Protecting your Personal Information with Secure Passwords - National Cyber Security Awareness Month

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
https://www.dhs.gov/blog/2013/05/08/protecting-your-personal-information-secure-passwords

From email and banking to social media and mobile apps, the average person has a long list of passwords. While keeping track of numerous account logins can be tedious, there could be serious implications if a cybercriminal gains access to your email, financial information, social security number, or even your medical records. Passwords are the most common means of authentication online, and that is why it is critical to use strong passwords and keep them confidential.

Here are some the tips below from the Stop.Think.Connect. ™ campaign to help make your passwords stronger and help keep them secure:

• Don't use words that can be found in any dictionary of any language and use a combination of upper and lowercase letters, numbers, and symbols.
• Don't use passwords that are based on personal information or that can be easily accessed or guessed including birthdays, names of pets, or favorite movies and books that can be found by a quick search on social networking sites.
• Use passphrases like "Thispasswdis4myemail!" to help you remember complex passwords.
• Write down your passwords and store them in a secure place away from your computer if necessary. For example, passwords locked in your desk drawer are secure, but passwords on a sticky note stuck to the monitor are not.
• Use different passwords for different accounts and change them regularly.
• Make sure account login pages use encryption including a URL that begins with "https:" instead of "http:". Look for the padlock icon in the browser bar, too. If the padlock icon appears on the webpage, but not in the browser bar, it might just be a graphic that a cybercriminal embedded to trick you into feeling secure.

Cybersecurity is a shared responsibility and we are all called on to ACT or Achieve Cybersecurity Together. We know it only takes a single infected computer to potentially infect thousands and perhaps millions of others. But at the end of the day, cybersecurity is ultimately about people. The most impressive and sophisticated technology is worthless if it's not operated and maintained by informed and conscientious users.

If each of us commits to staying informed of cybersecurity risks and takes a few simple steps, we can all make a big difference to stay safe online.

For more information on choosing and protecting passwords, visit the U.S. Computer Emergency Readiness Team (US-CERT),

Choosing and Protecting Passwords

http://www.us-cert.gov/ncas/tips/st04-002

General online safety tips, visit Stop.Think.Connect, Get Involved and Informed

http://www.dhs.gov/stopthinkconnect

October is National Cyber Security Awareness Month

http://www.dhs.gov/national-cyber-security-awareness-month

Cybersecurity – What You Can Do

http://www.dhs.gov/topic/cybersecurity