

Cybersecurity Awareness Month 2022: Using Strong Passwords and a Password Manager

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The key behavior that we are highlighting this week for [Cybersecurity Awareness Month](#) is using strong passwords and a password manager. In today's blog we interviewed NIST's Connie LaSalle, a senior technology policy advisor, and she offers four specific ways to mitigate your cybersecurity risks online while discussing the importance adopting strong passwords.

Take a look at her responses to [some of] our questions below...

What is the easiest way to stay safe online?

Just like in the physical world around us, we should all be aware of our surroundings online. Social engineering attacks, phishing, mis/disinformation campaigns, scams, and many other nefarious activities are increasingly sophisticated and common, so being a skeptical consumer of information is generally a good rule of thumb. For groups and individuals who may be at high risk of targeted attacks or harassment, both online and offline, it is especially important to monitor your digital footprint and be conscientious about which technologies (and people) you decide to trust with your information. Tying this back to our theme, one helpful habit that everyone can adopt is use of strong passwords – or, even better, multi-factor authentication that is phishing-resistant, where possible.

What are three things you can do to minimize cybersecurity risks to a person or businesses?

I'll offer three things and a bonus fourth. Mitigating risk, whether you are an individual or a business, comes down to a few buckets of action that translate across contexts —

1. understand your environment (e.g., people, their preferences and needs, assets for which you are responsible or upon which you are reliant, etc.)
2. understand risks to your environment
3. take action to manage risks based on their relevance to your environment and your priorities
4. have a backup plan when something unexpected happens

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Connie LaSalle



Connie LaSalle is a Senior Technology Policy Advisor within the NIST IT Lab. Prior to joining NIST, Connie led the Platform Program and Federal Customer Success teams at DC-based startup Virtru. In the years leading up to this role, Connie served as the lead policy advisor to the Chief Information Officer of the U.S. Department of Justice and led several cybersecurity and IT modernization initiatives within the White House Office of Management and Budget. Beyond her government service, Connie brings several years of industry experience with her to NIST and holds a graduate degree in public policy.