

# Tech Tips

## Password Best Practices

By Arthur Garbiso, PMP

Do you ever bank online, purchase merchandise over the internet with a credit card, or send a confidential email? If so, how safe is your password? How often do you change your password? And, most importantly, how many people besides you know your password?

Every day, thousands of accounts are compromised—sometimes for money, sometimes for confidential information, and sometimes to steal your identity. Life in the information age is quite convenient, with activities such as online commerce, banking, research, and corresponding with friends and family. Yet, living in the age of information can also be a bit scary if you're not protecting your personal data from intruders.

Here are a few password best practices that will help keep personal data safe.

- Use a password that is at least twelve characters and contains both numbers and letters. Also try including some nonalphanumeric keys like @, %, &, or \$.
- Do not use a password that contains any part of your name or your login.
- Change your password at least every 3 months.
- Do not reuse the same password.
- Do not share your password with other people, especially via email.
- Try using a pass phrase instead of a password.

Here are two examples of some good passwords:

- Myp@ssw0rd1ss3cur3—Translated, this would read, “My password is secure.” In this example, I replaced vowels with numbers and nonalphanumeric keys.
- W310v3t0h1k3—Translated, this would read, “We love to hike.” This, too, is a pretty strong password. Since it is using capital letters; numerical values, instead of vowels; and does not resemble a dictionary word.

Stronger passwords can be a bit challenging to generate and remember at first, but you'll get used to this practice in no time and your data will be safer.

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## Find\_It\_Online

Websites about NCLB provide a wide variety of information, including resources for educators and parents to better understand the law.



### U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION NCLB WEBSITE

<http://www.ed.gov/nclb>

The official U.S. Department of Education (U.S. ED) website on NCLB is a comprehensive source for information on NCLB legislation and policy. The website includes road-maps for districts, resources for teachers, and an

overview of how each state is doing.

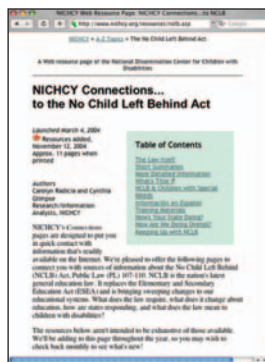


### THE EDUCATION TRUST

<http://www2.edtrust.org/EdTrust/ESEA/ESEA+Resources.htm>

The Education Trust maintains a comprehensive list of resources about NCLB. In the Fact Sheet and Summaries section, you'll find information on how students and schools across the U.S.

are achieving. The “Handouts” section has information for parents, including a *Homework Brochure* and *Making Data Work: A Parent and Community Guide*. In the Interactive Data Tools section of the website, the *Dispelling the Myth* online database allows you to search for high-performing schools across the country based on criteria you select.



### NICHY CONNECTIONS . . . TO THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT

<http://www.nichcy.org/resources/nclb.asp>

The National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities hosts the NICHY Connections website. The site contains several useful links to NCLB resources. The links on this website are organized by

topics such as “NCLB and Children with Special Needs,” “How's Your State Doing,” and “Keeping Up With NCLB.” Along with a wealth of informational resources, the site provides training materials.

These websites were active as of April 2006. PREL does not guarantee they will continue to be available for any given period of time.

