

Creating a secure Password



Why are passwords important?

Choosing a good password is vital for being secure on your PC, your home or office network and the Internet. And yet some of the most common passwords are Password, 123456, God, secret.....

Incredible! These are open invitations to people to hack your systems.

Use of online banking, online shopping and social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn etc. (on which we share all kinds of personal details as well as music, pictures, and videos.) mean that we have to create and remember multiple passwords; you should not use the same password for all your online activity!

The more personal details we make available, the more exposed we are to online identity theft. Identity theft is when a criminal steals confidential personal data that lets them fraudulently obtain goods and services in your name, remove funds from your bank or distribute viruses using your email or social networking account.

Good, or 'strong' passwords help safeguard you against hacking and identity theft. They make it harder for cybercriminals to access your network or PC, profile you, access your bank account (or other online accounts) and steal your money.

So what makes a good password?

A strong password is generally considered to be at least eight characters long and should consist of a mixture of uppercase (capital) letters, lowercase letters, at least 1 number and at least 1 'special' character such as !£\$%^&@# (some online systems will restrict what special characters you can use).

e.g. yHq6l9*a - I don't suggest you use this one!

To help you remember your passwords you could choose a word or phrase that is relevant to the account (e.g. mycheques for your current account) and then apply a rule.

A simple rule might be to change char 2 to #, char 4 to 8, char 6 to capital and char 8 to !
With the above example this results in a password of m#c8eQe!

All you have to do then is to remember a simple expression for each account and your rule.

