

Keeping Your Password Secure

Maintaining Your First Line of Defense

Related Tip Sheet: Choosing a Good Password

Introduction

You use passwords to access your services through the University and NSIT, your online credit card and bank accounts, eCommerce sites like Amazon, and popular social networking sites like Facebook and MySpace. It is important to choose good passwords and make sure no one gets access to your private information. Here are some tips on how to keep your passwords secure.

Choose good passwords

Secure passwords have at least 8 digits and are not based on dictionary words. Pick a password using a combination of letters, numbers, and symbols. For a full list of tips on how to choose a good password, see our *Choosing a Good Password Tip Sheet*.

Never share your password with anyone!

Don't give out your password to friends or family members, and never give out your password online to others. Email requests for your password and other private information are scams. University administrators and your banking representatives will never request this kind of information through email, fax, or phone.

Don't use the same password for all your accounts

Never use your CNet password for your social networking pages or low-security accounts. You should choose separate, unique passwords for each account or service.

Avoid using non-secure networks

Don't access sensitive information using your CNet password on public networks or public computers (e.g., computers in a hotel lobby, library or Internet cafe). Hackers can more easily access your username, password, and other private information by tracking your keystrokes using remote software.

Change your password after using a non-secure network

You should change your password after using a public or internet cafe network the next time you are at a secure machine.

Change your password after traveling abroad

If you frequently access wireless networks overseas, you should change your password the next time you are at a secure machine.

Change your password once a year

You want to choose a password you can remember, while also making sure to change it periodically. Find a method that works best for you.



Never store your password in a program

Many email programs offer to store your password. This is a bad idea. Many computer viruses and spyware programs can retrieve stored passwords from these accounts.

Never write down your password

Writing down passwords makes it easier for others to access your private accounts and information. Choose a password that you can remember.

To change your CNet password, visit <http://cnet.uchicago.edu>.

To learn about other tips for safe computing, visit <http://nsit.uchicago.edu/safecomputing>.

For additional assistance

Please email support@uchicago.edu or call 4-TECH



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