Bits & Bytes

Arkansas' Premier Computer Club

November 2024

The Bella Vista Computer Club - John Ruehle Center
Highlands Crossing Center, 1801 Forest Hills Blvd Suite 208 (lower level), Bella Vista, AR 72715

Website: http://BVComputerClub.org   **Email: editor@bvcomputerclub.org**

MEETINGS

Board Meeting: November 11, 6pm, in John Ruehle Training Center, Highlands Crossing Center.

General Meeting: November 11, 7pm. Program: "Accessing Your iPhone/iPad iCloud Storage From Your PC", a presentation from an APCUG Wednesday Workshop. This shows how to manage your Apple device photos saved in iCloud using a web browser on your PC.

 We will meet in-person in John Ruehle Training Center, Highlands Crossing Center, lower level, 1801 Forest Hills Blvd, Bella Vista, or you may attend the meeting on-line via Zoom. Zoom access information is published on our website.

Visitors or Guests are welcome.

Consider attending by Zoom if you are unable to attend in-person.

HELP CLINICS

November 2, 9am - noon at John Ruehle center
November 20, 9am - noon at John Ruehle center
Members may request Remote Help on our website at https://bvcomputerclub.org at menu path Member Benefits ►Remote Help .

MEMBERSHIP

Single membership is $30; $15 for each additional family member in the same household.

Join on our website at https://bvcomputerclub.org at menu path Get Involved ►Join/Renew, by mailing an application (from the web site) with check, or complete an application and pay in person at any meeting.

CLASSES

(At BVCC Training Center)

Wednesday, November 6, 9am-11am, "Basic Computing, Pt 2", with Pete Opland.

Wednesday, November 13, 9, 8am-10am, "Basic Computing, Pt 3", with Pete Opland.

Advance sign up required for each listed class: For reservations: email to edu@bvcomputerclub.org, or sign up at the General Meeting. Classes are free to Computer Club members.

Check the monthly calendar and announcements for any last minute schedule changes at https://bvcomputerclub.org .

NEW OR RETURNING BVCC MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome the following new members or members returning as BVCC members after an absence:

K. B. Smith	Sandra English	Mary Kay Laskowsky
Daniel Parnelle	Dory Hammeke	Chuck Hammeke
Jerry Shelton	Laurie Hand	Amy Clark
Bill Clark		

IS A PERIODIC PASSWORD CHANGE A GOOD THING?

By Leo Notenboom
Republished under AskLeo.com's Creative Commons License
 source: askleo.com/is_a_periodic_password_change_a_good_thing/

Conventional wisdom says to change your passwords periodically. I disagree.

Question: I read many articles (including some on Ask Leo!) that recommend that people should change their passwords from time to time. But what is good practice in this respect? Should it be related to frequency of use? For instance, some passwords are used frequently, some less often, and some rarely. Or should it be related to the level of security needed? For instance, passwords for online banking are more sensitive than passwords for magazine subscriptions. Good practice in a corporate environment seems to be to force network and other password changes every 30 days or so. This would seem to be overkill in the home environment, as it could result in some accounts being accessed more often to change a password than to do anything else. Unless you get into a good routine, like when you do data backups, password changes will only get done sporadically, if at all. Do you have a view on how to build such a good routine?

As you say, routines for things like this are difficult to set up. If not automated, they are easily forgotten. Automation may often be the answer but it's not always available, at least not in a convenient form.

But before we even get to that, I want to talk about the "you should change your password periodically" rule of thumb.

I disagree.

Periodic Password change

There's no reason to change your password only because time has passed. Most password-based hacks have little to do with age and more to do with bad passwords, phishing attacks, and/or keystroke loggers. For the best security, use good password hygiene to begin with. Change your password if you hear of a breach or something else that affects your account.

Password value over time

Conventional wisdom is to change your password every so often. I know of no good reason to do that. If it was ever a good guideline, it's certainly outlived its usefulness.

There's nothing about the age of a password that makes it lose quality over time.

The vast majority of password-based hacks are due to:

- Weak passwords
- Sharing passwords when you shouldn't
- Phishing attacks
- Technology-based compromises like malware (especially keyloggers)

Hackers get your current password without regard to its age. It doesn't matter whether you changed it last week or last year; they have it right now.

Periodically changing your password adds a tiny layer of security that avoids less common threats such as the compromise of an old database of accounts and passwords. These things happen, but not nearly as often as the more common compromises mentioned above. Even when they do, more often than not your password is never exposed because of how databases are maintained.

When to change your password

There are situations where you do want to change your password, but they're not tied to a schedule or length of time.

- Change your password if you realize you've selected a poor password, be it easy to guess or too short. Choose a better, more secure one.
- Change your password at the first hint of strange account activity. If your account has been hacked, doing this immediately is step one. Then take additional steps to secure your account.

- Change your password if you find out that the service has been compromised. For instance, if you read about your favorite online store getting hacked, immediately change your password there.
- If you've been using a service (say an email service gets hacked) as the alternate account for one of your other accounts, consider changing the other account's password as well.

Automating the process

As you can see, I've concluded that a periodic password-changing routine isn't as important as we've been led to believe. Perhaps you don't agree and still want to set up a system, as our questioner did. So, how to automate this process?

The only approach I can think of is to set a reminder in your calendar. The problem is that changing your password on all your accounts (I have over 350) just isn't practical. As a result, we skip it.

Technology is the other approach. There are systems — including Windows itself — that can be configured to require you to change your password according to a set schedule. The problem here is that most password-requiring systems don't include this type of functionality. For example, the major free email providers do not.

The power of determination

I'll end this with a story I've seen myself (and also overheard in an episode of <u>Security Now!</u>) as an example of how ineffectual forced periodic password changes can be.

A company had configured its Windows logins to require a new password every 30 days. It had also configured the system so you couldn't re-use your last five passwords; you had to come up with a new one each time.

So one individual, every 30 days, would change his password six times in succession, so his current password would be forgotten by the system and he could use it again.

Yes, he changed his passwords six times in a row so he could end up with his favorite password — unchanged.

Users can be... innovative at getting what they want.

Do this

Use good password hygiene, of course. I've described what I mean by that above. But there's no need to change your password because time has passed.

CAN TWO FILES HAVE THE SAME NAME?

By Jim Cerny, 1st Vice President
Sarasota Technology Users Group
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It was the usual family gathering. And, as usual, Uncle Backup and Aunt Fowlder were arguing. They both use Windows computers, and both save files into folders. Uncle Backup said, "NO, of course not; you cannot have two files with the same name; Windows won't allow it!"

"Oh, don't be silly," said Aunt Fowlder. Of course, you can. I do it myself whenever I copy a file—it copies it with the same name!"

Well, dear reader, who's right? This is a great trick question to bring up over beverages whenever you are in a tech discussion with friends.

The answer? Well, the answer is they are both right! Well, sort of. Fortunately, their argument was overheard by the good doctor, Doc Ewewmint.

"May I help you?" interrupted the good doctor, "Yes, you CAN have two files with the same name if they are in different folders! Let me explain. If you copy a file to a different folder, it can have the same name. But now you must remember carefully which folder you put it in. If you change one of the files but not the other, even if they have the same name, they will now be different."

"Oh, that could cause trouble," said Aunt Fowlder, "so when I copy my files to back them up on a different device, I name the folder "Backup" and the date or something. That way, I know they are not the ones I actively use and change daily. I am thankful that Windows keeps track of the date of each file."

It happens that Aunt Fowlder's husband also overheard the discussion. "Well," he said, "that's all true, of course, but you can have two files that appear to have the same name in the same folder – but they would be of different file types! You could have a word processing document file created in Word, for example, and another with the same name created by Word Pad. They would have different file types -- ".docx" (or ".doc" for Word) or ".rtf" (for WordPad) -- but other than that, they could have the same name."

"That's because the file type is part of the name!" said Aunt Fowlder. "My husband is so right about that."

"Yes," said the good doctor, "and the computer keeps all this straight. The computer recognizes the folder path to get to the file you want because you can have the same file name (even with the same file type or extension) in different folders. You could say that the "path" of the folders to get to the file is also part of the file name. Thus, you can never have two files with the same name!"

Well, I'm glad we all settled that and agreed! Now, should I use "Save" or "Save as"?