Introduction

Elcomsoft System Recovery helps system administrators reset or recover passwords to local Windows accounts and Microsoft Account in all versions of Windows, assign administrative privileges to any user account, reset expired passwords or export password hashes for offline recovery. The tool can detect encryption and create forensic disk images. Elcomsoft System Recovery is supplied with a bootable Windows PE environment.

Features and Benefits

- Ready to boot with Windows PE (Preinstallation Environment) licensed from Microsoft
- Recovers or resets user and administrative passwords
- Original password recovery may be possible to provide automatic access to EFS-encrypted files
- Unlocks and enables user and administrative accounts
- Assigns administrative privileges to any user account
- Resets or disables password expiry options
- Broad hardware compatibility and genuinely native FAT and NTFS support
- Genuine Windows GUI for convenient operation
- Supports Windows NT 4, Windows 2000, Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7, Windows 8/8.1, Windows 10
- Supports Windows Windows Server 2000/2003/2008/2012/2016/2019 (including Domain Administrator password and all users' passwords)
- Supports US and localized versions of Windows and multilingual user names and passwords
- Detects all Windows installations automatically
- An option to dump hashed passwords from SAM/SYSTEM files or Active Directory database for further analysis and off-line password recovery
- An option to dump Domain Cached Credentials
- Dumps encryption keys for protected drives
- Supports Microsoft Live! accounts
- Resets or searches for SYSKEY startup password
- Password reset for Domain Cached accounts
- Dumps disk encryption keys
- Unlocks BitLocker-encrypted drives
- Locates encrypted virtual machines and extract encryption metadata for subsequent password recovery
- Creates forensic disk or partition images

Ready to Boot, Instant Unlock

Elcomsoft System Recovery makes it easy to create a bootable CD image (ISO) or USB flash frive. No need to create a reach for a Windows setup disks to make one! ElcomSoft has licensed the Windows Preinstallation Environment (Windows PE) directly from Microsoft, allowing the company to distribute the completely working bootable Windows environment based on Windows 10.

If there are no EFS-encrypted files on your Windows account, an instant unlock option is the quickest and easiest way to gain access to user and administrative accounts. Elcomsoft System Recovery resets forgotten passwords with a new password supplied by you, allowing for immediate login without the time-consuming password recovery operations.

Broad Compatibility

Elcomsoft System Recovery bootable environment supports a variety of hardware components including the most popular hard disk controllers thanks to the native Windows drivers. Unlike the various emulation environments, Elcomsoft System Recovery is genuinely compatible with the latest revisions of Microsoft file systems, including the latest versions of the FAT (FAT32, exFAT) and NTFS.

Recovers Original Passwords

Elcomsoft System Recovery can attempt to attack and recover the original password with common passwords and dictionary attacks. Elcomsoft System Recovery checks the locations where system passwords are cached, often allowing for instant password recovery.

Offline password recovery is made possible by dumping hashed passwords from SAM/SYSTEM files or Active Directory database for further analysis off-line analysis. We recommend Elcomsoft Distributed Password Recovery for highly scalable, GPU-accelerated recovery of system passwords.

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8.2. Public Announcements. The Licensor may identify you to the public as a customer of the Licensor and describe in a customer case study the services and solutions delivered by the Licensor to you. The Licensor may also issue one or more press releases, containing an announcement of the execution and delivery of this Agreement and/or the implementation of the Product by you. Nothing contained in this Section shall be construed as an obligation by you to disclose any of your proprietary or confidential information to any third party. In addition, you may opt- out from this Section by writing an opt-out request to the Licensor at https://support.elcomsoft.com.

9. Miscellaneous.

9.1. Governing Law; Jurisdiction and Venue. This Agreement shall be governed by and construed and enforced in accordance with the laws of the Russian Federation without reference to conflicts of law rules and principles. To the extent permitted by law, the provisions of this Agreement shall supersede any provisions of the Uniform Commercial Code as adopted or made applicable to the Products in any competent jurisdiction. This Agreement shall not be governed by the United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Sale of Goods, the application of which is expressly disclaimed and excluded. The courts within the Russian Federation shall have exclusive jurisdiction to adjudicate any dispute arising out of this Agreement. You agree that this Agreement is to be performed in the Russian Federation and that any action, dispute, controversy, or claim that may be instituted based on this Agreement, or arising

out of or related to this Agreement or any alleged breach thereof, shall be prosecuted exclusively in the federal or state courts in of the Russian Federation and you, to the extent permitted by applicable law, hereby waive the right to change venue to any other state, county, district or jurisdiction; provided, however, that the Licensor as claimant shall be entitled to initiate proceedings in any court of competent jurisdiction.

9.2. Period for Bringing Actions. No action, regardless of form, arising out of the transactions under this Agreement, may be brought by either party hereto more than one (1) year after the cause of action has occurred, or was discovered to have occurred, except that an action for infringement of intellectual property rights may be brought within the maximum applicable statutory period.

9.3. Entire Agreement; Severability; No Waiver. This Agreement is the entire agreement between you and Licensor and supersedes any other prior agreements, proposals, communications or advertising, oral or written, with respect to the Product or to subject matter of this Agreement. You acknowledge that you have read this Agreement, understand it and agree to be bound by its terms. If any provision of this Agreement is found by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, void, or unenforceable for any reason, in whole or in part, such provision will be more narrowly construed so that it becomes legal and enforceable, and the entire Agreement will not fail on account thereof and the balance of the Agreement will continue in full force and effect to the maximum extent permitted by law or equity while preserving, to the fullest extent possible, its original intent. No waiver of any provision or condition herein shall be valid unless in writing and signed by you and an authorized representative of Licensor provided that no waiver of any breach of any provisions of this Agreement will constitute a waiver of any prior, concurrent or subsequent breach. Licensor's failure to insist upon or enforce strict performance of any provision of this Agreement or any right shall not be construed as a waiver of any such provision or right.

9.4. Contact Information. Should you have any questions concerning this Agreement contact us at https://support.elcomsoft.com.

Contacting us

For technical support, please contact us through the following form:

https://support.elcomsoft.com/

For all other requests please use this form:

https://www.elcomsoft.com/company.html

Please contact us in **English**.

Important compatibility notes

- You can view or change account properties (Administrator account, Account is locked/disabled, Password expired, Password never expires) for local user accounts only, but not for AD accounts.
- Some computers may require third-party mass storage drivers for RAID, SCSI, SAS and similar storage devices. You can load additional drivers after ESR was booted from a USB drive, or use drivers supplied with the program.
- If you use read-only media to boot ESR (such as a CD/DVD), you cannot save the password hashes back to the bootable disk. Use a different storage media for saving files.

Elcomsoft System Recovery is compatible with modern and legacy computers. While modern computers are equipped with UEFI, you may still encounter a PC that still uses the legacy BIOS. Some manufacturers shipping newer PCs equipped with UEFI are still using the term "BIOS" to avoid confusion. However, the vast majority of computers sold over the past decade are equipped with UEFI firmware instead of a BIOS.

If your computer runs UEFI, there are no special requirements to boot media. If, however, you are analyzing a legacy PC equipped with a BIOS, you will need to create a bootable media that is no larger than 32GB. There are some other restrictions to keep in mind when analyzing legacy BIOS PCs.

When creating a bootable media, ESR offers the choice of three boot options: BIOS, UEFI x64, and UEFI x32. You must select the correct option for the target computer. A vast majority of modern computers use **UEFI x64**, which is the default option. For legacy PCs, select **BIOS**. The last option, **UEFI x32**, is used in a few special cases such as some thin-and-light devices and nettops built on certain generations of the Intel Atom platform which, while supporting 64-bit instructions, are limited to the 32-bit instruction set.

Requirements for booting leagacy BIOS computers

There are special requirements when booting legacy BIOS computers from USB media, as defined by Microsoft for Windows PE.

- The size of the USB media cannot be smaller than 256 megabytes.
- The size of the USB media cannot be larger than 32 GB.
- The USB media must report a drive type of Removeable, not Fixed.
- The USB media must be the first in the list of boot devices in the computer BIOS.
- The computer BIOS must support the extended INT 13h (xINT13) BIOS interrupt for USB media.
- The computer BIOS must support booting from USB media.
- The computer's USB controller must support bulk-only transport (BOT).

Please note that these requirements do not apply to reasonably modern computers equipped with UEFI. To give an idea, manufacturers started using UEFI instead of a BIOS some time around 2007.

ESR has been designed for maximum compatibility and should be able to boot even from external hard disk (USB or FireWire) including ones that are larger than 32 GB, but some restrictions still apply.

Please note that after you reset the password, you may lose access to the user's: web page credentials, file share credentials, DPAPI encrypted stuff, EFS-encrypted files and certificates with private keys (signed/encrypted e-mail).

Creating bootable media

To create a bootable USB media, start the ESRBOOT utility and follow a few simple steps:

- Accept the ElcomSoft end user license agreement
- Enter your license key
- Select an option for creating a bootable USB drive
- Insert the USB device you're about to make bootable (warning: all data on this disk will be deleted!)
- Select the USB device from the Destination drive drop-down box. Select Show compatible devices only to filter out internal storage devices; you may wish to switch it off only if ESRBOOT does not show your removable disk.
- The program verifies that the device can be configured to boot ESR; creates a special partition; creates a logical drive; formats the drive; makes this drive bootable; then copies the files (Windows PE and ESR itself).

Please note: when creating a bootable media, ESR offers the choice of three boot options: BIOS, UEFI x64, and UEFI x32. You must select the correct option for the target computer. A vast majority of modern computers use **UEFI x64**, which is the default option. For legacy PCs, select **BIOS**. The last option, **UEFI x32**, is used in a few special cases such as some thin-and-light devices and nettops built on certain generations of the Intel Atom platform which, while supporting 64-bit instructions, are limited to the 32-bit instruction set.
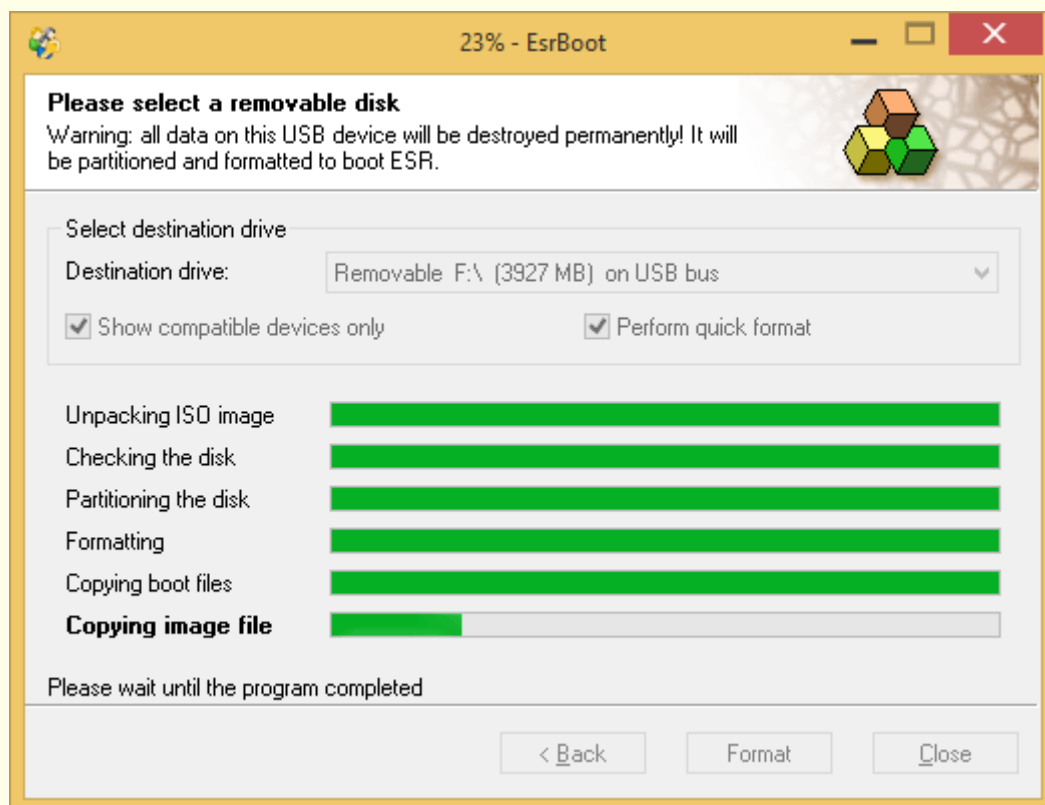
Booting from a CD or USB device

To boot your computer from a CD or USB device, make changes in the target computer's BIOS or UEFI shell to have the CD-ROM drive or USB device appear as the first device in the list of boot devices:

```
                          PhoenixBIOS Setup Utility
   Main    Advanced    Security      Power      Boot      Exit

                                              ┌──────────────────────┐
                                              │  Item Specific Help  │
      CD-ROM Drive                            ├──────────────────────┤
     +Removable Devices                       │                      │
     +Hard Drive                              │ Keys used to view or │
      Network boot from AMD Am79C970A         │ configure devices:   │
                                              │ <Enter> expands or   │
                                              │ collapses devices with│
                                              │ a + or -             │
                                              │ <Ctrl+Enter> expands │
                                              │ all                  │
                                              │ <Shift + 1> enables or│
                                              │ disables a device.   │
                                              │ <+> and <-> moves the │
                                              │ device up or down.   │
                                              │ <n> May move removable│
                                              │ device between Hard  │
                                              │ Disk or Removable Disk│
                                              │ <d> Remove a device  │
                                              │ that is not installed.│
                                              └──────────────────────┘
   F1   Help    ↑↓   Select Item   -/+   Change Values      F9   Setup Defaults
   Esc  Exit    ↔    Select Menu   Enter Select ▶ Sub-Menu  F10  Save and Exit
```
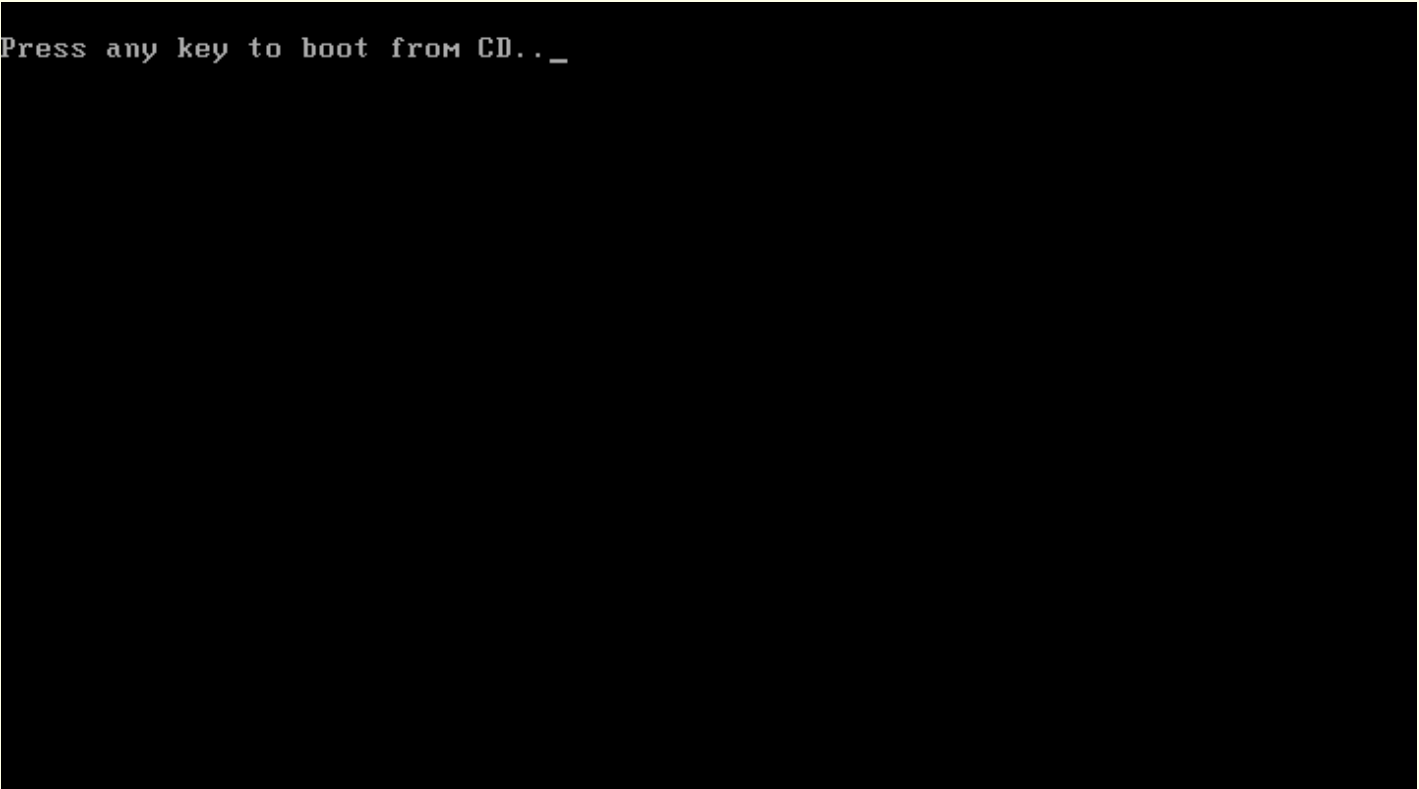
Then, insert the ESR boot media and reboot.

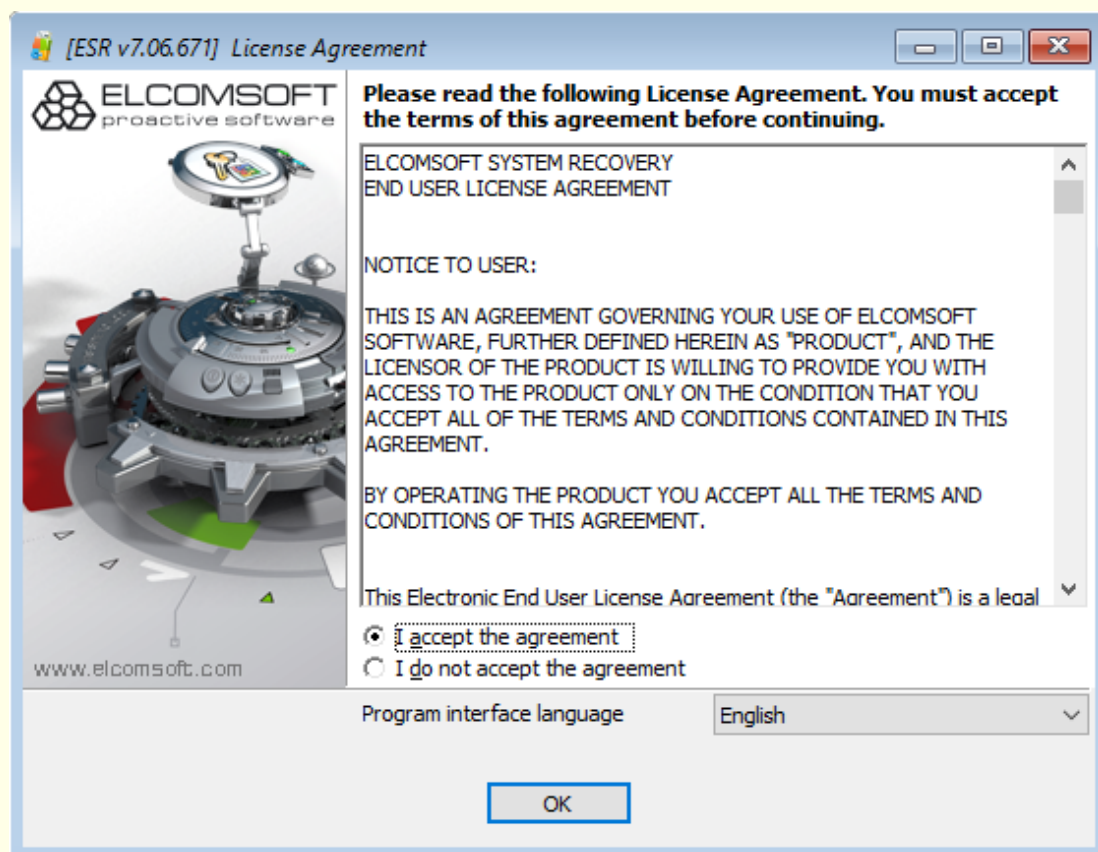```
Press any key to boot from CD.._
```

Press any key, and ESR will start booting (creating the RAM drive and loading Windows PE):



If you boot from a USB device, the steps are generally the same, except there will be no Press any key... message during the boot process.
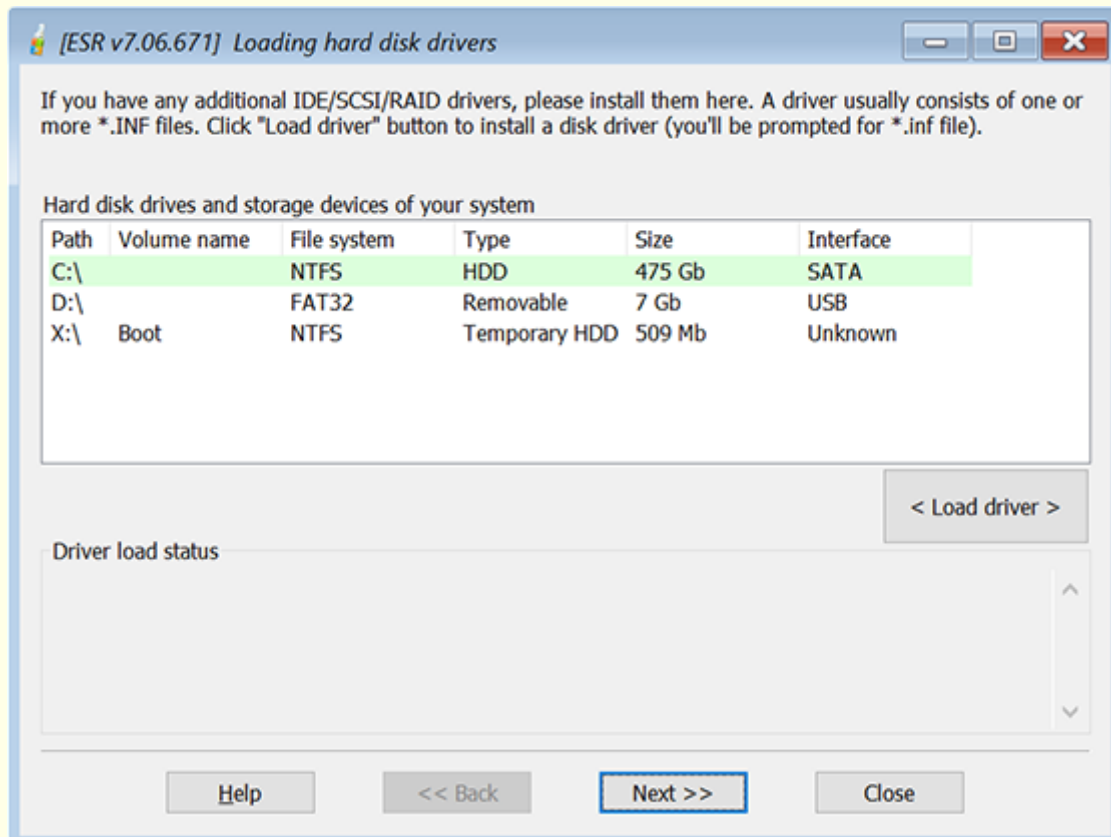
When ESR is booted, you will be presented with the license agreement; accept it to continue:

# Mass-stogare drivers

If your system uses a non-standard mass-storage adapter (such as some SerialATA, SCSI, RAID or SAS extension cards), you may need to specify the appropriate drivers:

```
[ESR v7.06.671]  Loading hard disk drivers                        _  □  ✕

If you have any additional IDE/SCSI/RAID drivers, please install them here. A driver usually consists of one or
more *.INF files. Click "Load driver" button to install a disk driver (you'll be prompted for *.inf file).

Hard disk drives and storage devices of your system

Path   Volume name   File system   Type            Size      Interface
C:\                  NTFS          HDD             475 Gb    SATA
D:\                  FAT32         Removable       7 Gb      USB
X:\    Boot          NTFS          Temporary HDD   509 Mb    Unknown


                                                         < Load driver >

Driver load status                                                     ^



                                                                       ∨

        Help            << Back          Next >>           Close
```

The list of local drives will be displayed. If you cannot see the system partition, press Load driver and browse for a disk that contains the appropriate drivers. ESR will load the driver specified, and update the list of available partitions. The Driver load status window will let you know whether the driver has been loaded successfully.

Database source

You can select local and Active Directory accounts. Working with AD requires launching ESR on the server (domain controller) running a Windows Server 2000/2003/2008/2012/2016/2019.

- Work with local computer accounts (SAM)
- Work with Active Directory accounts (ntds.dit)
- Work with domain cached accounts
- Tools to search for disk encryption keys
- Additional utilities
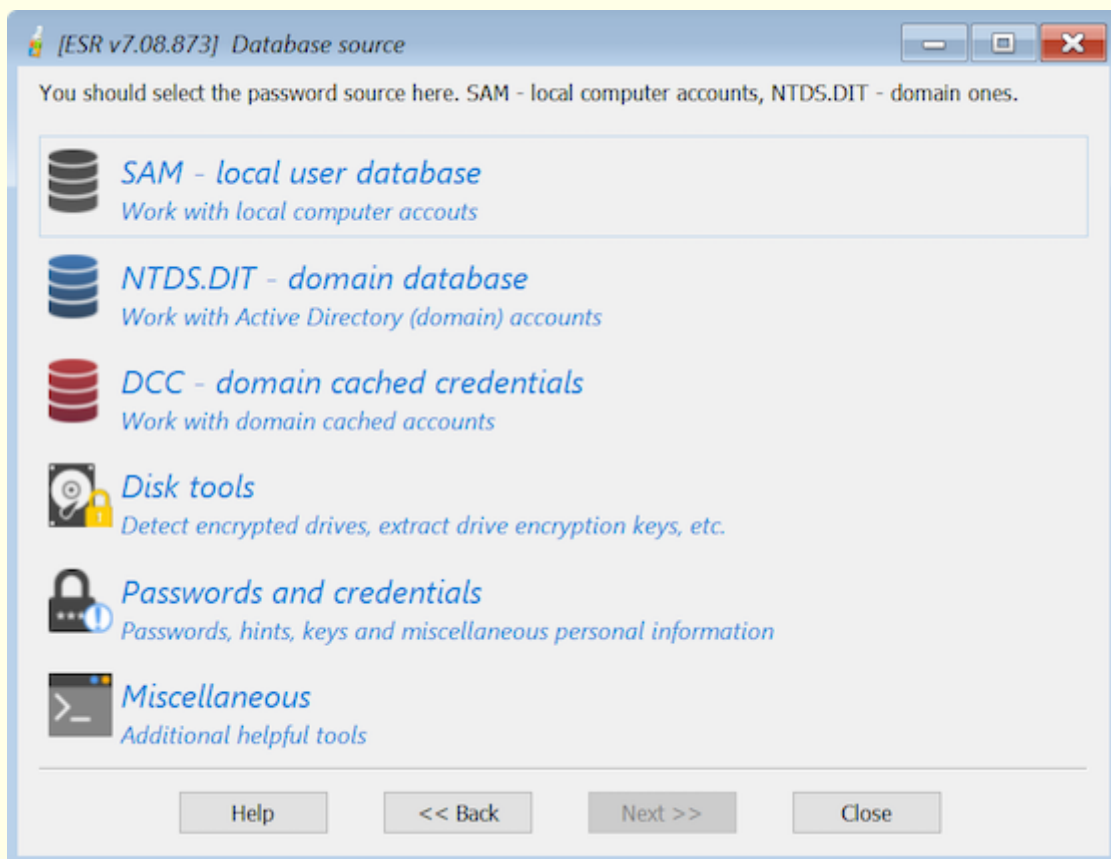
Working mode

- Change account password and properties
- Dump password hashes for further audit/recovery
- Backup Registry or Active Directory to archive
- Restore Registry or AD from backup
- SAM database editor
- Reset DSRM password
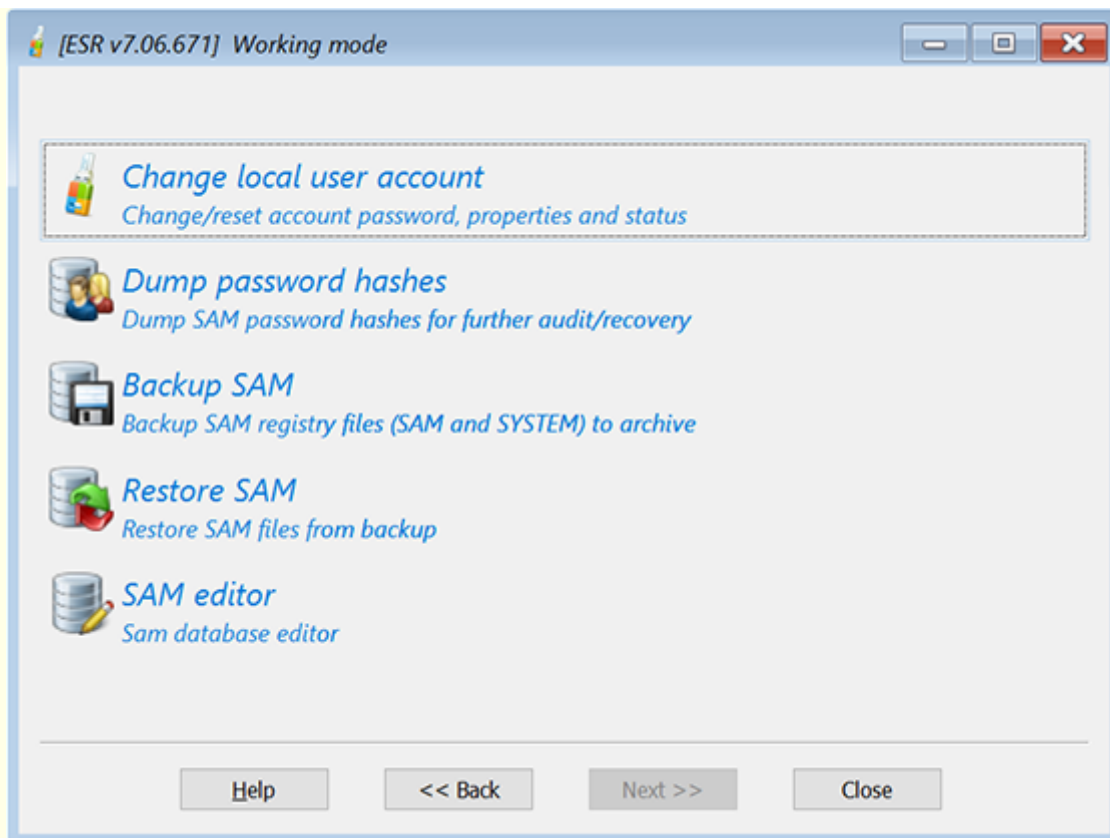
If you already changed some account properties or password(s) and would like to roll back the changes, select the last option: Restore Registry or AD from backup. You will be prompted for locations of a backup copy of the Windows registry or AD database. Otherwise, select Change account password and properties (to change/reset passwords to user accounts, unlock disabled or locked accounts etc), or Dump password hashes... to dump password hashes from the AD or the registry into a text file for further analysis/recovery in Proactive Password Auditor or Elcomsoft Distributed Password Recovery. Finally, you can back up the Registry (SAM, SECURITY and SYSTEM) or Active Directory database (ntds.dit).

When you dump local password hashes from the SAM, password history hashes are also extracted and saved into the dump file.

Password hashes can be saved as a standard dump file in ASCII or UNICODE. After dumping, the program prompts to open the file in Notepad; please note that if the user names or comments use non-US alphabet, they will be shown correctly only in UNICODE.

Finally, SAM database editor allows to edit all the fields in the SAM database that contain advanced properties of local user accounts.

Select operating system or SAM/AD files location

Once you selected a database source (SAM, DCC or AD) and working mode, you will be prompted to select the operating system to work with. If your system uses non-standard mass-storage adapters such as SCSI or SAS that are not supported by ESR, you may need to add drivers; see Mass-storage drivers for details. With the Auto selection, you can select the system folder from the drop-down box:
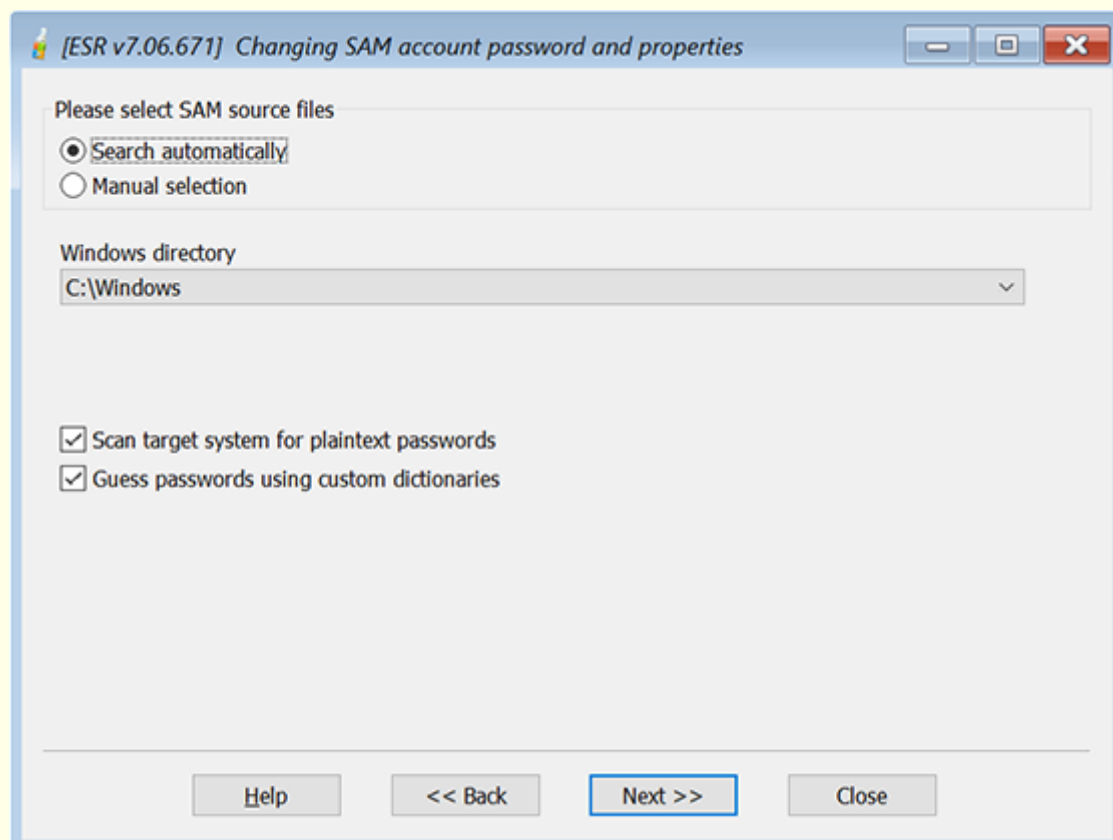
With Manual selection, you have to select the location of the AD database and SYSTEM Registry file using the [...] button at the right:
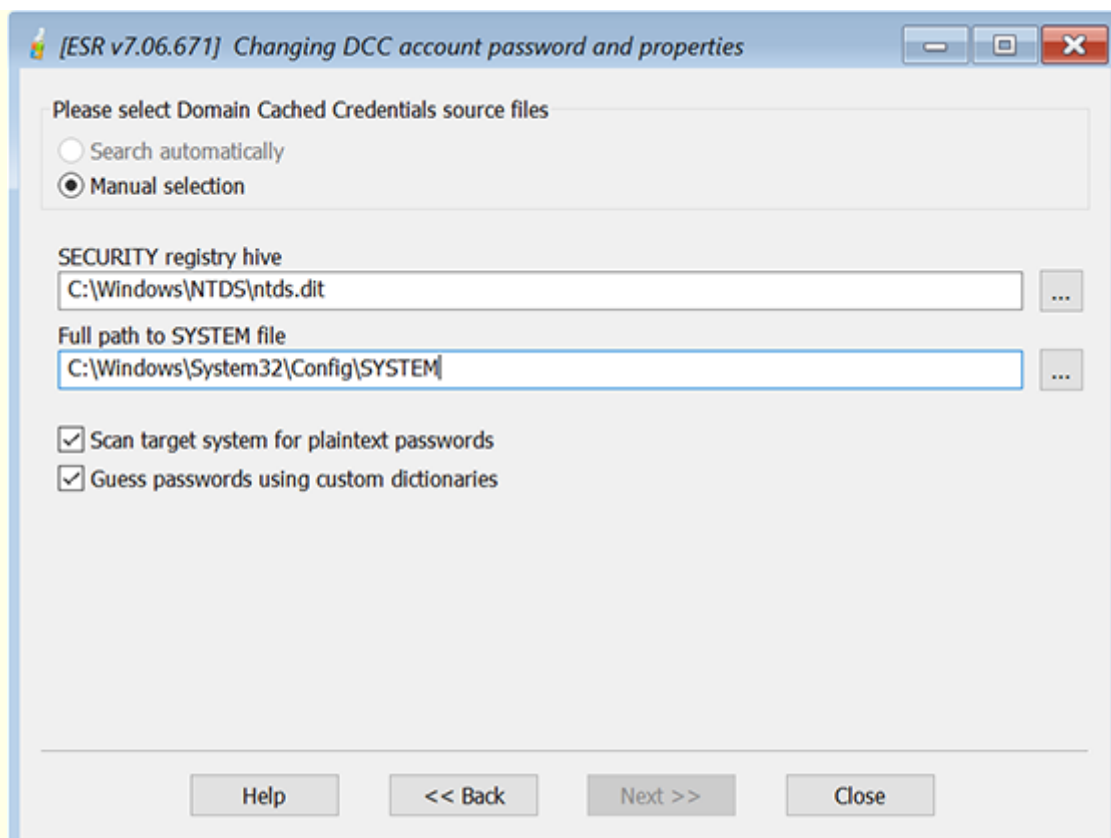
Alternatively, select the location of SAM, SECURITY and SYSTEM files:
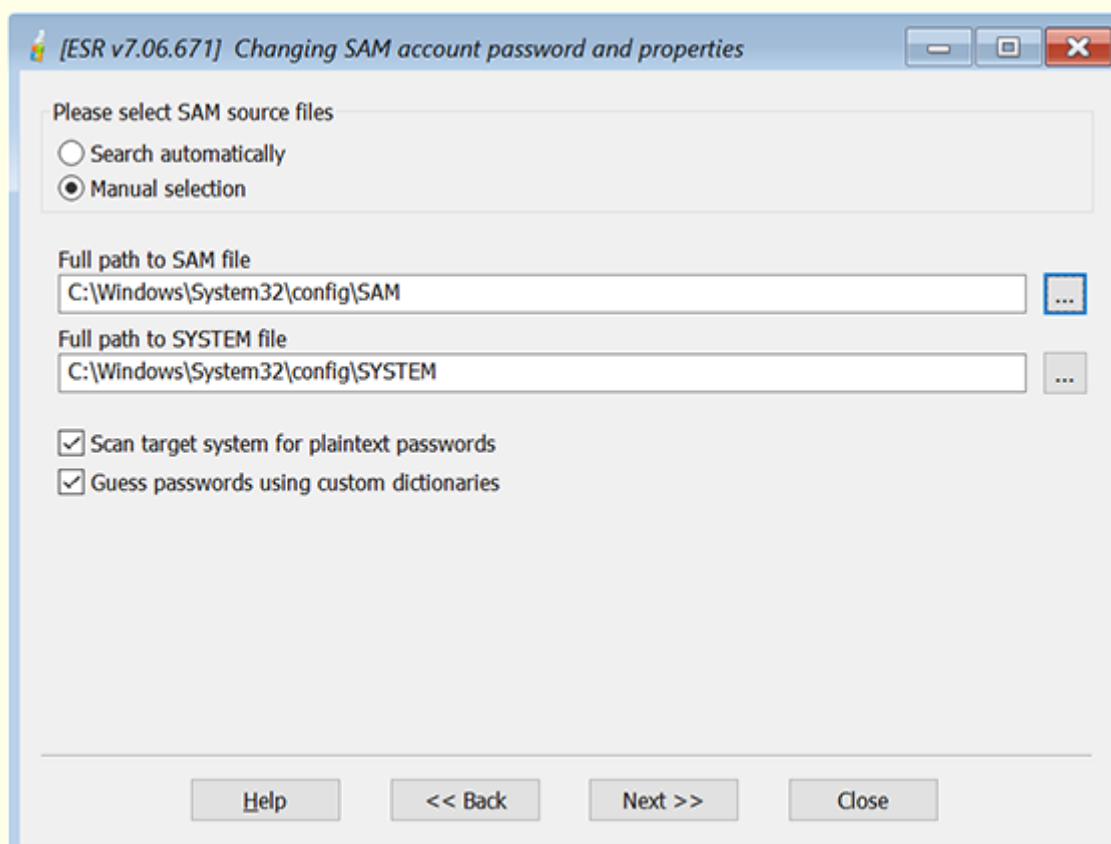
In manual mode, we recommend to select the location of the SYSTEM file first, so the location of SAM/SECURITY (or AD database) will be filled automatically. The default location of SAM, SECURITY and SYSTEM files is:

%WINDOWS%\SYSTEM32\CONFIG\

The AD database (ntds.dit) is usually stored in the following folder:

%WINDOWS%\NTDS\

If you don't see the local drives when browsing for SAM/SECURITY/SYSTEM/AD files, it can mean that you do not have the necessary drivers installed such as SerialATA, SCSI or RAID. You may need to specify them during boot process (see [Booting from the CD or UFD](#) for details).

If your system uses a non-default SYSKEY mode (i.e. SYSKEY is not stored in the Registry), then the program will prompt you for the startup password or SYSKEY floppy disk. If you do not supply them, password hashes cannot be extracted, and you will be unable to change account passwords or properties, or even dump password hashes into a text file.

If you selected the Test short and simple passwords option, ESR will try to recover passwords using several pre-defined dictionary and brute-force attacks. It will also attempt to decrypt passwords that could be stored or cached in other files. While this attack may not recover a lot of passwords, it only takes minutes and helps to recover short and simple passwords. These passwords will be tested:

- Obvious combinations such as passwords that are equal to login names
- Stored dial-up passwords
- Passwords from secrets (SECURITY registry file)
- Passwords from some browsers that can be decrypted instantly
- LM passwords
  - 4-characters (caps, digits, 16 symbols)
  - Passwords from the wordlist
  - Passwords from the wordlist with one digit at the end
- NTLM passwords
  - 4 characters (small, digits, 16 symbols)
  - 4 characters (small, caps)
  - 5 characters (small)
  - 5 characters (caps)
  - 7 characters (digits)
  - 3 characters (all symbols)
  - Passwords from the wordlist
  - Repeatable combinations (like '00000', 'aaa' etc)
  - Keyboard combinations (like 'qwerty')
  - Keyboard combinations on OEM layout

After that, the program creates a few different mutations for passwords that have been found at previous steps, and tries to apply them to all accounts.

Local user accounts

If you work with local (SAM) accounts, you will be presented with a list of all local accounts after selecting the operating system or SAM and SYSTEM files:
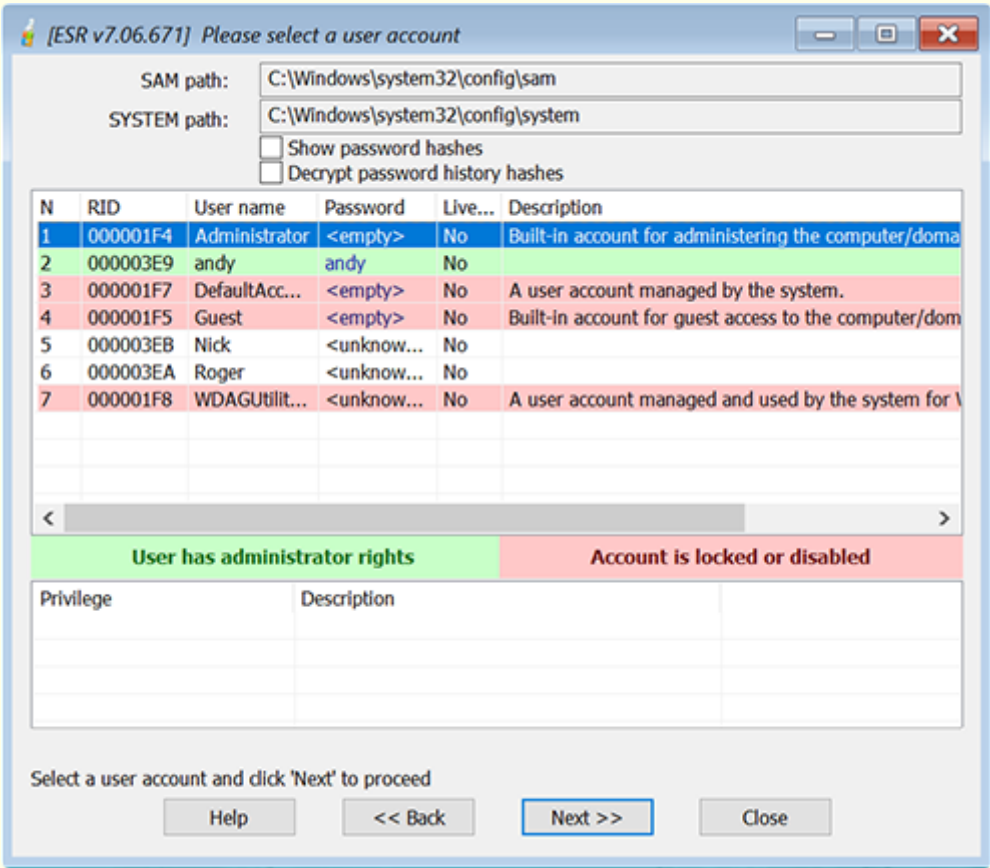
The accounts that have Administrator privileges are highlighted in green. Accounts that are locked or disabled are colored red.

You can enable the Show password hashes option to see LM and NTLM hashes for all accounts with non-empty passwords, and Show password history option to see old records that are available (if saving the password history was enabled in the system).

Select the account you want to change the password or properties for, and press Next:

Here you can reset/change the password as well as the following account properties:

- Administrator account
- Password never expires
- Password expired
- Account disabled
- Account is locked out

After you make the changes, press Apply. You will be prompted for the location and name of the backup copy of the SAM database.

Caution: do not reset the password with an empty one. For security reasons, select a new, reasonably complex password. Note that a local security policy might be applied. If this is the case, you will be able to set a non-compliant or even empty password, but you may be unable to log on with that new password if it does not comply the password policy. Finally, you cannot give Administrator privileges to built-in accounts such as Guest; it is also not recommended to change the password or any properties for any accounts in the Guests user group.

AD accounts

If you work with Active Directory accounts, you will get a list of all Active Directory accounts along with their properties. Here you can reset the password to any Active Directory user (including Domain Administrator), like for local user accounts. However, you cannot change any of the account properties (like Administrator account, Password never expires etc).
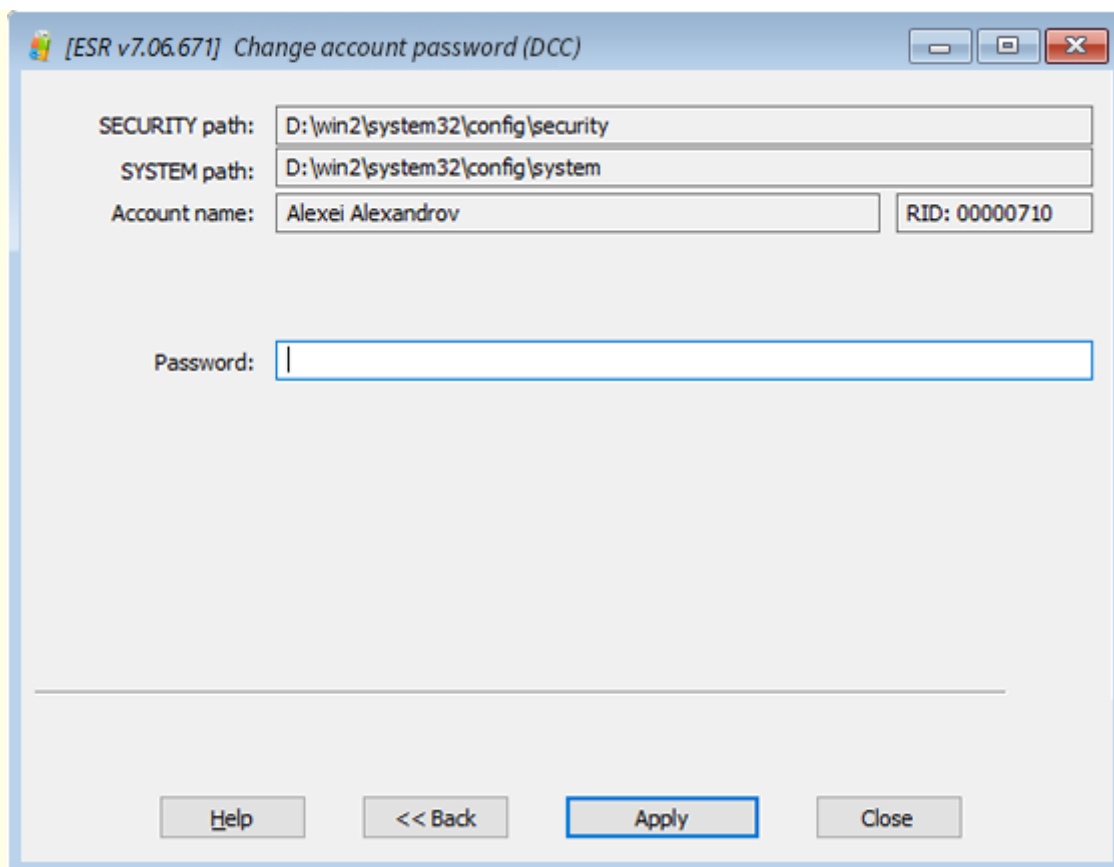
Domain cached accounts

Once the Windows directory (or SECURITY and SYSTEM files) is selected, the program tries to locate and decrypt domain cached entries and display the list of cached user accounts.
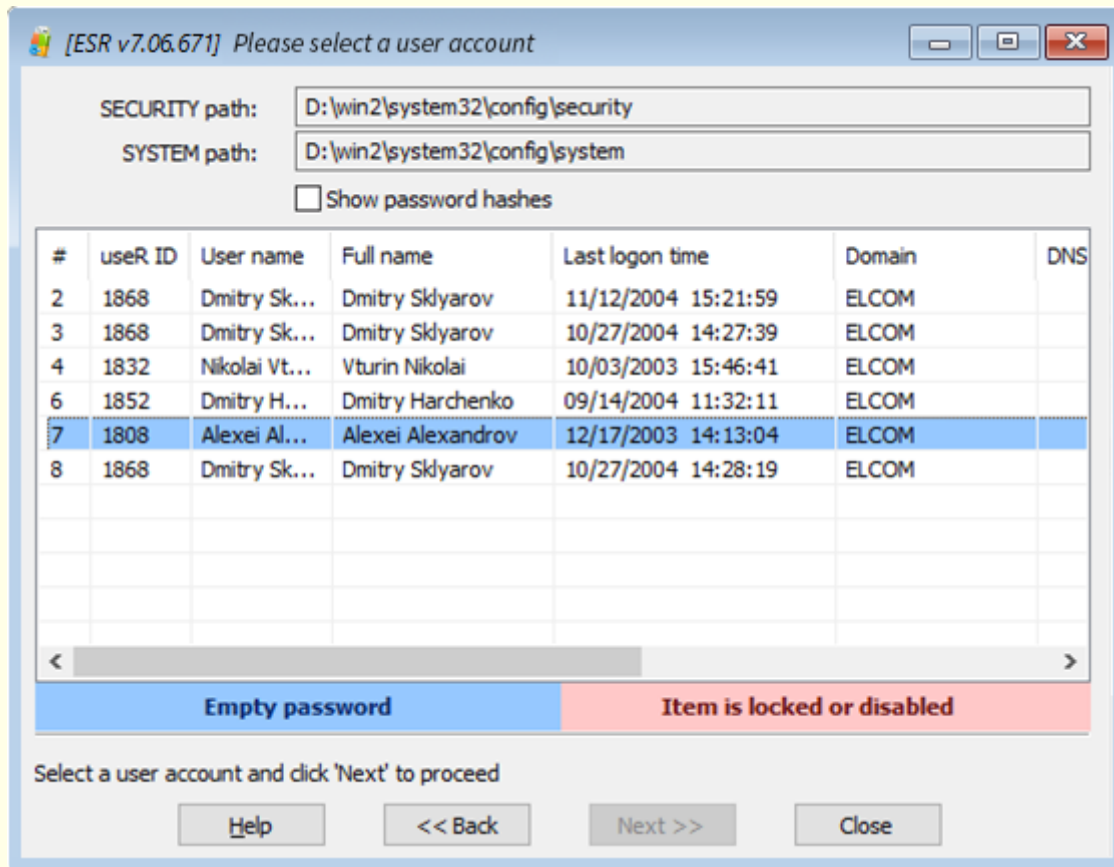
Accounts with empty passwords are are highlighted in blue. Accounts that are locked or disabled are colored red.

Select the account to change the password for, and press Next>> to proceed to the next step.

Type in a password or wipe out the appropriate input field, then press Apply. You will be prompted to back up the SECURITY file. It is highly recommended to backup the file before applying the changes.

To log on into the domain account after the password is reset, you will need to disable the connection to the domain. Otherwise, Windows will not use the cached credentials.

SAM database editor

The SAM database editor allows viewing and changing most properties of local user accounts:
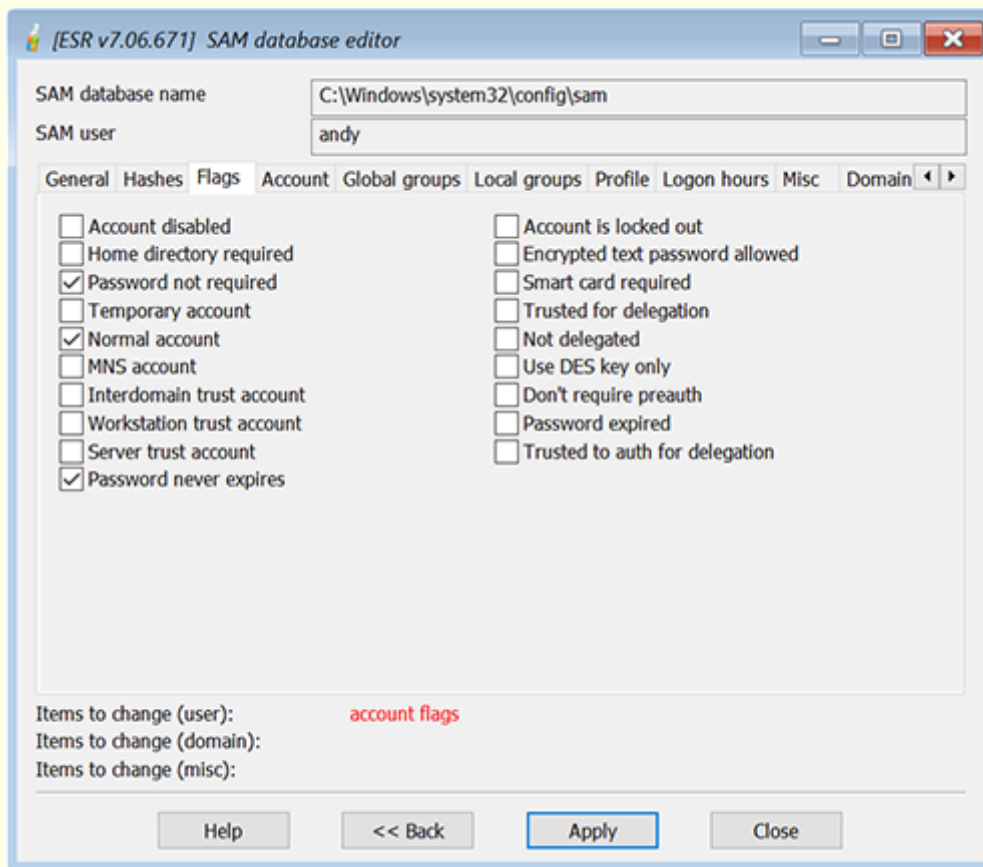
The following information is shown:

- General (user name, full name, comment, user ID)
- Hashes (LM and NTLM)
- Flags (essential user account properties)
- Account (time of last logon and logoff, password last set, account expiration, last bad password)
- Global and local groups (membership)
- Profile (home directory, script/profile path)
- Logon hours
- Misc (SAM database revision, country code, code page etc.)
- Domain information, properties and password properties

It is not recommended to edit any of the SAM database fields unless you know what you are doing.
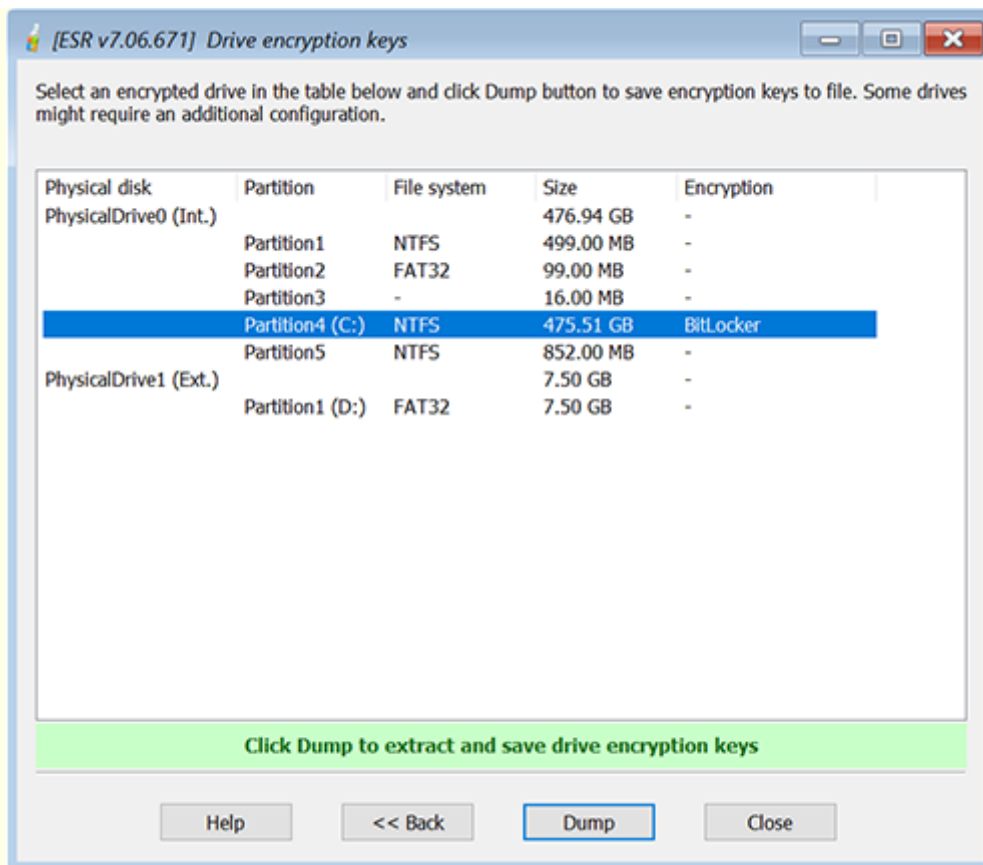
Disk tools

In the disk tools dialog you can search for encrypted drives or virtual machines and dump encryption keys for further recovery using Elcomsoft Distributed Password Recovery or other tools.
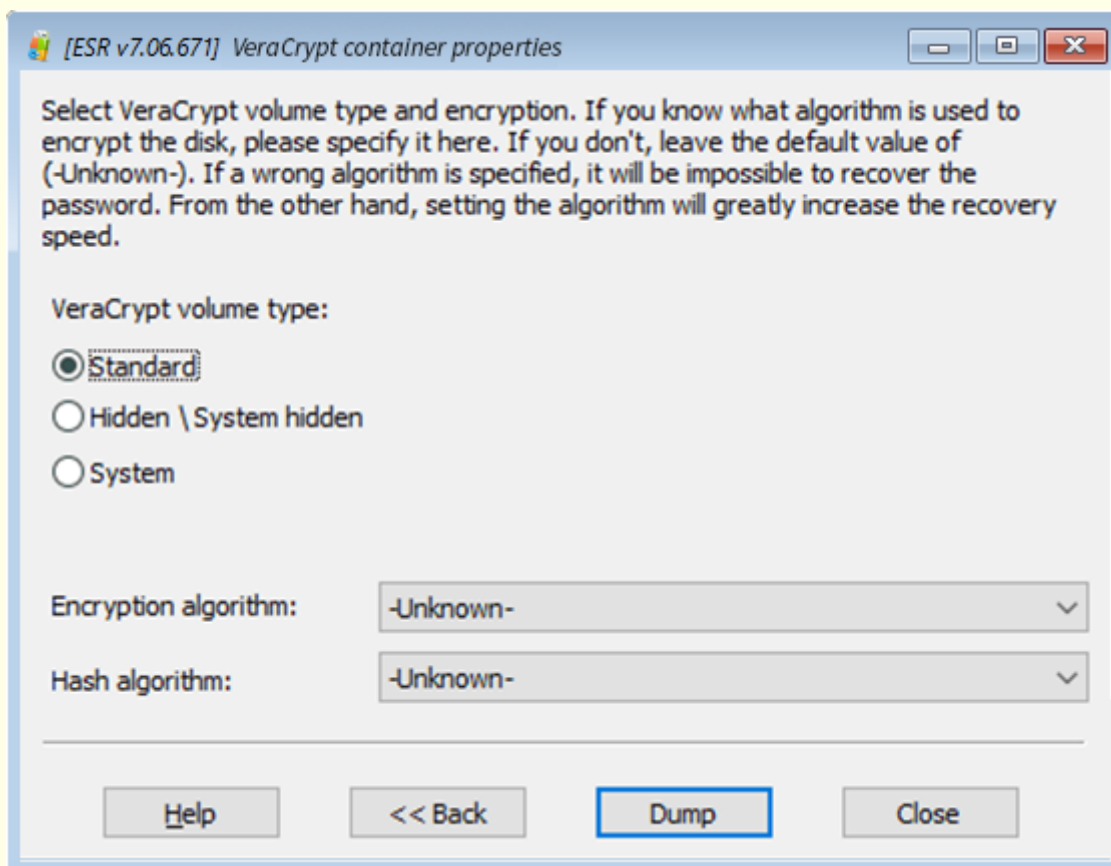You can also create a forensic disk image.
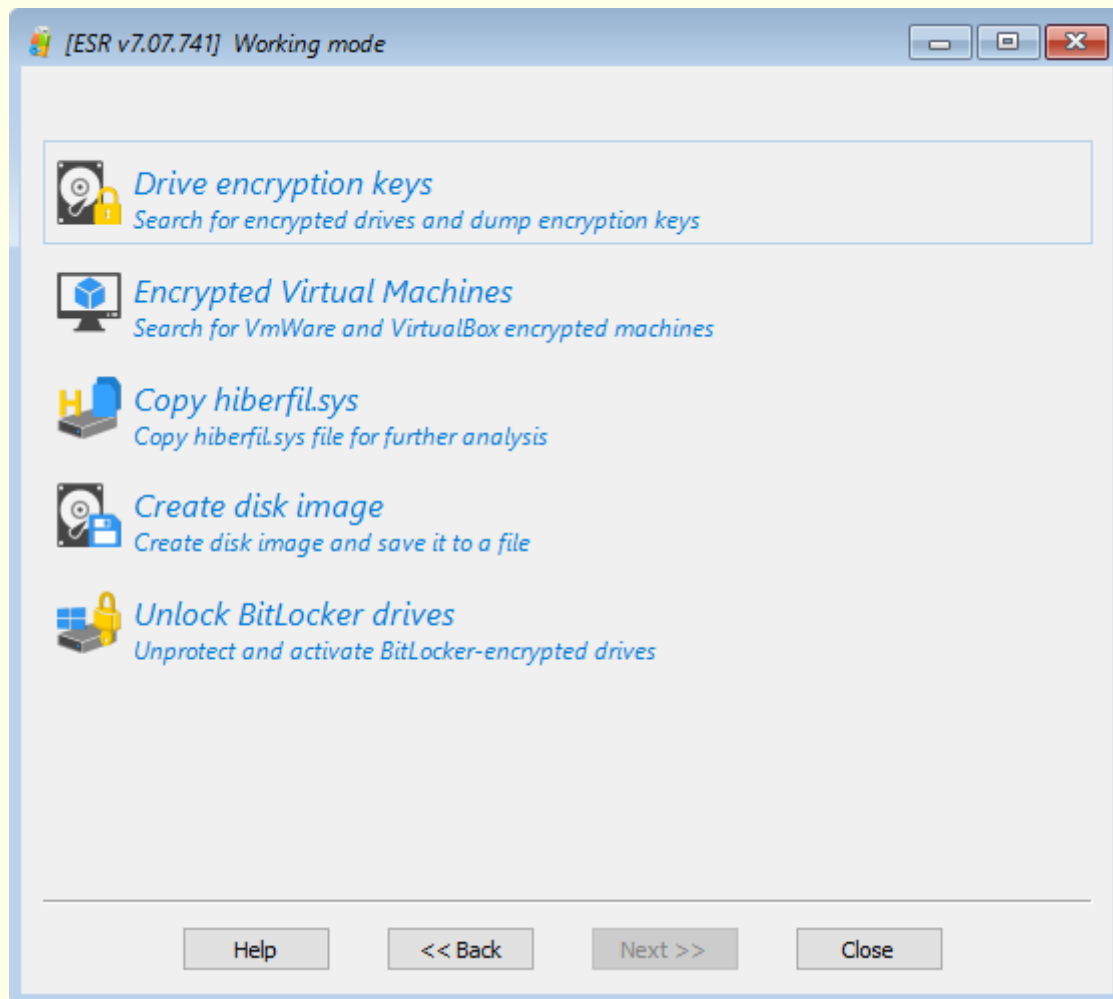
Once the programs detects an encrypted drive, select it from the table and click Dump to save the disk encryption keys.

TrueCrypt/VeraCrypt disks require additional configuration. You may need to specify the encryption algorithms explicitly for faster recovery.

The program support for the following encryption types:

- BitLocker
- PGP Disk
- PGP WDE
- TrueCrypt
- VeraCrypt
- FileVault
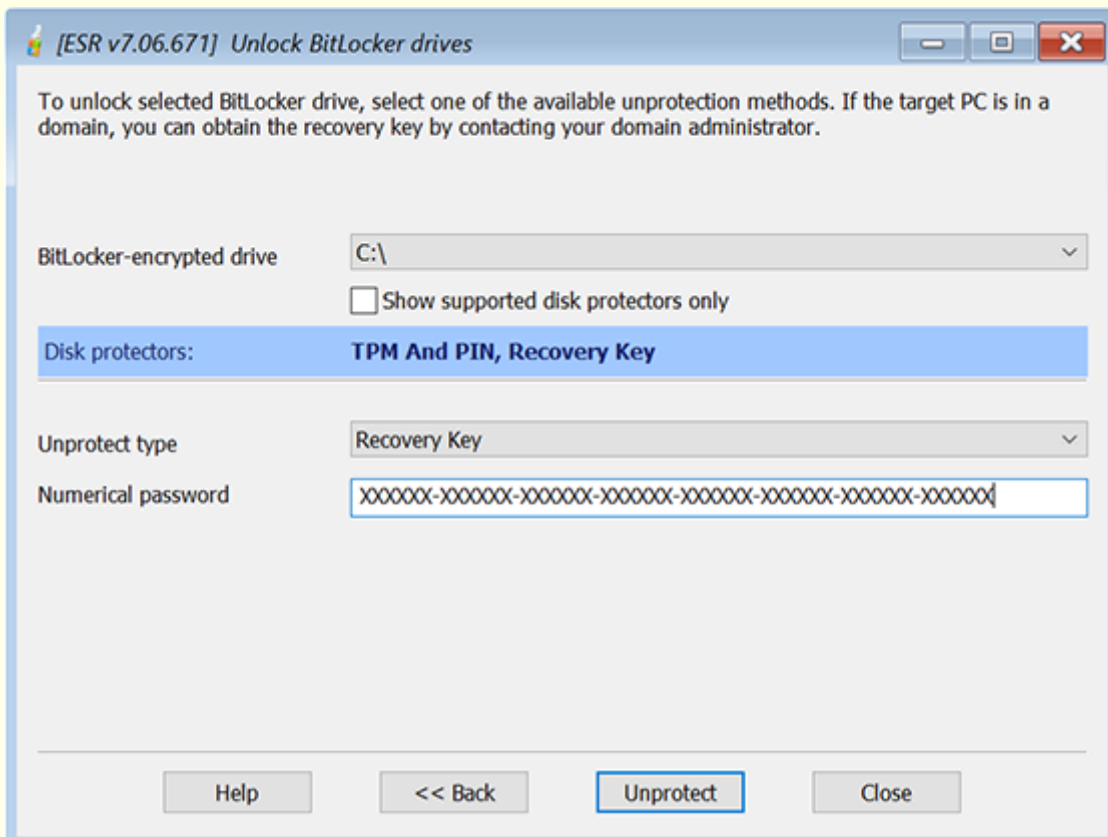- LUKS

Unlock BitLocker drives

To use a BitLocker-encrypted disk, you will need to unlock and mount it first. The program supports three general methods to unlock a BitLocker drive:

- Recovery Key. This method is used by default. Windows generates a 48-digit numeric recovery key every time a user initiates the BitLocker encryption.
- Password. A simple alphanumeric passphase that is used to unlock BitLocker-encrypted disks in addition to the Recovery Key.
- USB Key. A binary file, typically with *.bek extension, that is stored on an external drive (eg. USB).

If the target computer is a part of a domain organization, you can also obtain the Recovery Key by contacting your domain administrator.

After the selected BitLocker disk is unlocked, the program decrypts and mounts the drive, allowing you to access the data stored on that disk.
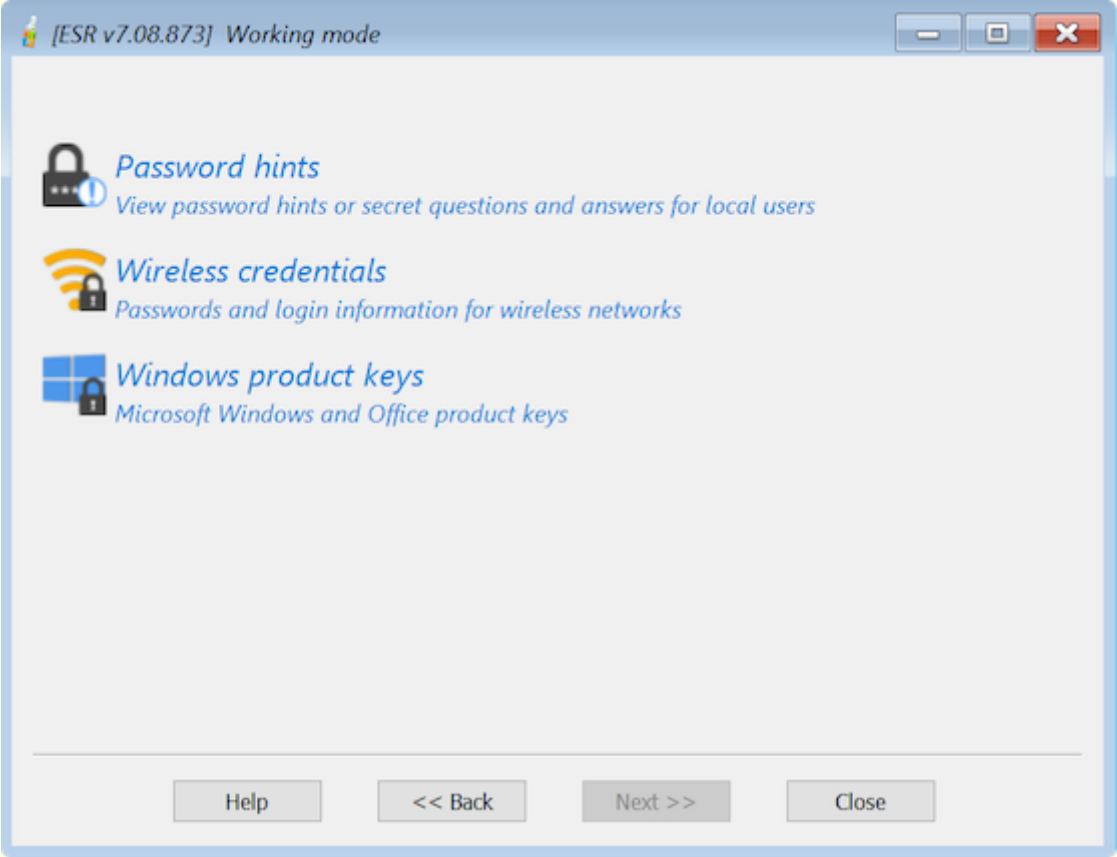
[ESR v7.06.671] Unlock BitLocker drives	☐ ▭ ✕

To unlock selected BitLocker drive, select one of the available unprotection methods. If the target PC is in a domain, you can obtain the recovery key by contacting your domain administrator.

BitLocker-encrypted drive   `C:\`   ⌄
☐ Show supported disk protectors only

Disk protectors: **TPM And PIN, Recovery Key**

Unprotect type   `Recovery Key`   ⌄

Numerical password   `XXXXXX-XXXXXX-XXXXXX-XXXXXX-XXXXXX-XXXXXX-XXXXXX-XXXXXX`

[Help]   [<< Back]   [Unprotect]   [Close]

Passwords and credentials

Main menu

Password hints

Password hints

SAM path:	C:\Windows\system32\config\sam
SYSTEM path:	C:\Windows\system32\config\system
SOFTWARE path:	C:\Windows\system32\config\software

User name ⌃	Password hint / Secret question
andrey	As usual starts with "a"
john	What's the first name of your oldest cousin? : Layla
john	What's the name of the city where you were born? : Berlin
john	What's the name of the city where your parents met? : Vienna
nancy	What was your childhood nickname? : Katy
nancy	What's the name of the city where you were born? : New York
nancy	What was your first pet's name? : Bob

| Help | << Back | Next >> | Close |

WIreless credentials

Wireless credentials

SECURITY registry	C:\Windows\system32\config\security
SYSTEM path:	C:\Windows\system32\config\system
Data directory	C:\ProgramData

SSID / name	Password	Type	Encryption
		WPA2PSK	AES
		WPA2PSK	AES
		WPA2PSK	AES
		WPA2PSK	AES

| Help | << Back | Next >> | Close |

Windows keys

Windows product keys

OS version:	Windows 10 Enterprise v6.3.18363
OS owner:	andy
Installed on:	25-06-2020

Product name	Product id	Product key
Microsoft Windows	00329-10438-00000-AA252	
Microsoft Windows	03612-03291-043-800000-03-1033-1...	
Internet Explorer	00329-10438-00000-AA057	
Microsoft\Internet Explorer\Regi...	03612-03291-043-800000-03-1033-1...	
Microsoft\Windows NT\CurrentV...	03612-03291-043-800000-03-1033-1...	
Microsoft\Windows NT\CurrentV...		T3X2K-RCJVR-M4MVB-3D...
Microsoft\Windows NT\CurrentV...	00000-03289-000-000000-02-1033-1...	T3X2K-RCJVR-M4MVB-3D...
Microsoft\Windows NT\CurrentV...		VYBJV-BWP9G-X8VG7-4G9...
Microsoft\Windows NT\CurrentV...	55041-03291-043-800000-03-1033-1...	VYBJV-BWP9G-X8VG7-4G9...

| Help | << Back | Next >> | Close |

Miscellaneous

Some additional tools are available:

- CMD.EXE - the command line. You can use it to perform additional operations like copying files or launching built-in WinPE tools.
- FAR Manager - light and convenient file manager to explore the file system.
- SYSKEY - allows resetting or recovering the Syskey startup password.