Four Steps to Stronger Passwords

1) Avoid common passwords - Some of these passwords include '123456', 'password', '111111' and 'qwerty' *(if you utilize one of these - change it NOW!).* According to some studies, it's reported that the 100 most commonly used passwords make up over 60% of all passwords. Avoid simple dictionary words that can be easily guessed, or selecting easy to remember passwords because of keyboard key positioning. Don't kid yourself; cybercriminals are fully aware of our lazy practices, and they make their living by capitalizing on us.

2) Steer clear of personal passwords - When creating passwords avoid passwords that are based solely on personal information about yourself or your family and that can be dangerous.

3) Take the extra time to create a strong password - Strength of a password is measured by a combination of its length and complexity *(mixing in numbers, letters, capitals, symbols, etc.).* Believe it or not, length plays a bigger role in password strength than complexity. Passwords should be a minimum of 8 characters in length, but 12 characters or more should be the norm. You might think you don't have the time to spend logging in with a complicated password each day, but trust me - you do if it saves you the time of attempting to obtain your "ransomed" files from a nameless hacker, or your password discourages an online cybercriminal from choosing your bank account over someone else's because yours is taking too long to crack. It's worth it!

4) Get creative when arriving at passwords - Individuality can make creating strong and easy to remember passwords enjoyable, especially when sharing the importance of strong passwords with small children and even young adults. Taking in to account tip number 3, I would suggest using a short phrase as a password. For example: MyD@distheb3st ("My dad is the best"). This is something a child could be trained to remember based on a phrase they understand. *(and don't underestimate a child's capacity to retain information!)*

If you would like to submit a question or suggest a topic for future column consideration, please email your question to: info.vpcuc@gmail.com

The next meeting of the Vernon PC Users' Club is Tuesday October 11th, at 7:00 PM in the cafeteria at the Schubert Centre.

We start off every meeting with a 'TANSQ' session. Come see what we're all about!

If you have your own laptop, please bring it with you.

Call Betty at 250-542-7024 or Grace at 250-549-4318 for more information.