Browser extension signs users into websites only when they approach a computer

Online security and privacy is becoming is a rising concern with the increasing amount of information individuals store online and on electronic devices. We recently wrote about a USB key that enables users to delete data remotely, and now Ford has collaborated with ad agency Ogilvy Paris to produce Keyfree Login, a browser extension that signs into websites only when users are at their computer.

The French branch of the motor company was inspired by the keyless entry technology already developed for its cars, whereby keyfobs automatically activate the unlocking of the vehicle through RFID tags as the driver approaches it. Those using Keyfree login – which currently takes the form of an extension for Google Chrome – install the application on a computer with Bluetooth connectivity and enter in the login details for sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Google. Following this, a cell phone or other portable Bluetooth device is chosen as the activator. If the device is too far away to connect via Bluetooth, all online accounts are inaccessible. Whenever the selected device comes into range – up to 30 feet, depending on signal quality – login details are unlocked. The following video demonstrates the concept further:

According to reports, the service was initially made available but then pulled by Ford due to concerns over its lack of encryption of login details, meaning the site is down at the time of writing. The team behind the innovation are now working to improve its security features, as well as adding the ability to log in manually when the chosen device is not present. A spokesperson for Ford France's Keyfree Login team said: "Our teams are already working toward a new release as quickly as possible and we will keep you informed on its availability."

Keyfree Login aims to keep unauthorized users from breaking into others' online accounts by offering an alternative to browsers' saved passwords function. Is this something that will put computer users' minds at rest, or do the current flaws raise too many concerns about security?

Website: www.ford.fr/keyfreelogin
Contact: www.ford.fr/Footer/Contact

Spotted by: Hemanth Chandrasekar