

Why do I need password security?

Passwords are an important aspect of computer security. They provide protection for your online user accounts. If someone else has your password, your electronic life—including e-mail, personnel data or student account information, and class projects—becomes available to others. You are at great risk of becoming a victim of identity theft.

Simple passwords may cause a breach of security resulting in the theft of your user accounts. Compromised accounts are a risk for everyone. While you may think the worst someone might do to you is to send an embarrassing e-mail message from your account, your account could also be used to launch attacks on other Pace University systems, companies, or institutions around the world. If someone else could figure out your password, they could assume your electronic identity.

Your password gives others the power to:

- modify or destroy your files
- send malicious e-mail—such as spam or threats—in your name
- commit fraud while masquerading as you
- use your computer to illegally distribute things like child pornography
- access and distribute information on University servers

If anything malicious or criminal is done through your account, you will have to prove you're not the culprit!

Passwords are private

Keep your passwords hidden from colleagues, friends or family (especially children) that could pass them on to less trustworthy individuals.

Change your password regularly

This simple practice can help keep criminals and other malicious users unaware of your password. By changing your password every 3 to 6 months, you will provide better protection for your account.

Create a complex password

Developing a complex password provides the best defense against breaches in the security of your online accounts. It is tempting to pick something easy to remember. However, hackers use password “cracking” programs that can rapidly find a password match.

The strength of your password will help keep it effective for a longer time. A password that is shorter than 8 characters could be easier to determine than a longer password. For example, a password that is 14 characters or longer (and follows the other rules outlined in Password guidelines) would be harder to breach.

By keeping your password private, changing it regularly and using a complex password, you are providing a better defense against account intrusion.

Password guidelines

Here are some guidelines for choosing strong, complex passwords:

- meets minimum character length (depends on systems being accessed)
- contains a mix of upper and lower case letters
- includes numerals, special characters, and punctuation (check if your system can handle all special characters)
- not based on personal information
- not based on any dictionary word

Examples of complex passwords:

- use more than one word (SamlikesTurtles, AndyandDog)
- use a combination of special characters and letters (Allison = @ll!s0n)
- choose events or people that are on your mind (my eye hurts = MyE6eHuRt\$)
- use phonetics in words (Want to dance? = R0ndaDan\$?)
- lengthy passwords (Four score and seven years ago our fathers = 4score&7yrsAgoOurFather\$)
- use first letters of a phrase (My son Luke is in the Coast Guard in DC = MsL\$inCGdc)

When to change your password

Change your password if:

- you don't meet these guidelines
- you have used the same password for more than 3 to 6 months
- you shared your password with anyone
- you have written your password down anywhere

Protect your password

Make every effort to protect your password and be mindful of these dos and don'ts:

- *do* change your password regularly
- *do* create a complex password
- *do* use the systems logout feature whenever it's provided
- *don't* tell anyone your password
- *don't* write it down or e-mail it
- *don't* let anyone observe you entering it

Notable quotes

Treat your password like your toothbrush—don't share it with others and change it every few months.

Passwords are like bubble gum—strongest when fresh; should be used by an individual, not by a group; and if left lying around, will create a sticky mess!

Password Haiku

Lowering your guard

Sharing your secret password

Bodes ill for you both – *R. Chris Brown*

How to change your password

Go to Pace's **Password Reset Utility** (PRU) located at <http://pru.pace.edu>. Select **Click here** at the top of the page for guidelines and help when choosing a complex password. After reviewing these guidelines, select **Click here** to return to the PRU homepage.

To change your password, select **Change your password** and follow the prompts.

Questions?

More information is available from the Division of Information Technology:

- phone: 914.773.3648
- via web: doithelpdesk.pace.edu

101707



your guide to *Password Security*

