

## Passwords

Passwords are very important, they

- keep your personal information safe
- stop people from getting access to systems that they might break

A secure password is difficult for other people to guess but is also difficult for a machine to crack. Machines can try lots of combinations very quickly.

**If all passwords** were made of numbers a password 3 characters long would give 000 to 999 this is 1000 possible different passwords. That might sound a lot but a computer could try all those combinations in a fraction of a second. It would be very bad to have a password that is just numbers.

**If all passwords** were made from 3 letters we would have aaa to zzz that is 17576 possible combinations so that is a lot better.

**If all passwords** used upper and lower case letters as different instead of 26 letters we have 52 so that is 140,608 possibilities

**If all passwords** were made from numbers and letters it increases from 52 to 62 possible characters. If we add %\$£@ etc we can get as many as 128. So for a 3 character password we have over 2 million possibilities. If we increase that to a 6 character password it is 67675234241018881 possibilities so we are really getting a lot lot more secure.

So **make sure your password** has Upper case, lowercase letters, at least a number and one of the special characters in it and is more than 6 characters long.

### Won't this be difficult to remember?

Not really, here are some examples of strong memorable passwords - but don't use them exactly!

MyBestFriend100%

20%RipOff

64\$isExpensive

ChangeMy£10to\$10

ILuvMy\*Dog2bits

- Don't use obvious words by themselves such as Password
- Don't use any dictionary words by themselves - computers can try all the words in a dictionary
- Don't tell anyone else your password
- Don't try and find out anyone else's password
- Don't store your password in an ordinary word processing file on your computer, especially not in a file called password!
- Do write your password down and keep it safe somewhere where it won't be obvious what it is if someone finds it.

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