Passwords Keep Me Safe

Understanding What Children Think about Passwords

Yee-Yin Choong, Mary Theofanos
National Institute of Standards and Technology

Olivia Murphy
University of Maryland
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Adults Face Challenges with Passwords: What About Children?

**RQ1. Password Understandings**
- What do students know about passwords?
- Why do they think they need passwords?
- What are students' passwords perceptions?

**RQ2. Password Behaviors**
- How do youth create and maintain passwords?
- What are the characteristics of passwords they create?
Large Scale Survey: 1,505 Students

Elementary
3rd to 5th graders (n=425)
- 51.9%
- 40.2%
- 7.9%

Middle
6th to 8th graders (n=357)
- 50.3%
- 45.1%
- 4.6%

High
9th to 12th graders (n=723)
- 51.4%
- 44.7%
- 3.9%

Credit: Getty Images/EyeEm
Credit: Karen Kasler
Parents and School Play Important Roles

Parents and School – guidance

Elementary – Family
• Help create passwords
• Help remember passwords

Middle and High
• Assist family with passwords
Limiting writing passwords
Memorizing passwords
Keeping passwords private
Signing out when finished

Students Reported Some Good Practices
Students Reported Some Bad Practices

- Sharing passwords with friends
- Using the same password for everything
What’s in the Passwords?

All Numbers

- All Numbers
- Dictionary Words
- Dictionary Plus

- Percentage
- E
- M
- H
Why Passwords?

Access

To keep unwanted people off your device
(P1392, 11th)

Privacy

To keep stuff private
(P2918, 8th)

Protection

To protect information
(P2719, 12th)

Safety

To keep us safe
(P1131, 4th)
Cybersecurity Education Should Strive To:

- Reinforce positive perceptions and practices
- Promote concrete understanding
- Bridge gap between knowledge and behavior
Thank You!

yee-yin.choong@nist.gov
mary.theofanos@nist.gov