

BRITS GIVE THE NAME AWAY TO PASSWORD THIEVES

Britons are putting themselves at risk of Internet fraud, by using easy-to-guess passwords for their online shopping and banking. According to a new report from **Lloyds TSB Internet banking** a fifth of the population (20 per cent) say they have chosen passwords as obvious as their own name and almost three quarters (71 per cent) admit to using the same password for several websites.

The report reveals a fifth of Internet users (20 per cent) recognise they don't do enough to keep their passwords secure. One in five (20 per cent) have saved their passwords on their computer, potentially leaving them at risk from hacking; a third have written their security details down instead of committing them to memory; one in 10 have given their password to a friend or relative and one in 20 (4 per cent) have stored the information on a mobile phone.

Among the words most commonly used for passwords are:

- Pet names 17 per cent
- Family names 12 per cent
- First names 8 per cent
- Birthdays 7 per cent
- Partner's name 6 per cent
- Place of birth 6 per cent
- Celebrity names 4 per cent
- Obvious word or number patterns 3 per cent

Matthew Timms, Internet banking director, Lloyds TSB, said: "A password needs to be yours and yours alone. Services like Lloyds TSB online banking are extremely secure and safe to use, but if you choose passwords that are easy to guess, or you don't keep them secret, you're making light work for fraudsters."

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Matthew Timms, continued: “Lloyds TSB Internet Banking has more than 1.7 million users, and this is due in no small part to the measures we take to keep our security watertight. We were one of the first banks to introduce ‘memorable information’, which customers enter using a mouse, to stop fraudsters recording what is typed on the keyboard.

“We are always looking at ways to make Internet banking even safer, however, anyone using the Internet to bank or shop must make sure that they take as much care online as they would do with their wallet when shopping in the high street.”

Top tips to keep your passwords safe:

- Choose ‘strong’ passwords for any sites you use and change them regularly. Use a combination of letters and numbers and avoid using words that may be easy for others to guess (such as the name of a family member or pet).
- Do not tell anyone else your passwords - do not write them down or store them on your computer. If you think someone else knows your password, change it immediately – most websites will allow you to change your personal information.
- Always log off when you have finished using a site and close your browser to prevent others gaining access to any personal details online.
- Be aware that you cannot be assured of the security of a computer in a public place e.g. an Internet café. If you have any reason to be suspicious about a publicly accessible computer, then do not access facilities such as internet banking from that machine.
- Don’t choose or change your passwords on a computer or in a public place such as an Internet café.
- If you are using a facility such as Internet banking in a public place then do not leave the computer unattended and ensure that no one is looking over your shoulder at what you are doing.

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