

Keeping Track of Passwords

Every week we hear about another security breach on the Internet. Recently it was [JPMorgan Chase](#). Time to change your JPMorgan Chase password. Hopefully if you have a JPMorgan Chase account your password is not the same as any other account. Security experts recommend that you have unique and complicated passwords. Having unique passwords means that when one company is hacked you don't have to change your password at some other company which has the same password. Having complicated nonsensical passwords makes it harder for automated bots to randomly generate your password.

Complicated passwords have these characteristics:

Example: Fy%9<Ds56#

- The longer the better (10 characters or more but remember you might have to enter it repeatedly on small device keyboards)
- Have upper and lower case letters
- Also have numbers
- Also have special characters (~,!,@,#,\$,%,^,&,*,<,>) Some websites won't allow some special characters so you may have to try again.

Remember, you are no longer expected to memorize a password so feel free to make up any combination randomly. Just make sure to record it before you enter it so you will have what you entered.

I hate to keep harping on passwords but the tech world is full of them and Internet breaches are happening every week. I personally feel that the days of trying to remember passwords are over. Keep a good list and refer to it when you need to. Everyone will have a different way to keep his or her list.

Different ways to keep track of your passwords:

- Keep your passwords on paper. Print out this [PDF](#) to get started.
- Buy a convenient password book to keep in your purse or pocket. [See examples.](#)
- Keep your passwords in a computer file on your computer. Save this Microsoft Word document or this Excel spreadsheet to get started (see links below). I would suggest that you password protect your document and maybe even change the name from "Passwords" to something less obvious.
 - [Microsoft Word password document](#)
 - [Microsoft Excel password document](#)

How to password protect a Microsoft document or spreadsheet:

1. Click File menu
2. Click Save As
3. Click Tools (just to the right of the Save button see Tools)
4. Click General Options
5. Click in the Password to Open box and type your "Master Password" to open this file and don't forget this password
6. Click OK
7. Retype your Master Password
8. Click OK
9. In the File Name box type a new name for this new file that will have all your passwords
10. Click Save

From now on when you try to open this file you will be asked for your Master Password. DON'T FORGET IT. There is no way to recover this password if you forget it. You will have to start over if you can't open this file in the future.

- Use a program (app) to store, generate and auto-fill passwords for you. Some are free for one device (computer, cell phone, tablet). Some have monthly/yearly fees to sync passwords between devices so you will always have your password list with you.
 - www.dashlane.com [Dashlane tutorial](#) (my current favorite)
 - www.roboform.com [RoboForm tutorial](#)
 - www.1password.com [1Password tutorial](#)
 - www.lastpass.com [LastPass tutorial](#)

One caveat on using a password manager: Some financial institutions do not allow password managers to be used on their websites. If so that institution has decided that password managers are a danger to their system since it is "one point of failure". Meaning, if someone were to gain access to your password manager account they would have the "keys to the kingdom" so to speak. Others argue that password managers are better than the alternatives of computer files, sheets of paper or password books.

So it really is a tossup as to what the best method is for organizing your passwords. One thing is clear, everyone has to pick one method and use it consistently so when it comes time to change a password you can do it quickly with the least amount of fuss.

Some day we may get past the password nightmare we are all in. None of us like to change passwords constantly. I am sure the top brains in tech are working on the next level of security on the Internet which will replace passwords altogether. But in the mean time keep your list somewhere and keep it up-to-date.

Updates/Upgrades

[Click here](#) to see if you should do an update or upgrade.

Newsletter Archives

[Click here](#) to read some of my past newsletters.

Some of my clients do not realize that my business has expanded to all mobile devices. In fact, any consumer electronic product that you can purchase I can help you with. So if you would like help setting up or syncing your new smartphone or tablet or connecting your new WiFi TV to the Internet, just let me know.

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