



P@S3W0RD\$ YOU CAN REMEMBER

Last fall I mentioned that the most common problem we face in the PSRC computer lab is forgotten user IDs and passwords. Without them, you cannot do much of anything on line. And I suggested keeping your passwords on your computer, which, itself should be protected with a password, or, at least, a four-digit PIN.

A similar problem is making up a new password when you establish a new on-line account, or when you have to reset your password because you didn't take my advice in the previous paragraph. Then you'll need to conjure up a password that's usually an eight-character string comprising at least:

- Two upper case letters,
- Two lower case letters,
- Two numbers, and
- Two symbols

Unfortunately, few things come to mind that would use such a hodge-podge of characters. Sometimes, I'll let Keychain on my Mac create a random password for me, which it then stores in its secure file (very handy!). You can also purchase a third-party password app like 1Password that works for most browsers and operating systems.

But sometimes I log in to, say, my iCloud or Gmail account from a remote location and don't want to rely on an app to remind me of my password. For those few accounts, I'll create a password that's a long word or short phrase that uses symbols and numbers for letters, like P@S3W0rd\$ in the title of this article. (Of course, I'd never use any variation of "password" as a real password, and I'm sure you wouldn't, either.)

Here are three more examples:

- Eye8aG00se! ("I ate a goose." This is the form person-action-object. And, no, I've never eaten a G00se.)
- 4Ev3rA*! ("Forever a star!" How you will describe your spouse from now on.)
- EyeMN3vRL8! ("I'm never late!" It's not true, but it's good to hear yourself say it.)

Now, to be *really* secure, your passwords should be much longer—say, 20 characters or more—because computers can quickly "crack" shorter ones by trial and error. But a more reasonable threat is someone logging into your Gmail account, which uses your E-mail address as your ID, and then guessing your password. A person would have a hard time guessing these smaller passwords that use numbers and symbols.

G00Dby4Now.