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## Password Security

Password security is a very tricky issue. Ultimately you want great password security to keep the evil hackers out of your system. Unfortunately, there is a really big trade off in making passwords secure vs. the amount of confusion you cause when you make them very, very secure.

Here are the commonly accepted security guidelines:

- at least 8 characters
- combination of Upper case, lower case and numbers
- NEVER a WORD, a name or a birthday
- Should be easy to remember, so you do not need to write it down
- should be quick to type, so someone over your shoulder cannot see what you type
- change at least every 90 days

Very bad passwords (easy to use, easy to guess)

- tommy
- tommy13
- Tommy42
- Jan151968
- 2478MainSt

Better passwords (easier to remember, harder to guess or hack)

- iLuv2Sh0p
- I8thew0leTHANG
- UMMD0nuts8
- MyDawgR0cks
- NRGrunslig8ts

Great passwords (Nearly impossible to hack [or remember])

- 78QR14zy279
- uzix7123uid
- 8908tvbNYUJ43
- zdTRjv09vsLXkoi

For user passwords, we generally suggest the guideline of 8 characters including uppercase, lowercase, numbers, easy to remember, easy to type.

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If the user can actually remember a password, it REALLY helps. If it can't be remembered, you will find it on a sticky note on the side of the monitor. (Something like leaving your car keys hanging in the driver's side door lock...)

If you change passwords too often, you can create an administrative nightmare, and give someone a full time job just recording, updating, and looking up passwords for all those who forget (or can't type accurately.)

**Do pick the most secure password for your firewalls and servers.**

Make a game of picking a password that is unique. We have has customers who have had some unusual methods.

One customer used NoNNeI2964 for the password – she is a big Beatles fan and nonnel is Lennon spelled backwards (along with the date they appeared on Ed Sullivan – Feb. 9, 1964).

Another was a Shakespeare Lover, and used Rich2Act1Scn, referring to the quote "The purest treasure mortal times afford, is spotless reputation" from Richard II, Act 1, Scene 1.

Yet another was a cook, and used 833fWe11nGt0n for Beef Wellington.

A language lover may look for a translation of their name. Choosing a good password doesn't have to be a drag. Just remember the one you chose, and in exactly the way you typed it in. If you must write it down, put it in a secure place – not on the monitor.

Thanks,

Bruce Meyer

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