

PURBECK PC SERVICES

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A reminder to CHANGE YOUR PASSWORDS!

We all know we should, but do we really need to find 10 minutes to change our passwords?

I recently had to help someone change the password for their hotmail account, because a spyware infected computer in a cyber-cafe overseas had managed to record the password allowing someone else to use it.

The only reason the real account holder knew this had happened was because the “hacker” was chatting to the “victims” friends on MSN Messenger which is accessed using the same login details.

In this case, fortunately, the account holder was alerted by telephone by a friend suspicious of what had happened and we were able to change the password before the hacker thought to do so!

This would have locked out the real account holder from their own e-mail account and been almost impossible to rectify. Not to mention

compromise all the data contained within the e-mails.

Here are a few tips to help make things more secure.

Use a strong password. Use a mixture of upper and lower case and a number or two. *Pas5w0rD76* is much harder to guess than *password*. Perhaps substitute a L with a 1 or an S with a 5.

Change your passwords frequently, at least 3 or 4 times a year. Most websites provide instructions of how to do this. Commonly look in “Account Settings” or “My Account” for a change password button.

Don’t use the same password as your email account for anything else. This is a bad habit. Imagine you are opening an online account with www.fredblogs.com, for example. You supply them with your e-mail address to send you receipts and offers and the like, and then are asked to choose a password

to log into your new fredblogs.com account with. If you choose the same password as your e-mail account, you have just given Fred Blogs your e-mail address AND the password that gives anyone access to it! Sounds obvious, but I know a lot of people have done it!

Remember to Log Out of each website you are signed into. This is most important when you are using a public or shared computer, but always avoid just closing a browser window. Look for the “log out” or “sign out” button and click it.

Consider a password manager if you only use one PC and have a lot of online accounts. I use Roboform (www.roboform.com) which encrypts all the passwords stored and uses a very strong master password to access them.

If you would like any further advice, please contact Andy on **07816 483448** or by e-mail andy@purbeckpcservices.co.uk