

Creating secure, complex passphrases

Everyone has passwords. Passwords to log onto computers, check email, log into websites, pay online bills etc... Most passwords are simple, one word, and surprisingly easy to hack. Pet's names, birthdays, anniversary dates, children's names... These are all commonly used passwords that are insufficient and weak. This guide will teach you how to make your password an easy to remember, yet complex string of characters that is difficult to be hacked or stolen.

To start, forget the term password. Think of it as a Passphrase. Ideally your password should be 15 characters or more. I know most people say, "I can barely remember my ATM PIN number much less a 15 character password." This is why I want you to forget the term password, and start thinking passphrase.

So, how do you create a complex passphrase that is easy to remember? Think to yourself for a minute, how many famous quotes can you think of at this moment? How many lyrics to your favorite songs can you quote right now? Here's a simple one everybody knows:

"I am a little tea pot short and stout, here is my handle here is my spout..." Everybody should remember this little song from their childhood. Now let's convert this into a complex passphrase that is extremely hard to hack, and very easy to remember.

Take the first letter of every word, this will give you something like this:

I A A L T P S A S H I M H H I M S

Now lets substitute some special characters and numbers in place of some letters. Make the I's the number 1, make your A's the character @, your S's can become 5's, and you can add exclamation marks at the end. Do this and you will have something like this:

1@@ltp5@5h1mhh1m5!

Voila you have a 15+ character passphrase that is quite easy to remember. All you have to remember is "I am a little tea pot short and stout here is my handle here is my spout."

This can work for many other phrases as well. Personalize it if you want:

"My name is Joe and I work for Walmart." Use the method described above, take the first letter of every word and substitute some numbers and special characters for a few letters and you could have

Mn1J&1wfW!

The M, J, and W are capitalized because they are capitalized in the sentence.

Substitute some 1's for your I's and add an ampersand (&) in place of the word and, and once again you have created a lengthy complex passphrase that is extremely easy to remember and difficult for a hacker to crack.

Identity theft is no joke, and your personal information is only as secure as you make it to be. Do you really want your online banking information to be protected by your dog's name?