

SECURITY

PASSWORDS, PASSPHRASES AND PASSCODES - KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

BY
SHAUN ADAMS

PASSWORDS, PASSPHRASES AND PASSCODES - KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

In Shakespearian times, names didn't matter. You could call anything by any name you could think of and it'd be fine. At least that's what I interpret from some of that writing. Alas, in this innovation age, the same can't be said. Names matter, definitions matter. Knowing the differences between Passwords, Passphrases and Passcodes could mean a great deal to your business and its security.

“What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.” -W. Shakespeare

SECURITY

Cyber-security is now something that every person who has access to the internet has to worry about. It's no longer a nerd's game or concern. We live in a world where everything is digitised and accessible 'online,' including those x-rays of your broken leg! You need to make sure that it stays where its supposed to. For the most part, all that stands between your deepest, darkest personal secrets and the world is a password. A string of 8-12 letters, numbers and symbols.

PASSWORDS

A password is a word used for user authentication to prove identity to gain access to a protected resource. These are usually less secure and more easily guessed. Social engineering is a major tool used in cracking and guessing passwords. In both a surprising but inevitable twist, due to passwords being hard to remember most of the time, people basically use the same password everywhere. Results from a survey of 1,000 people conducted by Keeper Security, a password management software, revealed a horrible truth. It's not what you'd expect. The more age-advanced internet users are not the worst offenders!

PASSWORD REUSE BY AGE GROUP

87%

respondents of age
18 to 30

81%

respondents of age
30+

SOCIAL ENGINEERING

Humans are smart. I mean, we're at the top of the food chain while Lions and Sharks still exist! This can only mean one thing: we're great at getting what we want. Social engineering is the psychological manipulation of people into performing actions or divulging confidential information. Social engineering is a word that, in this instance, means when someone uses any means to 'con' someone into providing information about themselves that they wouldn't regularly provide. Such as their mother's maiden name, or their first pets name.

PASSWORDS, PASSPHRASES AND PASSCODES - KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

PASSPHRASES

More commonly used for more secure endeavours, passphrases are full grammatical sentences that are more often than not used to unlock greater caches of information. For example, there are 1,000's of password managers out on the market today. These Aladin's cave of security and personal information often require a passphrase to be created in order to access it. Traditionally passphrases are more secure and harder to crack due to their number of characters and randomness. For example, a great passphrase for an internet banking site would be "What's that green thing doing there?" Each of the elements, capitals, spaces and proper grammar are unique and would take 100's of thousands of attempts to successfully crack.

PASSCODES

More commonly referred to as a Personal Identification Number (PIN), due to the fact that this access secret can only contain numbers. These are used by banks as they're short and easy to remember. As we all know, a 4-digit PIN is impossible to crack.

The safest way to keep your PIN away from the bad guys is to opt for a 6-digit PIN and make it something that doesn't spell a word on a touch-tone pad or has anything to do with a significant date in your, or a loved one's life.

So there we have it, the difference between Passwords, Passphrases and Passcodes. I suggest you go out now and change all your online passwords into passphrases and don't reuse them! For any further assistance or advice on how to keep yourself safe in this digital world, contact us today.

