Instructor Resource

Questions and answers for Security Guides, Ethics Guides, and So What Guides

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Security Guides

Chapter 1 - Password Etiquette

1. Here is a line from Shakespeare's Macbeth: "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow, creeps in its petty pace." Explain how to use these lines to create a password. How could you add numbers and special characters to the password in a way that you will be able to remember?

   There are several correct ways to create a password from this line. One way might be to take the first letters from each word. The password would then be "tatatciipp". You could then capitalize a couple of the letters and add in a special character or numbers. The resulting password could be "T&2morrow&tciiPP". This would be a very secure password.

2. List two different phrases that you can use to create a strong password. Show the password created by each.

   There will be many correct answers to this question. Using a passphrase to create a password is done by using the first letters in the phrase. Then changing some of the letters by substituting in special characters, numbers, or changes of case. For example, the phrase, "I never count my chickens before the eggs have hatched!" could create the password "iNcmCHKNSb4t3ggsHH!" This would be a great password.

3. One of the problems of life in the cyberworld is that we all are required to have multiple passwords—one for work or school, one for bank accounts, another for eBay or other auction sites, and so forth. Of course, it is better to use different passwords for each. But in that case you have to remember three or four different passwords. Think of different phrases you can use to create a memorable, strong password for each of these different accounts. Relate the phrase to the purpose of the account. Show the passwords for each.

   There will be many correct answers to this question. For example, a passphrase for a university account may look something like, "I will graduate from state university before 2020 or bust!" This could yield a password that would look like "IwgfSUb42020ORB!"

4. Explain proper behavior when you are using your computer and you need to enter, for some valid reason, another person's password.

   In this case, say to the other person, "We need your password," and then get out of your chair, offer your keyboard to the other person, and look away while she enters the password. Among professionals working in organizations that take security seriously, this little "do-si-do" move—one person getting out of the way so another person can enter her password—is common and accepted.

5. Explain proper behavior when someone else is using her computer and that person needs to enter, for some valid reason, your password.

   If someone asks for your password, do not give it out. Instead, get up, go over to that person's machine, and enter your own password yourself. Stay present while your password is in use, and ensure that your account is logged out at the end of the activity. No one should mind or be offended in any way when you do this. It is the mark of a professional.