Protecting Folders & Etc.

Protecting Folders, Disks, & Applications is just as easy. You can do it by selecting the corresponding command under the Protection menu.

In protecting applications, FileGuard offers not only copy- protection, but also launch limited & time limited protection. Have a file that you wanted to share with someone, but didn't want to *give* that application away? You could create a demo (read crippled) program that would survive only a specified period of time or certain # of launches. The legality of this is questionable, but the option is there.

War Story

Enough about specs, what you really want is a war story, right?

Well, last semester, my sister wanted to borrow my Mac for use on some college term papers. For being so nice, she said that I could name any program I wanted, & one of the fellows would get it for me.

Yeah, right! I had a vision of my programs being "shared."

Did I worry? Not as much as I would have if I had not installed FileGuard. I simply made her a user, assigned her a password, but I did not give her the ability to copy applications.

Since I had already password & copy - protected all the important applications-- like Teach Text,(smile)-- I really didn't have anything to worry about!

Did she mind? Well, she was a little put out over the fact that she had to log on every time she wanted to use the Mac, but she soon got over it.

I did get a phone call from her, saying that for some reason she couldn't copy off anything, (for her own personal use, of course).

Failure?

So far, FileGuard has yet to fail me. Whenever I start from another floppy, I must enter the password for the internal hard disk just to get it to mount!

What if I crash?

A real big +, is that If you **ever** crash, ALL files that were encrypted and are now open, are reencrypted before the Restart! This is almost a foolproof way to preserve data integrity!

Extras

FileGuard can also be used in coordination with the MacAccess Card reader. This reader will read any ATM or credit card in place of/or with a password.

It also has an exceptions file for your backup software. Just specify what backup program you are using & when the time rolls around, FileGuard will let it do its thing. This is something that some security packages won't allow.

Summary

All in all, FileGuard is one of the best all-round security programs available. Forget the conflict causing INITS, Screen locker F-keys, & all the misc. jazz out there. This one has it all, from a screen saver / locker to full blown users & groups configuration.

Although the review version (2.5/2h) wasn't System 7 compatible, by the time this goes to press, a System 7 Savvy version will be shipping.

For upgrade information, you can call ASD Software at (714) 624-2594.