

PASSWORDS - TOP SECRET

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We all know how important our passwords are but how much do we really understand about creating and protecting them?

Here at Thrings, we have given a great deal of thought to this difficult topic. This sheet is designed to help you:

- Create a strong password.
- Protect it from unwanted intruders.
- Avoid the most common password pitfalls.

We cannot guarantee your password will be 100% secure but we can certainly reduce the risks that we all face when we use the Internet.

Creating a strong password

Strong passwords have at least 14 characters, using upper case and lower case and letters, numbers and symbols. The difficulty is how to remember the password you have created. Here is one method you might like to try:

- Think of your favourite song from your teenage years. Without wishing to show our average ages here at Thrings, one possibility could be 'when I am sixty four'.
- Take out all of the vowels leaving consonants only so on this one that would be 'whnmsxyfr'.
- Make alternate letters upper case: wHnMsXtYfR
- Add two numbers that are meaningful to you between what is left of the second and third word. Do not repeat the same number: wHn56MsXtYfR
- Chose two different symbols from your keyboard and put one at the beginning and one at the end: !wHn56MsXtYfR*

Protecting your password

- Do not tell your password to other people.
- Do not store your password on your computer.
- Do not type your password into computers in places that are open to the public, such as internet cafes, hotels and airport lounges.
- It is ok to write your password down but keep it in a secure place such as a strong box.

Password pitfalls

- Do not use your name, birthday, drivers licence, passport number or children's names and birthdays.
- Do not use a word that can be found in a dictionary, even if it is in a foreign language.
- Do not use dictionary words even if they are spelt backwards or abbreviations.
- Do not use common sequences or repeated characters or adjacent keyboard strokes (e.g. asdfg).

Remember that hackers and criminals have access to sophisticated software that can decipher passwords and log key strokes.

Finally, remember that the stronger your password the more you can enjoy using the internet without exposing yourself to too greater risk.

If you want to remain in control, contact one of our specialists:

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