

Microsoft Gets Serious about Passwords

June 1, 2016 – In the wake of LinkedIn’s data breach which exposed account information on more than 100 million LinkedIn users, Microsoft has decided to get serious about password protection. Specifically the company is banning simple passwords – meaning passwords that can easily be guessed. Frankly, it is about time. Even after years of warning consumers about the perils of using simple passwords to protect their online accounts, the most common password in use today is drum roll please – password.

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(function() {
var s = document.createElement('SCRIPT'), s1 = document.getElementsByTagName('SCRIPT')[0];
s.type = 'text/javascript';
s.src = 'http://widgets.digg.com/buttons.js';
s1.parentNode.insertBefore(s, s1);
})();
```

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(function() {
var po = document.createElement('script'); po.type = 'text/javascript'; po.async = true;
po.src = 'https://apis.google.com/js/plusone.js';
var s = document.getElementsByTagName('script')[0]; s.parentNode.insertBefore(po, s);
})();
```

Microsoft has already begun to implement the change. Anyone signing up for a new Microsoft account will have to choose a password that doesn’t appear on the company’s banned password list. Additionally, existing customers are being forced to make changes to their accounts if their current password appears on the list.

The company is constantly updating the list it uses. When data breaches occur across the internet, the company looks to those data breaches to find out if hackers were able to break into other company’s servers using a simple password. The passwords used make onto the list.

Microsoft also uses information obtained from hackers trying to break into Microsoft’s own network.

For consumers, this means that even if you haven’t received a notification from Microsoft saying that you need to change your password, it is quite possible the day will come when you do.

by Jim Malmberg

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