

A-Lock Help!



A-Lock

[How to Encrypt a Message](#)

[How to Decrypt a Message](#)

[Easy Encryption with Encrypt with Default Password](#)

[The Password Book](#)

[A Note About Passwords](#)

[Key Exchange](#)

[How to Use Key Exchange](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)/Trouble Shooting Guide](#)

[How to Register A-Lock](#)


[Important Information about A-Lock](#)

How to Encrypt a Message

Here's how to encrypt an e-mail message. You can also use this technique to encrypt text in almost any application window.

1. Type the message in your e-mail program window as usual.

NOTE: If you are encrypting an already existing message, then make sure the window that contains it is the active window. You can make a window active by simply clicking anywhere inside of it with the mouse.

2. Click the *A-Lock* icon  located on the Windows Task Bar, (in the bottom right corner of your screen) and select "Encrypt/Decrypt" from the menu or "Encrypt with Default Password".
3. If you select "Encrypt/Decrypt," enter a password (see [A Note about Passwords](#)) or select a name from the "Password Book" and click "OK." See [The Password Book](#).

The selected text in your message will automatically be replaced with scrambled characters.

OR

4. If you select "Encrypt with Default Password" the password you have defined as the default (see below) will be used to encrypt the message.

How to Make a Default Password

To make a password the default password, click "View/Edit Password Book," then select a name from the list of names and click "Make Default On/Off."

NOTE: The "Password Book" itself can be password protected so others using your computer can't access your encrypted messages.

How to Decrypt a Message

Follow these easy steps to decrypt an e-mail message. This technique can also be used to decrypt text in almost any application window.

1. Make sure the window that contains the encrypted text is the active window. You make the window active by simply clicking anywhere inside it with the mouse. Also, if you see the cursor blinking inside of the window, then it is active.



2. Click on the *A-Lock* icon located on the Windows Task Bar (bottom right corner of your screen) and then select "Encrypt/Decrypt" from the menu.

A-Lock will search the "Password Book" to see if any entries in it can decrypt the message. If such an entry is found, the message is decrypted automatically and displayed in the "Private Window" where it can be edited, deleted or saved. If the password is not found, you will be prompted to enter the password.

NOTE: If the "Password Book" is password protected, you will be prompted for that password before the decryption process can continue.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)/Trouble Shooting Guide

Will *A-Lock* work with all e-mail programs?

We do not guarantee that *A-Lock* will work with all e-mail programs. We do know it works with Outlook Express, Eudora, Netscape 3.x, Netscape Communicator, Microsoft Mail, ccMail, Hotmail, ICQ etc. *A-Lock* should work with any application that supports the keyboard shortcuts for "Select All" and "Copy", specifically Ctrl+A and Ctrl+C

How do I access *A-Lock*'s main menu?

Simply click the *A-Lock* icon on the Windows Task Bar. The icon will usually be situated in the bottom right hand corner of the screen.

Sometimes I get a message saying *A-Lock* cannot find <<START_PC_Encrypt_DATA>>. What's going on?

This problem exists because some e-mail programs do not support editing of received messages and thus the Ctrl+A (Select All) keyboard shortcut is not available. The way to solve this problem is to highlight the entire message and then click the *A-Lock* icon on the Windows Task Bar and proceed with decryption as usual. If even this doesn't work, highlight the text and then go to your application's "Edit" menu and select "Copy". Then click the *A-Lock* icon and proceed with decryption as usual.

How secure is *A-Lock*?

A-Lock uses the tested and proven Blowfish encryption algorithm developed by the world famous cryptographer, Bruce Schneier. Blowfish has been challenged by many cryptographers but has yet to be cracked.

Can messages be edited, saved, etc. in the "Private Window"?

Yes. The "Private Window" supports all standard editing operations. Decrypted messages can be saved to a file or simply discarded by closing the "Private Window" without saving.

How does "Send *A-Lock* to a Friend" work?

When you click on this option you are taken directly to The "Send *A-Lock* to a Friend" web page. This web page provides space for you to enter up to 5 names and email addresses of friends and associates with whom you may wish to exchange encrypted information. *A-Lock* will automatically be sent to their email addresses along with a message from you.


Why is it that I can Decrypt a message in Netscape (version 3.01) when it is first

received but when I try to decrypt it again I get a message saying "cannot find <<START_PC_Encrypt_DATA>> in selected text"?

Netscape versions prior to version 4.0 did not include a "Select All" option in the Edit mode. When a message is first received it is in the "active" window and is found by *A-Lock*. When you try to decrypt the same message at a later time it will not come up in the "active" window" so *A-Lock* cannot find it. The solution is to highlight the entire message (using your mouse) then click "Decrypt" in the *A-Lock* menu.

This problem may also occur in other e-mail programs. The solution is the same.

How to Register *A-Lock*

Click the *A-Lock* icon  and then select the "Register" option on the menu. You will be presented with a screen containing a link to *A-Lock*'s registration page. Also displayed on the screen is a field containing the "Product Code". Click "Copy Product Code" to save it in the Windows clipboard.

Now click on the blue text to go to the *A-Lock* registration web page. When the "Register" web page appears paste this number into the Product Code field (right click your mouse and select "Paste"). You will then enter a secure web site where information pertaining to your credit card is gathered.

You can use American Express, MasterCard or Visa for payment when you register. A secure dedicated server connected directly to the banking system handles all credit transactions. Once the transaction is completed (several seconds) you will get an online receipt that you should print for your records.

An e-mail will be sent to you immediately acknowledging your order. This e-mail will contain an encrypted section that you're *A-Lock* program interprets as a registration confirmation and takes the appropriate actions to convert the demo program to a fully registered program. All you have to do is click on the *A-Lock* icon then select "Encrypt/Decrypt" and *A-Lock* does the rest.

A Note About Passwords

The best and easiest way to manage passwords is to do it through Key-Exchange. However, there may be times when you want to use a special password that is not in your Password Book. Remember that the password that you use to encrypt the message is the same password that must be used to decrypt the message.

The advantage of using Key-Exchange is the far greater security and ease of use that it offers. The passwords it generates are random with no discernable word or number patterns. This makes it virtually impossible for anyone to guess a password or to use a computerized dictionary search to find passwords. It also eliminates the need to enter a password to either encrypt or decrypt a message! It is strongly recommended that you use the Key-Exchange service to generate and distribute passwords.

See the topic [Key Exchange](#) for more information.

Important Information about *A-Lock*

A-Lock works best with applications that support the following keyboard shortcuts for copying data to and from the Windows clipboard. Fortunately, almost all Windows applications support these shortcuts:

Ctrl+C

Copy: Copies selected text to the clipboard. ***This shortcut must be supported or A-Lock will not work.***

Ctrl+V (for encryption only)

Paste: Replaces current selection with text in the clipboard. This shortcut is nice to have but not necessary. If there is no such keyboard shortcut, use your application's Edit|Paste command to copy the encrypted data into your application's document window.

Ctrl+A

Select All: Selects all text in the application's document window. If this shortcut is not available, you must select all the text yourself before you can encrypt or decrypt it. There is probably a Select All command in the Edit menu.

The Password Book

The "Password Book" is *A-Lock's* answer to the problem of remembering and storing passwords. You don't have to remember a password that is in the "Password Book." And you don't have to worry about keeping it in a safe place either, because all entries in the password book are stored in encrypted format on your hard disk. To be entirely safe, you have the option of specifying a password to protect access to the "Password Book".

Adding Entries to the Password Book

From *A-Lock's* main menu, select View/Edit Password Book. The "Password Book" screen appears. To add a new entry, click the "New" button and fill in the fields. When you click OK, the new entry will be saved and will appear in the list.

Editing Entries in the Password Book

You can edit an entry by selecting it and clicking the "Edit/View..." button. Make the appropriate changes and click OK to save your changes.

Deleting Entries in the Password Book

To delete an entry, simply select it and click the "Delete" button. You'll be asked to confirm your decision.

Specifying a Default Password

To make an entry the default password, simply highlight it in the list and click the "Make Default On/Off" button. You should see a happy face beside the item in the list. To remove the default property, just click the button again. Please note that there can only be one default password/entry at any one time.

You must have an entry specified as the default before you can use the "Encrypt with Default Password" feature. See the topic [Easy Encryption with Encrypt with Default Password](#) for more information.

Protecting the Password Book

If your computer is being shared with other users you may wish to block access to the information in the "Password Book." To do this, click the *A-Lock* icon in the Windows Task Bar and select "Change Password Book Password". If this is the first time you have used this feature leave the "Current Password" field blank since there isn't a current password.

The password you choose should be a short word or character sequences that cannot be easily guessed by others (don't use the dog's name). Access to the "Password

Book" will then only be allowed with the correct password.

You can remove password protection by simply specifying the current password and leaving all other fields blank.

Easy Encryption with Encrypt with Default Password

A-Lock's Encrypt with Default Password feature saves you the trouble of typing a password over and over again. This is handy if you have a password that you use more frequently than others. By making this password the default, you can encrypt messages with a single mouse click.

NOTE: If the "Password Book" is password protected, you will be prompted for that password before the encryption process can continue.

Here's How it Works

When you choose "Encrypt with Default Password" from the *A-Lock* menu, *A-Lock* searches the "Password Book" for an entry marked as default. If such an entry is found, that entry's password is used to encrypt the message.

To find out how to create a default password, see "Specifying a Default Password" in the topic [The Password Book](#).

Key Exchange

Key-Exchange is a system that allows secret passwords to be delivered securely and inexpensively, anywhere in the world, by e-mail. It is remarkably easy to use and contains several very innovative features. The Key-Exchange service is provided free of charge to all A-Lock and PC-Encrypt users. Some of its special features are:

It generates passwords for you, no need for you to try to think up hard to guess passwords.

The passwords it generates are random values, the most secure kind of password.

Passwords are delivered in an encrypted e-mail for maximum security.

Passwords are automatically entered into your Password Book. You don't have to type a thing.

You can specify if a password is to be used exclusively by one person or by a group of people. This can be useful if you want to send the same encrypted information to a group of people.

Everyone who downloads A-Lock or PC-Encrypt from the <http://www.pc-encrypt.com> or <http://www.a-lock.com> web sites is automatically registered with Key-Exchange.

Much easier to use than any other password system.

For more information, see the topic [How to Use Key Exchange](#).

How To Use Key Exchange

When you request a download of *A-Lock* you are automatically registered in Key-Exchange and a unique "Exchange Key" is generated for you and stored in the Key-Exchange database.

The first time you use Key-Exchange your Exchange Key will be displayed on a secure web page. The simple instructions for transferring this key to your Password Book are included in this web page. Once you have the Exchange Key in your Password Book you can begin using Key-Exchange to deliver password keys to friends and associates.

Conducting a Key-Exchange

Click on the "Go to Key Exchange Site" link on the *A-Lock* menu. This will take you to the web page where you list the name(s) and e-mail address(s) of the people you want to exchange secure messages with. Each person listed will be sent the unique password generated by this exchange, encrypted with his or her personal Exchange Key.

Defining a Group (how big etc.)

If you enter more than one e-mail address for recipients the next page will ask you for a group name

You have not received your Exchange Key

If you request a key exchange but have not yet picked up your Exchange Key, you will be linked to the registration page where you will add your name and Product Code to the database record for your email address. You will then have your Exchange Key displayed on a secure web page.


Recipient has not received their Exchange Key

If one or more of the recipients you list in "Conduct a Key Exchange" is not registered with Key-Exchange they will be e-mailed a form letter suggesting that they register with Key-Exchange to receive a password that is waiting to be delivered to them.

How passwords are delivered

Passwords are encrypted with the unique Exchange Key of each person then emailed to them.

What Happens with the E-Mail

When each person receives their e-mail they click on the *A-Lock* icon  on the task

tray and select "Encrypt/Decrypt" from the menu. *A-Lock* will decrypt the password and ask the user if they want to add it to their Password Book. If they click "OK" the password, along with the name of the initiator, or group, will be automatically added to their Password Book.

