ASLAN COMPUTER SYSTEMS

2015-10 HOW TO PICK A PASSWORD

ASLAN News

News Feature

How to Pick a Password

- Do you frequently require another password?
- Do you struggle to meet all the password requirements and suggestions?
- Or worse yet, do you just use the same one everywhere or write them down?

You are not alone. I have the same issues. Experts suggest that we:

- **Don't write them down:** If you write them down someone can find them and gain access.
- **Don't reuse them:** Many website or system administrators can see your passwords. If they can see them, they can try them on other sites or systems.
- **Make them long:** Most systems require 8 characters. The longer the password the harder it is to try all the combinations, which makes it more secure. One expert recommended a password length of 15 characters based on the speed of current computers.

- **Change them frequently:** The longer a hacker has to try to figure out your password before it changes, the more likely they will succeed. With more time, their computers can try more combinations.
- **Make them a combination of upper case, lower case, numbers and special characters:** A four digit pin has 10,000 combinations but a 4 character password consisting of upper case, lower case, digits and special characters has about 78 million. The more combinations the longer it takes for the hacker's computer to try them all.

So how can we have many passwords, make them long and complex, remember them without writing them down, use each one in only one place and change them frequently? We need a system! I suggest you routinely create passwords that are made up of different parts, then combine or transform them in a consistent way. You may want to choose parts that are specific to you or to the site or service you are accessing. Including a part that is specific to the current year or month can make it easy to change them over time. For example, to generate long random looking passwords you might use the:

- first 4 characters of the site name as part 1.
- digits above these characters on your keyboard as part 2.
- special characters above these characters on your keyboard as part 3.
- first three characters of the last word of the current year as part 4, with the first character capitalized.

The result is 'twit5285%@*%Fif' for twitter, 'Face4133$!##Fif' for Facebook, and 'asla1291!@(!Fif' for aslan.ca. They are long and complex and look random, don't they. But don't use these, because everyone who reads this will be able to figure out your passwords. Instead, pick the parts you will use, pick how you will transform and combine them, and create your own set of rules, and don't tell anyone.

Figure 1 includes some ideas for choosing the parts. Figure 2 has some ways to transform them. Figure 3 has some ways to combine them. Use these ideas, or better yet, why not come up with your own?

Specific To	Rule	Example	Characters	Result Type	Explanation
You	First 3 letters of your name	Rick	Ric	letters	
You	Characters for your favorite emoji		:-)	special characters	
The site or system you are connecting to	Last 4 characters of site name	twitter	tter	letters	
The site or system you are connecting to	First 3 characters of the first thing that comes to mind when you think about the site or system	twitter	bir	letters	When you think of twitter, you think of birds because they twitter. The first 3 characters of birds are 'bir'.
Month or year	Last 3 characters of month name	March	rch	letters	March ends in 'rch'
Month or year	Two digit month	March	03	digits	March is the third month
Month or year	Two digit year	2015	15	digits	15 is the 2 digit year portion of 2015

Figure 1: Choosing Password Parts

From	To	Example	Translation	Why
letter	digit	d	3	3' is above 'd' on keyboard
letter	digit	d	4	d' is the fourth letter
letter	special character	d	#	#' is above 'd' on the keyboard
letter	special character	d	;	;' is right of 'd' on the keyboard
year	number	2015	15	last two digits
year	letter	2015	fif	first three characters of last word (fifteen)
lower	upper	twitter	tWi	first three chars, middle one upper
lower	upper	thecat	TheCat	initial letter of each word is capitalized
char	num	E	3	3' looks like a backward 'E'
char	num	o	zero	zero looks like an 'o'
char	num	i or l	1	1' looks like 'i' or 'l'

Figure 2: Transforming Password Parts

Part 1	Part 2	Part 3	Combine Method	Result
ABC	123	:-)	Sequential	ABC123:-)
ABC	123	:-)	Interleaved	A1:B2-C3)
ABC	123	:-)	Reversed	)-:321CBA

Figure 3: Combining Password Parts

By Rick Simon, Business Development Manager

Security Trends

Neato's robot vacuum cleaner joins the Internet of Things

IoT devices can introduce security vulnerabilities. Firewalls can help prevent hackers from taking advantage of them.

See Neato's robot vacuum cleaner By Darren Quick, gizmag.com

For help choosing and configuring your Firewall contact us

New Technology

Lenovo YOGA Products Are Good in a Weird Way

Lenovo is telling the story of its most recognizable consumer products – YOGA convertibles, tabletop PCs and tablets. A new marketing campaign, dubbed #Goodweird illustrates how YOGA products embrace unexpected design and functionality. The design is weird in a good way because of the amazing things these products enable people to do.

From Lenovo Tells Story of Its #Goodweird Products, News Release, Lenovo

Q & A

See Brute-force attack, ComputerHope.com

or Brute-force attack From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Question:	What is a brute force attack?
The Short Answer:	A brute force attack is when a hacker uses software to try all the possible combinations one after another, to break a password.

If you think someone you know would appreciate and benefit from this information, please forward it to them or SHARE it on:

If you received this from someone you know, and would like to see it on a regular basis, please subscribe or follow us on:

Subscribe Now