Selecting a Strong Password

Overview

Tips and advice on how to create strong passwords for your accounts.
Choosing your password is an important step in securing access to your private information and files. The best passwords do NOT use words found in a dictionary or proper names because these are **easily cracked** by automated programs that rely on word patterns.

Instead, think of a phrase you find memorable which includes one or more numbers, the first letter of each word, and the number. In addition to one or more numbers, be sure to include special characters, such as #, &, or %. Make some of the letters capitals to make the password even better. Another way to include numbers is to use a zero for the letter O, the number one for the letter I or L, or the number three for the letter E.

Example: My little dog Trixie had fleas in 06 & now She does not! = MldThfi06&nSdn!

A good password should:

1. **NOT** contain all or part of your username, social security number, birth date, Tennessee Tech, TTU, or any derivative.
2. Be at least 8 characters in length and **over 15 characters** long if you have something important to protect.
3. Contain characters from:
    a. English uppercase characters (A-Z)
    b. English lowercase characters (a-z)
    c. Numeric characters (0-9)
    d. Special characters on your keyboard: ~, !, @, #, $, %, ^, &, *, -, =, +, ?, [,], {, }

Protect your password, or your accounts will be compromised. Remember to:

- **Never** tell your password to anyone.
- **Never** write a password down where it could be read by others.

If you have forgotten your password:

- You can reset your own password with **IDME** by clicking **Forgot Password?**, entering your username, and selecting **3 Challenge Answers**. You can alternatively choose to reset with an **OTP.**
- ...and have not registered with **IDME**, contact the myTECH Helpdesk at 931-372-3975 or visit them on the main floor of the Volpe Library.

Portions of this page adapted from: **http://www.sans.org/top20/#threats**

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