

Creating a Great Password

Good passwords are strong and easy to remember!



Good Password Samples: (Pick a method that is memorable for you)

welC0meS3 - Modified word with 2 numbers, mixed case, code at end for 3rd letter S in mysite.com

2L8again - Vanity plate message (too late again)

is2matFln - Acronym (I spent too much at the fair last night)

see3SHor - Like Seashore, not real word, mixed case, number

kit7ponD - Words with number and mixed case

luminSen - Nonsense word with mixed case

(Note: do not use the above samples)

Bad Passwords:

- Dictionary words
- Names of pets, family
- Personal information - relating to hobbies, ball teams, birth dates, phone
- All numeric or all upper or lower case
- Repeating or consecutive characters

Good Passwords and Practices:

- At least 7 characters
- Numbers, letters, mixed case, and symbols (begin with a letter)
- If using the same password for multiple programs or websites, add something from that name (such as the 3rd letter)
- Misspell words and change some letters to numbers such as i to 1
- Never give out your password to anyone
- Do not write down passwords under keyboard, mouse pad, telephone or anywhere else except in a locked safe
- Change passwords frequently - You may not know if someone uses it from the Internet to steal information

Why are strong passwords important? See the next page!

Think it's no big deal if your email password is hacked? Think again!

With access to your email, someone can reset your bank account passwords, steal your identity, and even scam your friends out of money by impersonating you and engaging your contact list in conversations and claiming you have an emergency. And the culprit may be on the other side of the world!

Even the most secure technology can easily be compromised when a weak password is used. Here are a few methods that are commonly used to crack passwords:

Educated Guess

Often the first method tried. Guesses based on combinations of information they know about you. If someone gains access to your office, they look around for information that could be used as a password. They may look up more personal details about you from public records. Dumpster diving, or searching through your trash, is another way people obtain information. Programs are sometimes used to quickly try various combinations of your personal information. If you write down your password, be sure to lock it in a safe instead of leaving it under your keyboard or telephone.

Dictionary Attack

A program using a database of words to try to break your password. If your password is a common word or phrase, a dictionary attack run from a regular PC may quickly crack your password.

Brute Force

This method requires a tremendous amount of computing power and takes a very long time. High-speed computers are used to run through all possible combinations of letters and numbers until maybe, some day, one of the combinations work. If strong, long passwords are used, this is the only way to crack most high-level encryption systems. Making passwords just one or two characters longer, or adding more combinations of characters (such as letters and numbers) will exponentially increase the time it takes to run a brute force attack, making it unfeasible to attack with this method.



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