

Creating Strong Passwords

The object when creating a password is to make it as difficult as possible for a cyber criminal to identify it, whether by educated guesses or automated attacks using software tools. Creating a very complicated or very long password vastly decreases the chances a cyber criminal will be able to guess what it is.

You can further increase your security by having a unique password for each account. This keeps your other services safe should one be compromised.

Strong passwords contain:

- 8 or more characters (longer passwords are stronger)
- At least one upper case letter
- At least one number
- At least one special character (#, -, %, _, @)

Weak passwords contain:

- A word that is found in the dictionary
- The user's account name or part of their account name that exceeds two characters in length
- The user's full name or part of their full name that exceeds two characters in length
- Information about the user that is easy to uncover such as a pet's name, phone number, address, birthday, anniversary, child's name, etc.

The best passwords are random and only make sense to their user. Having difficulty coming up with a strong password? Try one of the following methods.

Create a passphrase:

1. Come up with a phrase that is at least 10 characters long. (i like black tea)
2. Replace the spaces with special characters (i#like#black#tea)
3. Capitalize at least one letter. (I#likE#blacK#teA)
4. Replace one or more letters with a number or add numbers. The goal is to make sure none of the words can be found in the dictionary. (I#lik9E#blac9K#te9A).

Take the Letters from a Passphrase:

1. Come up with a phrase that has at least 8 words. (the black dog ran after the black cat)
2. Take one letter from each word. (tbdratbc)
3. Capitalize at least one letter. (tbDratbC)
4. Add numbers or replace letters with numbers. (1bDra1bC)
5. Add special characters or replace letters with special characters. (#1bDra1bC%)

Need an easy way to create unique passwords for every account? Create a strong base password and then add unique characters that are associated with each one. For example, using the above password as your base, your facebook account password could be **fac #1bDra1bC%**, **f#1bDra1bC%k** or **#1bDra1bC%fck**.

Don't know how to change your password? Check out [Changing your MyMRU password](#) on the ITS home page. Remember your MyMRU password is also used to access Gmail and Blackboard and login to your computer.

Having difficulty remembering all those passwords? Use a password manager like KeePass 2. KeePass 2 is available on every Mount Royal workstation. Want it for your home computer? [Visit the site.](#) It is free to download.