

Making your password safe and secure

By following these suggestions, you can prevent those with malicious intent from accessing your online accounts that may contain sensitive information such as e-mail, online personal information, PayPal, MySpace and Facebook.

Crackers (malicious hackers) are like digital thieves. They look to break in and cause all kinds of havoc. However, you are not helpless in protecting yourself against these malicious invaders. The following are some simple tips on protecting your private information from prying eyes.

- **Use the maximum number of characters available in setting your password.** If your password is too short, it could be easily guessed or cracked by password cracking programs. The longer the password, the harder it is to figure out.
- **The more familiar your password is, the easier it is to guess.** If the cracker knows basic information about you such as your name, house or cell phone number, dog's name and so on, they may be able to guess your password without the use of programming.
- **Keep your password as abstract as possible.** Do not use passwords like the word "password" or "1234." The best and most secure passwords are those that contain a combination of upper and lower case letters, numbers and symbols. "A\$3@x1sZ" is much more difficult to guess or crack than "cat."
- **Never use your username as your password.**
- **Third-party tools can help you create very strong passwords.** You can search for a tool online that creates a secure password for you. Be careful not to provide information on how the password will be used. That's your secret.