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Tips for Selecting and Managing Passwords Securely (is it safe?)

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In today's world, if there's one key to data security and privacy, it is a strong password. A common question that is sometimes asked is which is the safest password manager, but before I discuss some options, lets talk about why you need a password manager.

Whatever account you create, whether online or locally, you need a password, and a strong one at that, to ensure you are the only one able to log in and view your private work. However, one issue that is coming up is the fact that nowadays it is possible to have hundreds of different accounts for different services and using the same log in credentials on them all is akin to having the same key to all your locks. If you happen to misplace it, whoever has it will have gotten access to all your accounts and this is a major security breach.

To avoid this, you need to develop good password hygiene by following the following basics while creating effective passwords.

- Create strong passwords with a minimum of 12 – 16 characters.
- No recycling/reusing passwords.
- Regularly update your passwords every 3 months to curb any breach.
- Avoid having internet browsers saving passwords for you.
- Avoid obvious passwords like pet names, family names, year of birth and so on.
- Include upper and lowercase letters, numbers and symbols if the service allows them.

This may seem like a lot of work and it may be difficult to manage everything yourself; creating many passwords and committing your memory to them. That is why you need a password manager to do the hard work for you.

What is a Password Manager?

Think of a password manager as a secure platform where you can store and retrieve all your passwords at any time. Like having a book where you have written down all passwords and codes you need to log into your various accounts. All that you need for this to be effective is a master password known only to you that you will use to open the password manager and view your other keys.

This way, you can have as many unique passwords as possible and you do not have to put them to memory. You do not even have to trouble your creativity trying to come up with watertight

passwords. Most password managers will do the hard work for you and give you suggestions for secure passwords to use.

Do you need one?

If you are not sure whether a password manager would be of value to you, consider the following benefits.

1. **Safety from password reuse attacks.** Cyber-crime has become a major issue today and having a unique password for each of your accounts guarantees your security, even when one of your accounts is hacked. Sometimes attackers will break into a website and steal your email and password and if you happen to use the same credentials with other accounts, there is risk of them being broken into as well. With a password manager you are able to create unique passwords for all your accounts, a hacker will not be able to use your Account#1password to log into Account#2 as they will be different.

2. **Password Managers will also protect you from imposter websites.** A common strategy that cybercriminals use to steal your login credentials is by presenting you with a similar website to where you already have an account and tricking you to provide the email and password you use on them. With a password manager, you will be safe from such attacks since the manager will not provide the password for such a site. Generally, a password manager will know all websites where you have accounts and it will detect the one the attacker will use as phony thus avoiding mistakes.

3. **A password manager also tracks your activities on all websites where you have accounts.** In case you created an account and forgot all about it, the manager will still have the information for you. You will also identify the accounts that you no longer need and you can delete them to reduce your online exposure.
What is the safest password manager and how to select it?

When it comes to choosing the safest password manager, it is all up to you. By searching online, you will find a number of password managers, depending on the device you'll use them with.

Most iPhone and iPad users, running iOS 11 and later, will already have a password manager by default. For the rest of the users, many password managers are available online, some for free, but with some useful features.

Lastpass is a good example that I would recommend since it is one that I actually use. A major advantage of it is that it is possible to sync the passwords across all your devices simplifying access.

1password is another popular manager and it is integratred with Troy Hunt's Pwned Password database. This means that it becomes possible for you to tell if a password has been previously exposed in a data breach thus avoiding them.

If you are looking for a password manager that doesn't store your information in the cloud and instead remains in your device at all times, then your best option would be KeePass. This reduces the risk of being hacked online and losing the information to hackers. This is a real threat for individuals working with the government or other corporate companies.

Conclusion

However, as much as we'd like to have a completely secure way to save our personal data, it is important to note that in the world we live in today, nothing can really be considered to be ultimately safe and impenetrable. When the question **what is the safest password manager** is asked, it's hard to choose just one option. It's important to pick a solution that meets your needs and requirements.

The most likely way that a password manager can work against you is if you forget your master password and that way lose your access to the password manager, and as a result, all the other accounts' passwords. The master password landing in the wrong hands is another real threat as that way you will have lost complete access to all your accounts.

That aside, the advantages that you will have with a password manager far outweigh the risks involved. By keeping your password manager updated to prevent bugs and malware, and by protecting your master password, you will enjoy many benefits.

Image: **Zan**

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