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Password Protection and Remembrance
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[2020 Master Password List](#)

Password protection is always something that gets lost in many people's minds in recent memory. We look at our phones, the camera lens immediately knows who we are, and we are let into our own personal information from our phones without the use of manually typing in our passwords. It's very fast, easy, and efficient when it comes to knowing how to get into your phone or other electronic devices without having to type in your password.

However, what happens when you can't use your face? What happens when you need to restart your iPhone or laptop, and you need to manually type in your password? Most importantly, what happens when you forget your password and need to remember how to log in to all your personal data? These are questions that have been thought of by many people in the information technology industry and have provided answers for how people can create passwords that are easy to remember and that are not easily stolen. With much information, such as government records, bank statements, and other personal information, it is important for everyone who has access to a cellphone, tablet, or computer to be able to protect such information from the outside world.

Throughout the Newhouse School of Communications, there are plenty of staff members who have a clear understanding of the importance of password protection. Brian Tibbens leads the Newhouse Information and Computing Services Team, and he mentioned how passwords have evolved since their inception. "Password protection has seen evolutions since its inception," he said. "Even in the

last fifteen years, there has been a dramatic shift. The challenge being humans are still humans, which is why the challenges have to exist.”

The above link shows the top ten most commonly used passwords from 2020. As you can see, a lot of these passwords are very straightforward and simple. Many are in chronological order, with 1 through 5, and many are simple names like dragon, baseball, or even the best one yet, password. “A lot of this is because we’re creatures of comfort,” Tibbens said. “We like easy, we’re not good at remembering new sequences of numbers, new sequences of variables, because we work on repetition.” Many people are inclined to remember certain number sequences from their childhood, like phone numbers or house codes, and the simple reason why people continue to use these codes for their passcodes today is because its easy.

In this day and age, the idea of confidentiality is greater than just a username and password in order to sign up for something such as a subscription. Many people who put in their username and password are met with an email that has been sent to them or a text to their phone number, to make sure that they are who they really are. “Those are designed in theory because the only person who should have access to that secondary account is the owner,” Tibbens said. “It has to send it to another account that you should have access to, or a telephone. If you've already logged in with my password, it knows it's you.”

However, here at Syracuse University, and even other colleges or organizations, aren’t allowing words of any kind in the dictionary to appear in your passwords. Jim Nguyen is a member of the Newhouse Information and Computing Services department. He helps provide desktop, classroom,

systems administration, and server support for the Newhouse School. He has also had previous stints working at CBS Broadcasting, Nielsen Media Research, and the Syracuse City School District.

Jim talked about the Syracuse University policy and how that has helped with password protection in recent years. "At SU, you cannot include in your password a word that exists in the dictionary," Nguyen said. "I don't know what dictionary they use, but other blocks that you can't use are parts of your username in your password or your name." Jim also mentioned that they now have password length restrictions, which are usually eight characters or longer, and now they require an uppercase, a lowercase, and a special character of some kind.

Jim also mentioned his past experiences and connected them back to what he's dealing with here at Newhouse with the students. "So in former places as well as Newhouse, the tendency is to prevent people from reusing passwords," he said. "Also putting them onto sticky notes and things like that. Things have gotten more restrictive in terms of how often we have to change passwords."

Password protection will forever be a part of our development as humans. It is our responsibility to remember our passwords and how we can protect our valuables. With the upcoming use of AI and face recognition, it can be easier to control our passwords; however, it is still important to secure such valuable data, with a password that is suitable and, most importantly, easy to remember.