



Take a second to be secure.

The Security Minute

A communication of the Longwood University Information Security Office

Read *The Security Minute* Online: www.longwood.edu/infosec

May 2008



What is ... authentication?

Authentication is a process where you provide one or more forms of identification to verify that you are who you say you are. When you supply a username and password, your password is used to authenticate your identity.

A password is like a toothbrush

- Get the best quality.
- Change it often.
- Never let anyone else use it.



Be Mysterious: Don't Share Your Password

Two simple rules can help protect University IT resources, IT systems, University data, your identity and your secrets.

1. Never share your password with anyone.
2. Never ask others to share their password with you.

Why shouldn't I share my password?

Passwords protect our secrets.

Consider as an example that when you share your password you are allowing another individual access to your e-mail account. Are there e-mails you have sent or received that you wouldn't want anyone else to see? Have you sent messages to friends and family? Have you had conversations with your utility company or a realtor? If you have sent or received any such messages they are available to anyone with your password.

Passwords protect other people's secrets.

Your password works like a key to open a door to information about students, other employees and the University's operation. Students and other employees expect the keys to their data to be guarded very closely because of risks such as identity theft. Consider again your e-mail account and think about any messages that students or colleagues may have sent you that they would not like shared.

Passwords protect us from mistakes.

Some people share passwords because they trust a person and believe a friend or colleague would never snoop in their e-mail or use any information obtained for fraud. However, an honest mistake by an unauthorized user in a system can have major consequences. Information, such as a contact information in a database, is useful because it is correct. When a person is untrained or unfamiliar with a system a small, innocent error may go unnoticed. When the error is finally discovered you may be asked to confirm why you made the change but you will have no memory of making the alteration.

Be Mysterious: When you share your password you may be sharing more than you think.



Security Spotlight

University Policy #6119: Password Management includes minimum standards for University passwords and tips for creating memorable passwords. See these helpful hints in the Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual:

http://www.longwood.edu/vpaf/final_policy_base/



The Security Minute is a monthly publication aimed at raising awareness of information security related issues and concerns. If you have any questions regarding the newsletter, please contact Melissa Short at 434-395-2034 or shortmj@longwood.edu.