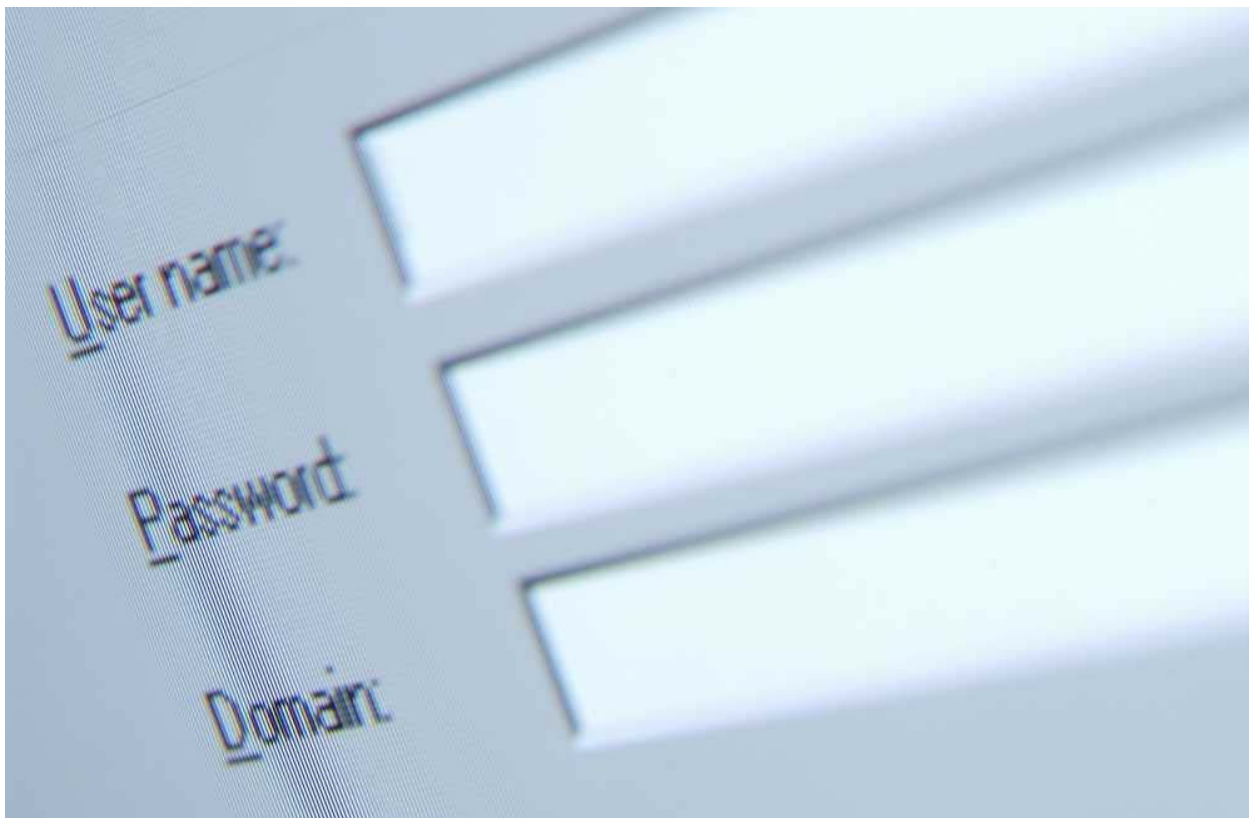


NOTICEBORED

Ten top tips on

Logging-on and logging-off the computer



Introduction

“Logging on” generally means entering your username (also known as user ID) and password into a computer system or website. The username is simply an identifier, your tag. The password is a secret that only you and the computer knows. It tells the computer that it is you at the keyboard rather than some random person, in other words it “authenticates” you. There are things you should do and avoid doing to make the logon process work properly. The tips below explain.

Ten top tips for logging-on and logging-off

1. **Be sure you are accessing the correct system:** attempting to login to one system using the user ID and password for another wastes your time and may trigger security alarms.
2. **Check that caps lock is off:** when you type your user ID (username), notice whether it is ALL IN CAPITALS – this usually means that ‘caps lock’ is on. To turn it off, press the caps lock key once. If caps lock is on, your password will also be ALL CAPITALS so the system probably won’t let you login (passwords should be Mixed Case not ALL CAPITALS or all lowercase).
3. **Avoid shoulder surfers:** if someone is close enough to watch you type your password, they might be able to see enough letters to guess your password. It is rude to stare or look over someone’s shoulder when they are entering a password. Ask them politely to look away, or position your body between them and the keyboard so they can’t see.

4. **If you get your password wrong, stop and think:** after just a few wrong attempts (usually 3 or 5), you will be locked out of the system automatically which triggers a security alarm. Think: are you logging in to the correct system? Look at the user ID - is caps lock on? Did you simply make a typing mistake? If you have forgotten your password, take a short break while you try to remember. Can you recall what your password was about? Is it a memorable song lyric or poem, perhaps? If so, which line are you on? When you think you've got it, by all means try again. If you have completely forgotten, call IT Help/Service Desk to get it reset.
5. **Check the last logon time:** as you login, some systems tell you when your account was last used. Keep an eye on this information and take note if it says you were using the system when you know you were not there – perhaps someone has broken in to your account? Call IT Help/Service Desk straight away!
6. **Changing your password:** until you have used your new password a few times, you are more likely to get it wrong or forget it, so try to avoid changing your password just before a weekend or holiday. It's better to change your password early in the week, ideally in the morning so you can practice using it a few times before you go home.
7. **Never, ever tell anyone your password:** your password is supposed to be a secret, known only by you and the systems you are authorized to access. If you tell someone else your password, *you* are completely to blame if *they* login as you and do something inappropriate, or if they tell someone else. In other words, everyone is held personally accountable for securing their own passwords. Don't just write your password down either, and stick it to the screen, leave it in a drawer or under the keyboard. If you worry about forgetting your password, you may keep a *hint* (a clue to it but not the actual password) somewhere private such as on a slip in your purse or wallet, but it's much better to choose a strong, memorable password in the first place ...
8. **Choose strong, memorable passwords:** strong passwords are long – the longer the better - and hard to guess. Lines from a song or poem make good passwords, especially if you mix CAPITALS and lower case, numbers and punctuation such as "Yesterday, A11 my troubles seemed 50 far away". Short, plain words and things that anyone who knows you could guess are weak passwords.
9. **Don't use the same password on every system:** if someone finds out your password, they will be able to access all those systems. For obvious reasons, it's a good idea to use unique passwords for online banking and credit card systems, for example, and for other systems whose security is vital.
10. **Log off before you walk off!** If you need to leave your workstation or laptop unattended for any reason, either log off or screen-lock your system first. It takes just a moment to lock and unlock your system, just as it takes only a moment for someone else to cruise by an unattended and unlocked workstation and hack the system, in your name. Turning off the screen but leaving the system running and logged-in is not acceptable.

For more information

Speak to your line manager about this first of all. Other security awareness materials about logging on, passwords *etc.* are available on Information Security's intranet site. Call IT Help/Service desk to report incidents or issues, especially if *anyone* asks you for your password.

Feel free to share these tips with your friends and family. Most computer users (including kids) logon to systems and websites they visit. Choosing strong passwords and keeping them secret is important for us all.