Organizing and Storing Your Online Passwords

Keep your passwords secure and accessible with these storage methods

Considering how connected you are in today's digital world, it's important to ensure your online presence is secure with a strong set of passwords. It can admittedly be difficult to keep track of these various passwords, and as the number of websites you sign into grows-, so does the challenge of organizing that growing list. Fortunately, there are some helpful tricks and tools you can use to organize and store the passwords you use while on the internet.

Why multiple passwords are essential

Many internet users may question the point of utilizing numerous passwords for different websites. Nick Douglas of LifeHacker explains that reusing passwords makes it more likely for you to be hacked. If someone gets ahold of your password, it will be easier for them to steal your information or identity if you use the same password for different websites. Multiple passwords that avoid common phrases will keep all of your data more secure. It may be tempting to make several simple passwords for all the sites that you use, but Robert Siciliano of the Balance warns that doing so is a mistake, as these simple passwords will be easier for hackers to decipher.

Method #1: Write your passwords down

One of the simplest ways to track your passwords is to physically write them down. Hayley Tsukayama of The Washington Post says that writing your passwords down on a physical piece of paper groups all your passwords in one convenient location. Tsukayama warns that a piece of paper or notebook could be stolen, however, thus putting all of your passwords at risk. Nara Schoenberg of The Chicago Tribune says that a piece of paper with all of your passwords on it is even more vulnerable if you live with a roommate or in a dorm-like setting. If you live alone or with a trusted friend or family member, this method is a bit more secure.

Method #2: Store your passwords in a computer document

A similar way of storing your passwords involves creating a digital document on your computer. Schoenberg states that this method is a fair bit more secure than simply writing down your passwords, as you have to log in to your computer to access it. If someone can get a hold of this document, though, they'll have access to all your passwords just as easily as if you wrote them down. Never share this document over the internet or via e-mail.

Method #3: Store your passwords on the cloud

There are various methods of storing your internet passwords over the internet. One of the most common methods is via a cloud-based system. Siciliano says that storing passwords via the cloud presents several advantages. The cloud is easy to access on any of your devices, meaning you'll take your passwords with you on the go. The data is also encrypted, protecting it from other online users. Siciliano does warn that the cloud is not foolproof. Like all computer systems, cloud-based interfaces can be vulnerable to advanced hacking or system outages.

Method #4: Use a password management program

Another way to store and protect your passwords is by utilizing a password protection program or app. These systems are designed specifically to organize and protect internet passwords. Many of these password managers are free. However, Jon Martindale of Digital Trends says that the most reliable of these services require a small fee to access. David Nield of Gizmodo notes that many internet browsers have built-in password management systems of their own. These work best if you're signing into a program that is supported by the browser, such as signing into Gmail via Google Chrome.

Drafting a wide assortment of passwords will help keep you more secure on the web, and employing a storage method will make it easy to access those passwords.