

Fast 'n' Easy Computers

We build, install, configure, maintain and design PC hardware and software

Prop. Dr. P.A. Errington,
Unit 4D Marcliffe Est, Macclesfield Road.
Hazel Grove,
Stockport, SK7 5EG.
Phone 0161-483-6656,

Fax 0161-483-6667,
Email: sales@fasteasy.com
Internet: www.fasteasy.com

Picking a windows password

We often come see users having difficulty in picking passwords, particularly for modern server-client systems with “complicated” password policies.

The principle of a complex password is to protect a computer account from people guessing the password or more generally nowadays; a computer brute force “guessing” (by running through dictionaries, common names, or just trying every combination of letters).

Good passwords for complexity need to be relatively long, have items like capitals and lower case characters, numbers and ideally special symbols as well. Each of these adds a much bigger search space for a cracking program, which makes your password more difficult to guess.

The flip side is that the password needs to be easy enough for a human to both remember and type (reliably).

We suggest some tips which should help in picking a password (or in our suggestion a passphrase).

1) Pick a phrase (longer than 7 characters) which you can type reliably and can easily remember.

e.g. mydogisbrown manuplayfootie

2) modify it by adding one or more capitals

e.g. Mydogisbrown manUplayfootie

3) stick some numbers in

e.g. My1dogisbrown, manU8playfootie

4) and finally add a special character somewhere (like !”£\$%^&*()/?><).

e.g. My1dogisbrown! manU8playfootie/

And you have a passphrase you can easily type and remember.

If you need a hint just write down somewhere you can find the capital number and special character you use, but not the password in full (e.g. M 1 ! or U8 / for the above passwords). Make sure you don't write “password” or your username near the hint either, in case someone searches your desk/room.

Hope this helps.

Phil Errington
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All your PC needs

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