

The World of Passwords

Don't pass up a strong password

World Password Day is May 7th, 2026. But passwords are important every day, and this month, your IQ newsletter is all about the dos and don'ts of password security.



The best passwords are unique. It's tempting to use the same password for multiple accounts. That's easier to remember, right? But using the same password across multiple accounts leaves every one of those accounts vulnerable. When one account is breached, hackers have that password for every other account that shares it.



Make it memorable. Instead of passwords, many experts suggest using passphrases. Combine several words from a statement or a favorite quote, creating something that's both hard to guess and easy to remember.



If you're using a passphrase, don't pick a quote from pop culture. If your passphrase starts "LukelAm," the average netizen will probably guess "YourFather."



Use a password manager. These handy services store all of your login information under one master password, making it easier to coordinate your accounts. Even better—if a hacker sends you to a phony site, your password manager won't autofill your details in the fake login. Choose password managers approved by your organization and browse safely!



Your password should never contain sensitive information. Details like your birthday, your pet's name or the street where you grew up are common password choices, but they're often publicly available. On the other hand, a random phrase like "dogfishdontbark" contains no personal data.

Most popular passwords of 2025

It's that time again! The top passwords of the past year are now available, and there's some pretty familiar faces here.

- 123456
- 1234567890
- qwerty
- qwerty123
- lloveyou
- 111111
- password

Is longer stronger? Changing password guidelines¹

If you've been online for a while, you've probably heard that you should mix numbers and punctuation into your password. Many sites and services still require passwords with these add-ons. But recent guidance from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) says that length, not character complexity, is the most important factor for a password. NIST now recommends passwords of between 15 and 64 letters — no special characters required.



1. NIST 800-63B, <https://pages.nist.gov/800-63-4/sp800-63b.html>