

LastPass and Password Managers

Is LastPass even necessary any longer? I'm not certain I understand the benefits now that Microsoft, Google, and Apple all offer some sort of encrypted password storage. When I first subscribed to LastPass, it was the only game in town (I believe). Are there still benefits?

I use Lastpass because:

- 1) Cross platform
- 2) Shared passwords
- 3) Secure
- 4) Team sharing--for example I can share certain logins with an associate and they will automatically update across all devices if a PW changes
- 5) Reasonably priced as these things go
- 6) No tracking or sales-related stuff

Erik Hammarlund, Massachusetts

I was at a cybersecurity CLE last week and the guy did not like the passwords being stored in Chrome. He stated that with physical control of the computer he could gain access and then would be able to access all the chrome passwords.

Nicholas I. Fuerst, Arizona

I've been wondering whether something like LastPass would help my 87-year-old dad, who constantly locks himself out of his bank accounts because he can't enter passwords or remember them and he doesn't use a cell phone so codes are a total mystery to him. Thoughts?

Kristi A. Bodin, Massachusetts

I am not confident about the security of allowing a browser to store passwords. I use LastPass, but there are other pw managers. I pay for the premium version so that I can have it on all of my devices, and have it on my phone as well. I don't have to rely on my memory or on slips of paper [which are the most insecure], and it generates and saves highly secure passwords, or as secure as any site will allow with alphanumeric and symbols, and as lengthy as the site will allow, and then I copy and paste from LastPass, so that there can be no error. I have a master phrase for my LP "password". This will be part of my digital assets, to be provided to my Personal Representative/fiduciaries, to make managing my other assets easier when I am incapacitated or dead, instead of having to list them all physically somewhere, and possibly not have an updated list.

I also recommend this to my estate planning clients, so that their estates can be easier to administer. Don't know if they listen to me.

Miriam N. Jacobson, Pennsylvania

I use and recommend KeePass, myself. It's open source and freeware, and keeps its database in a location chosen by you. I do not like keeping data in "the cloud" (i.e., on someone else's server somewhere) as a general rule, so synch my KeePass database between my phone, desktop, laptop, and wife's devices using SyncThing.

<https://keepass.info/>

Michael A. Koenecke, Texas

I have been using Dashlane for several years. It is quite easy to use and seems to work with most websites.

Robert "Robby" W. Hughes, Jr., Georgia

I had been using LP which was fairly easy. Some articles mentioned some flaws in their security recently, but I had been using it. After they started playing games with their plans, and customer service was useless, I did a ton of research and I switched to Bitwarden. So far so good but it is new. Transitioning was very easy.

Mark H. Wagner

Just to add another option, I've used 1Password for years and like it.

Justin Mallone

I don't use any of the password managers. I do use a password protected file with all of my logins and passwords. I copy and paste things into the browser windows from that file. Yes, it does prevent me from accessing many of my accounts unless I am in front of my computer, which is fine, because I don't want to use my phone to access them, anyway.

Most sites allow one to use two-factor authentication, including a text message. Yesterday, I was directed to this story, which is of concern, considering the hacking of so many sites:

<https://www.vice.com/en/article/y3g8wb/hacker-got-my-texts-16-dollars-sakari-netnumber>

We must remain vigilant!

Mark E. Peneguy, Louisiana

... and in case you don't have enough options (!) I use Passwords Plus. It was a one-time purchase... maybe \$10 or 20?? perhaps 10 years ago. I have it on my iPad and iPhone. I could pay an extra something or other and have it on my PC desktop as well.. but it's been very easy having it on my iPad, so I didn't bother.

Laurie Axinn Gienapp, Massachusetts

I second Mr. Koenecke's recommendation of KeePass. <https://keepass.info/>. Not only is it free, but it works. The database can be stored on dropbox, etc. There is an android app.

KeePass will suggest passwords if like me you have problems thinking up new sufficiently long passwords. While I have not worked with the process, the software can automate signing into Internet sites.

Richard P. Schmitt, Maryland

My experience is that two factor authentication has befuddled the 80+ year olds in the generation ahead of me. My relatives could manage passwords effectively before two factor authentication arose, using a manual system that was effective. After two factor authentication was mandatory, chaos resulted.

Password managers are always recommended, but generally you have a login method to access. I recommend none in particular, just point people to articles and note that last I knew market share leaders were LastPass and 1Password. The market leaders patch if a problem develops.

<https://www.pcmag.com/picks/the-best-password-managers>

You have to work with elderly people based on where they are at from a computer standpoint. If tech savvy, but mental decline starts, adjustments have to be made. If not tech savvy, manual systems still work. Key is not to try to convert someone to what a particular individual thinks is best. I have grave concerns about the less tech savvy having their computer compromised, especially if they try to do any electronic banking.

I regularly do cleanup work for the elderly's computers (and the young for that matter) when I have access to their computer while visiting. Commonly I find problems even if security software is present. Electronic banking on a compromised system can get out of hand in a hurry.

Darrell G. Stewart, Texas

No browser can successfully secure your password. I strongly recommend a password manager. Any of the more popular ones can work, depending on how you use them. I posted separately a recent PC Magazine evaluation of them. LastPass and 1Password are the most popular, but any of the top candidates can work.

Passwords must be unintelligible, long, complex and unique. Use a password manager for them. Use 2FA (two factor authentication). Use the longest password the site will accept (20 or so if available). Use the automatically generated ones in popular password managers when possible.

If you use a password manager as recommended, you only have to keep track of one password, which is the one for the password manager. I only keep that program active while I am on a site that requires it. After accessing a site that requires a password, I close the browser and password manager and clear the browser cache.

Darrell G. Stewart

There are 80-year-olds and there are 80-year-olds. I am a pretty tech savvy one. There are a lot of younger people who are not so tech savvy and who can screw up their computers and not use their software at all, or not effectively.

So, you really have to meet people where they are and try to recommend what they can use.

Good for you Darrell, trying to help those whose systems are screwed up.

It's too bad that there aren't simple systems that people can use and that the bad guys can't get into.

Miriam N. Jacobson

No, really. READ the story Mark cited. Saw this yesterday.

Summary: SMS (i.e., text messages, not iMessages, or Whatsapp, etc.) can ****easily**** be 'hacked' (taken over) without almost any technical expertise.

(Yes, there seems to have been some kind of fix applied last week, but it is very unclear if that sticks or how complete that fix is) SMS are ***not*** very secure at all as 2-factor authentication (2FA). (True for other reasons, aside from this story.) SMS is better than having ***no*** 2FA, but may not be much better if someone has any real interest in getting into your accounts. (Think angry spouse, former client that's upset with you, etc.) Google Authenticator is a better alternative, and there are many others.

[discussion here: <https://twitter.com/evacide/status/1371877064123371520>]

BTW -- speaking of angry spouses -- there's a article here where @evacide discusses stalkerware (malware used to stalk others): [<https://www.consumerreports.org/digital-security/shut-stalkers-out-of-your-tech/>]

Tim Ackermann, Texas

Yup. SMS was always unreliable and it makes no sense to use it especially since any smartphone can also install an authenticator app.

The only thing that drives me crazier than forced-sms authentication is the widespread use of identical non-customizable security questions.

Erik Hammarlund

I used LastPass Free and just paid for the premium version because of the changes they made to how the free version works (only allowing access on one type of device.

It makes it easy to log into websites, etc. from my phone or computer. I can use better passwords on sites now. Meaning ones I cannot remember or that are easy to type. I just need to remember the one LastPass

password. It also makes changing passwords easier since many sites not want the password changed periodically.

Phil A. Taylor, Massachusetts

I have tried to do this TWICE! Used Key pass and RoboForm. Not sure either did exactly as described below. I suspect that many sources deny correct passwords frequently (think about how many times you know that you entered the correct password and user name and an error message comes up)- Even w/ the password managers, this STILL happens.

I can't figure it out. I would love to hear how others have experienced these...

Patricia E. Kefalas Dudek, Michigan

Patti, please describe exactly what is happening that is frustrating you.

Miriam Jacobson

I will try~ it takes a great deal of time to end the passwords, unless you already have them in an excel spreadsheet type of format. Then, supposedly, you then only need to log in with the main password (for example the detailed hard one for RoboForm)- Then, every time you need a password, and you go to that account or page, or whatever, Robo form is supposed to AUTOMATICALLY enter your user name and password. For a while that worked great- it seems to work better from my iPads and iPhone then the DELL desktops.

What I suspect is happening— when you do not go to a sight or location/account frequently- the “host” or the company just automatically declines you password and/or user name. So you get an error message, and then you have to manually use the actual information from that account and enter it to get in ANYWAY as Robo Form will not work. And, if what I suspect is happening, does and it rejects it, you have to reset both them ANYWAY.

I hope this makes sense-there has to be a better way

Patricia E. Kefalas Dudek

I haven't used Roboform and definitely not a spreadsheet. That's why I use LastPass - it generates the long, complex password and saves it. When I go to a site, I go into LastPass and copy and paste the password into the site so that there can be no error. Rarely does a site require a new password, then I allow LastPass to generate the new one, or I may manually, in LastPass, change a couple of the characters of the existing password. and save it, then copy the new password into the site and save it there, and I'm good to go.

LastPass has a search that allows me to find the password I'm looking for by the site name. It's really easy to use, as I'm sure the other password managers are. I think they all have free versions or free trials.

Miriam N. Jacobson