CNS /Update Newsletter Feature

Password Security Remains Very Important

CNS Document ID: u970401a
Last Updated: 5/22/01

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Password Security Remains Very Important

The steps for changing your NERDC password via the NERDC Dialup Servers have been changed to match the quick and easy steps used to change a password on a UF Individual Dialup account.

You must change your NERDC password at least every six months. If you have access to sensitive data, you should change it more often. The trend today toward more open networks has many benefits, but also represents increased access opportunities for computer hackers.

This article shows four methods to change NERDC passwords. They are:

*Any of these methods (A, B or C) will change your password in NERTSO (TSO), and NERCICS (ADMIN).*

A. via a modem connection to the NERDC Dialup Servers
B. via a hardwired connection to the campus network
C. in batch mode in MVS

*Method D will change your password in NERSP only.*

D. interactively on NERDC's AIX (UNIX) system, NERSP.

Method A is for NERDC customers who connect to NERDC interactive services or the Internet via a telephone modem from work or home. Method B is for NERDC customers with permanent connections to the campus network; Method C is for users of MVS batch; and Method D is for NERSP system customers only. Your method of choice should be based on how you usually connect to NERDC and/or the NERDC system in which you customarily work.

*How Good is Your Password?*

If you thought up your current password casually, without referring to any password guidelines -- you and your password may be easy prey for hackers. The companion article, How Good Is Your Password? will help you devise strong passwords.

*Why Should I Care?*

You might say, "I only use my account for e-mail, what does it matter if someone guesses my password?" But there are at least four reasons you should be concerned:

*Your neighbors*

Using your account, a hacker can attack other accounts on your system. Most safeguards are outside, not inside, the system.

*Your mail*
Once in your account, a thief can corrupt your files, and play games with the To: and From: addresses on your incoming and outgoing mail (for starters).

Your reputation

Once in your account, the thief is you, as far as the rest of cyberspace knows. Any obnoxious activities through the account will be attributed to you (a hacker could send inflammatory messages to President Clinton in your name, for instance).

Your account

A password thief can pretend to be you and rack up computing charges. Stolen accounts are most often used for illegal activities, which often result in investigations. Even if you are personally cleared, you may have no access to your account during the investigation, and you may lose the account.

Password Procedure "A": For NERDC Dialup Server Customers

These instructions for changing your password on the NERDC Dialup Servers begin at the point where the Username: prompt appears on your screen.

Note 1: Changing your password with methods A, B or C will change your password in all NERDC systems except NERSP.

Note 2: Changing your password with method D will change your password only in NERSP.

1. At the Username: prompt, type password then press the <Enter> key. Once a modem connection is made, you will see: *** Dial-Up Server Password Changing Interface ***

2. You'll be prompted to identify your account by typing n <Enter> for a NERDC account or i <Enter> for a UF Individual Dialup account. If you press <Enter> without the "n" or "i" the password program and modem connection will be closed.

3. Type your NERDC userid and <Enter> when prompted.

4. Type your current password and <Enter> when prompted.

5. Type your new password and <Enter> when prompted.

6. Type your new password again and <Enter> when prompted. You should see: Success! Password changed.

Password Procedure "B": For Networked NERDC Customers
When you have a hardwired connection to the campus network and you want to change your password, you start from the NERDC menu.

1. You arrive at this menu screen in one of two ways:

A) You activate your terminal and the screen says: NERDC VTAM IS ACTIVE; at which point you type menu and press <Enter>.

B) Your personal computer is hardwired to the campus network, and you start a communications program (such as Hummingbird Host Explorer for Windows, or TN3270 for the Mac) configured to connect to the address nermvs.cns.ufl.edu.

2. Using one of the above methods, you arrive at the NERDC menu (Fig. 1). Press the <tab> key until your cursor is next to the word SIGNON. Press <Enter> to go to the NERDC Signon screen. The NERDC Signon screen says: Enter your ID and Password. Beneath that are three labeled fields: ID:, Password:, and New Password:. The fourth field on this screen, Transfer:, is not relevant to this procedure.

3. <Tab> to the ID: field and type your NERDC userid; do not press <Enter>.

4. <Tab> to the Password: field and type in your current password;

5. <Tab> to the New Password: field and type a new password; press <Enter>.

6. The system will prompt you: Retype Your New Password for Verification. Once you have retyped your new password and pressed <Enter>, you will get the screen titled: NERDC Interactive Services Menu for userid (i.e., your personalized NERDC menu screen), and your new password will be in effect.

Password Procedure "C": MVS Batch

In MVS batch, change your password on the JOB statement as follows:

```
// jobname JOB (,,time,lines),name,CLASS=class,USER=userid,PASSWORD=(oldp
```

Caution: Your JOB statement cannot go past column 72! If your userid and password are long enough to make the statement exceed 72 columns, you must use a continuation.

The next time you use this userid, use your new password.

Password Procedure "D": AIX (NERSP)

Note D1: Changing your NERSP password does NOT change your password on any other systems at NERDC!

Note D2: We used a fictional userid, “spock,” to help illustrate NERSP prompts during the password-changing procedure.

Note D3: This procedure applies regardless of whether you arrive at the NERSP prompt via a dialup connection or a hardwired connection.

To change your password on NERSP, log on normally with your userid and current password.
The standard NERSP prompt for your userid appears: `spock@nersp $`

1. To initiate the password change, type: `passwd` and press <Enter>. NERSP will respond: `Changing password for spock` followed by the prompt: `spock's Password:`.

2. Type in your current password, then press <Enter>. NERSP will prompt you with: `spock's New password:`.

3. Type in your new password, then press <Enter>. NERSP will prompt you with: `Re-enter spock's new password:`.

4. Type in your new password again, then press <Enter>. NERSP confirms your new password with: `Password update is now complete`, and returns you to the standard `spock@nersp $` prompt.

**Password Specifications-All NERDC Systems**

Besides choosing a password that's difficult to crack (see link above) your password needs to fit a few requirements for NERDC systems: it needs to be 5 to 8 characters long; it may not contain blank spaces; and it can be any combination of letters, digits, and the special characters #, $, or @ only.

*Password Specifications-NERSP Only*

Passwords on NERSP are case-sensitive. This means that if your password is "Kit#Ten" and you enter "kit#ten", your password will not be accepted.

**Your Comments are Welcome**

We welcome your comments and suggestions on this and all UFIT documentation. Please send your comments to:

**UF Information Technology**

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