World Cup Final
Win a trip to football heaven

"Nothing Mr Laws did warranted a resignation, even nearly" Hugo Rifkind

From The Times May 29, 2010

Log-ins strengthened to thwart hackers

Crackdown prompted by exposed security flaws

Lauren Thompson

Barclays has changed its online banking log-in procedures after Times Money exposed security flaws.

Last month we reported that it was possible for people to hack into accounts and view recent transactions. Barclays' "Instant Access" service allowed customers to log in using only four pieces of data — surname, date of birth, 16-digit card number and three-digit card security code. Ben Smyth, at the University of Birmingham's School of Computer Science, said that this information was too easy to obtain.

Although hackers would not be able to move money out of the account, they could view recent transactions, the account number and sort code. This information could be enough for a fraudster to set up fake standing orders or direct debits from the victim's account.

However, the Instant Access service has been dropped and replaced with "Basic Access", which provides the same facility but with enhanced security. Customers have to opt in to the service, and now require a user-generated password as well as their surname, date of birth and 16-digit card number to access their account.

"The site is now more secure — it's just a

Money Central

Five tips to avoid capital gains tax

The ten most expensive postcodes for insurance

Money Central

Today

Live: Body of gunman found after Cumbria...
'Morally bankrupt' Sarah Ferguson...
Police identify man wanted over drive-by...
Letters show how Richard Burton's love...

Today

Today

Ken Dodd single comes third in chart of...
Online lonely-hearts scam is costing Britons...
Vets want ban as influx of terrapins and...
David Cameron releases list of the fattest...

Focus Zone

Need to Know:
Up-to-date industry sectors news at a glance: interactive heatmap, daily video and podcast

Need to Know
Discover Normandy

Related Links

- Credit card fraud down while online banking crime rises
- Fraud by bank staff puts accounts at risk

shame that Barclays compromised the financial privacy of their customers for nearly a year before fixing it," Mr Smyth says.

Barclays' online customers are now greeted with a new message saying "Logging in just got a whole lot easier". But Mr Smyth says: "This is nonsense and mere PR. Log-in just got more complicated, because they added security."

A spokeswoman for Barclays insisted that the change was nothing to do with Mr Smyth's published paper on the bank, which it was asked to respond to in September. "These changes are part of the transformation programme which has already seen a site redesign and new functionality, with more to come over the next year," she said.

"They were scheduled prior to recent reports, which we maintain do not present a realistic threat."

Online banking losses totalled £59.7 million in 2009 — a 14 per cent rise on the previous year. "This increase is largely due to criminals using malware [malicious software], rather than the banks' own systems, which are more difficult to attack," says a spokeswoman for the UK Cards Association.

Malware viruses hide in computers, recording every key that someone presses when using his or her computer, to collect passwords, credit card numbers and other confidential data.

There were also more than 51,000 phishing incidents in 2009 — where a victim clicks on a link in an e-mail and is taken to a bogus site to input finan-cial details.

Print Email

SHARE

Your Comments

Order By: Newest firstOldest firstMost recommended

have your say

Would you like to post a comment? Please register or log in

Money Guides

Select from the dropdown

Select

Reader Guides

How to complain

Don't let big companies walk all over you

Energy

How to switch energy supplier

Make sure you are on the best deal possible

Online safety

How to protect your PC

Avoid viruses, trojans and spyware

More money guides

Money Central

- Mapping Business
- Cool Camping
- More reports

- Gas & Electricity
- Mortgages
- Credit Cards
- Savings Accounts
- Loans
- Current Accounts

Times Warranties

Avoid Large Bills

Find a Lawyer

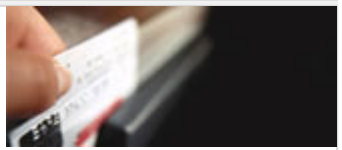
Cut your legal costs

Free credit report

Online credit history with CreditExpert from Experian

Free Credit Advice

Credit crunched? Our Credit Clinic has advice



Classifieds

Cars

Stratstone, the No.1 Choice for Luxury Cars.

Europe's largest independent Jaguar Dealer group with 23 locations across the UK.

To view our latest New Car Offers and Jaguar Approved Vehicles visit Stratstone.com.