



Impacting the future of the enterprise technology ecosystem

# Why Complex Passwords Should Be Fact and Not Fiction

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Introduction: Who am I?

- A technical person with a creative background.
- Science and the arts.
- Eclectic education and interests.
- Chemistry Lab, Research, Libraries, Banking, IT/Office Management, Tech Support.
- Creative solutions to technical problems.
- Visualization of RACF Password Symbols paper.
- SHARE San Antonio, 2016



3

"Passwords are our most basic way of proving who we are to a computer. By implication, this is also how we control who can use our computer."

#### - Stu Henderson

(source: The Mainframe Audit News, Issue 14, March 2010 - How to Think About Passwords and How to Think Deeply About Passwords

http://www.stuhenderson.com/Mainframe%20Audit%20News/MANEWS14.pdf )

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4

**Complex Passwords - Fact and Not Fiction** 

- Why is this relevant?
  - USERID or login name and passwords define us to the machines with which we work on a daily basis.

(There are OTHER ways to do this.)

- Focus on mainframes.
- Focus is on passwords not password phrases.







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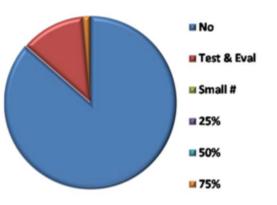
#### 5

Focus on Passwords rather than Pass Phrases?

Source: RSH Consulting RACF Survey, Sept. '13. (Survey #24)

Question: Are you using RACF Password Phrases?

Responses	Count	Percent %
No	57	86.4%
A few users have them for test and evaluation	8	12.1%
A small percentage of users are using them for logon authentication	0	0%
About 25% of the users are using them for logon authentication	0	0%
About half of the users are using them for logon authentication	0	0%
About 75% or more of the users are using them for logon authentication	1	1.5%
Total	66	100%





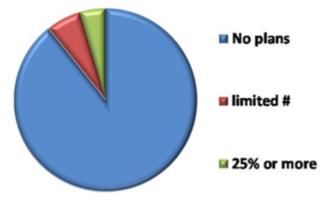


rather than Pass Phrases?

Focus on Passwords

Source: RSH Consulting RACF Survey, Sept. '13. (Survey #24)

Responses	Count	Percent %
No plans to implement	58	89.2%
Implement for a limited number of users	4	6.2%
Implement for 25% or more of all users	3	4.6%
Total	65	100%



Question:

6

What are your plans for implementing Password Phrases?

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Log On

New Technologies

• Biometrics

Password:

john\_smith

.....

7

#### \*\*\*\*\*\*\* What does the

Multi-Factor Authentication

future hold?









This is stored as an UNIQUE FACE ID NY



something

you know

- New Technologies
  - Multi-Factor Authentication
  - Biometrics

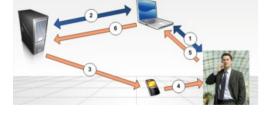
Password:

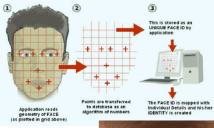


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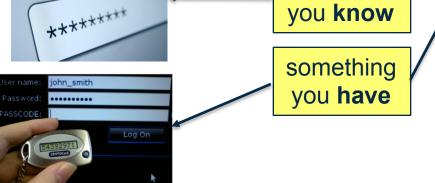
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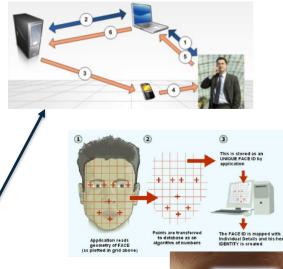
#### **Complex Passwords - Fact and Not Fiction**

something

- New Technologies
  - Multi-Factor Authentication
  - Biometrics

Password:



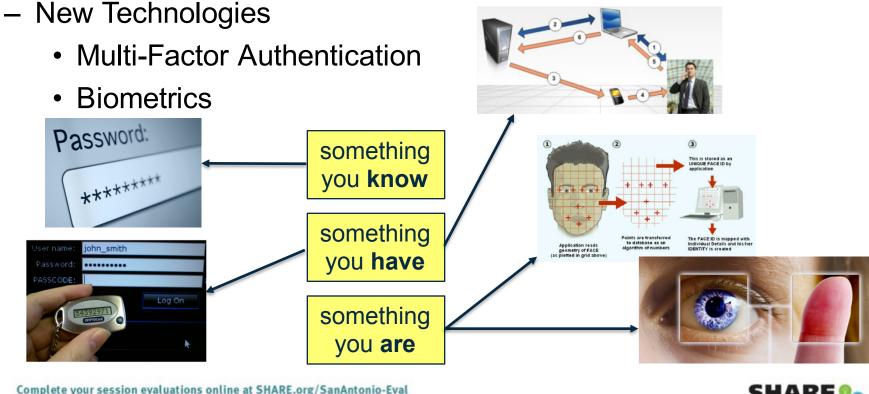
















- Defining Terms: Password Symbols
  - Any character or symbol available for use in crafting passwords.
  - Alphabet (upper / lower case), numbers, #\$@ (national characters).
  - Additional special / user defined characters.





- Defining Terms: Password Complexity
  - Number or symbol positions in the password.
  - Number of different symbols available for use.
  - Avoidance of certain patterns / recognizable words (dictionary lists, reserved word lists, etc...).
  - Avoidance of USERID or other personal user info.
  - Complies with complexity rules imposed by ESMs.







- Defining Terms: Statistics (just a few examples)
  - 8-symbols, all numeric (repeats allowed) [10]
     = 100.000.000 combinations
  - 8-symbols, upper case letters (repeats allowed) [26] = 208,827,064,576 combinations
  - 8-symbols, upper/lower case letters, numbers, national characters (repeats allowed) [65]

= 318,644,812,890,625 combinations





- Defining Terms: Statistics (just a few samples)
  - 8-symbols, upper/lower case letters, numbers, national characters, and RACF 14 Special Characters (repeats allowed) [79]

= 1,517,108,809,906,560 combinations

For some perspective:

14

How tall is a stack of 1.5 quadrillion pennies?

A cracking program making a million guesses per second would take 48 years to test all combinations.



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#### **Complex Passwords - Fact and Not Fiction**

#### - Defining Terms: Statistics (there is safety in numbers)

Eric Wedaa - Marist College LongTail: FOSS ssh Honeypot and Analytics

Software

http://longtail.it.marist.edu/honey

Length of Dassword	Number of unique passwords	i de la companya de l
1	99	
2	1337	
3	12145	
4	46013	
5	118317	
6	240858	
7	205774	
8	274723	8 characters used to be the maximum password lenght for
9	144392	
10	109426	
11	44478	
12	30716	
13	15984	
14	10815	
15	7324	
16	4771	
17	2299	







The argument FOR complex passwords:

- Can help protect systems from unwarranted access.



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#### **Complex Passwords - Fact and Not Fiction**

The argument FOR complex passwords:

- Systems with which we interact \*SHOULD\* have a number of safeguards in place to prevent unwarranted access.
- These are \*OUTSIDE\* the user's control. These safeguards fortify the WALLS of the kingdom.







The argument FOR complex passwords:

 The user's USERID and PASSWORD represent the KEYs to the kingdom.











The argument FOR complex passwords:

 The user's USERID and PASSWORD represent the KEYs to the kingdom.





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#### The argument FOR complex passwords:

T50/E LOGON	
ICH70001I LAST ACCESS AT 09:06:20	ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2016
IKJ56455I LOGON IN PROGRESS AT 09:57	7:28 ON FEBRUARY 19, 2016
IKJ56951I NO BROADCAST MESSAGES	
	*****
Acct Nmbr ===> ACCT!	The second state of the se
Size ===> 250000	
Perform ===>	
Command ===>	
Enter an 'S' before each option desired below: -Nomail -Nonotice S -Reconnect -OIDcard	
PP1/PP13 ==> Help PP3/PP15 ==> Logoff PA1 ==> Attention PA2 ==> Reshow You may request specific help information by entering a '?' in any entry field	
	a the second s

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21

What if?... MFA...Alert...



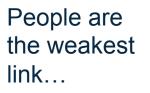
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#### **Complex Passwords - Fact and Not Fiction**

The argument FOR complex passwords:

The USER (with a capital Y – O – U) holds the keys to the kingdom.









The argument FOR complex passwords:

– A matter of professional and personal integrity.

Due diligence – "the care that a reasonable person exercises to avoid harm to other persons or their property"

- source: Merriam-Webster

Professional due diligence – the care that a professional exercises to avoid harm to company information (data) or property.



#### **Complex Passwords - Fact and Not Fiction**

The argument FOR complex passwords:

- A matter of professional integrity:
  - You wouldn't leave a company laptop sitting on the front seat of your car, would you?







#### **Complex Passwords - Fact and Not Fiction**

The argument FOR complex passwords:

- A matter of professional integrity:
  - So why be LAZY when it comes to your passwords?







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Complex Passwords - Fact and Not Fiction The argument FOR complex passwords: – A matter of professional integrity: Don't be lazy!

> 123456 password 12345678 qwerty 12345 123456789 football 1234 1234567 baseball

26

welcome 1234567890 abc123 111111 1qaz2wsx dragon master monkey letmein login

princess qwertyuiop solo passw0rd starwars

Twenty-five Worst Passwords of 2015. (source: time.com)







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## **Complex Passwords - Fact and Not Fiction**

The arguments AGAINST complex passwords:

- Inconvenience to the user.
- Difficult to memorize must be written down.
- Complexity is meaningless if a system's password store is compromised.
- Given enough time and resources, password cracking software can potentially hack into a password store in an offline attack.









My answers to the arguments AGAINST complex passwords:

- Inconvenience? It's a fact of life. Professional integrity.
- Difficult to memorize? Use a system mnemonics.
- Compromised password store? Not USER's responsibility.
- Cracking software + time? Change passwords regularly.





### **Complex Passwords - Fact and Not Fiction**

Crafting Complex Passwords: Tools already in place

- RACF, ACF2, Top Secret
- Available symbols
- Password Options

(set by ESM Administrator)

- What do the experts recommend?









Crafting Complex Passwords: Tools already in place

- Default password symbol sets for RACF, ACF2, TSS:
  - A-Z (upper case alphabet)
  - 0-9 (numeric)
  - #\$@ (national symbols)
  - With these [39] in place, you can generate 2.4 to 5.3 trillion unique combinations (difference due to allowance of repeated symbols)





Crafting Complex Passwords: Tools already in place

- Additional symbol sets (available if implemented):
  - a-z (lower case alphabet)
  - Special Characters

– RACF	.<+ &!*-%_>?:=	[14 symbols]
– ACF2	*&¬:=-!.%?_	[12 symbols]
– TSS	&*^:=!-%.?_	[12 symbols]



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**Complex Passwords - Fact and Not Fiction** 

Crafting Complex Passwords: Tools already in place

- Password Options (affecting which symbols may be used)
  - lower case symbols
  - special symbols
  - symbol sets (Rules / Masks)
  - reserved words/prefixes
  - user name, ID or other personal info
  - previous passwords









## **Complex Passwords - Fact and Not Fiction**

Crafting Complex Passwords: RACF Password Options

- length (from 1 to 8 characters)
- RACF password enhancements

If implemented and enabled, additional special

characters .<+|&!\*-%\_>?:= are allowed

- mixed case passwords
- previous password (and how many RACF remembers)







#### Crafting Complex Passwords: RACF Password Options

- Password Rules (from 1 to 8)
- ALPHA- (A-Z) (#\$@)
- ALPHANUM (A-Z) (#\$@) (0-9)

(0-9)

(AEIOU)

- NUMERIC -
- VOWEL -
- CONSONANT -
- NATIONAL -
- NOVOWEL -
- MIXEDNUM -

- (BCDFGHJKLMNPQRSTVWXYZ) (#\$@)
  - (0-9) (#\$@) CONSONANTs
  - must have one of each (A-Z) (#\$@) (0-9)
    - also (a-z) if enabled.



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#### Crafting Complex Passwords: RACF Password Options

MIXEDVOWEL -	(AEIOU) also (aeiou) if enabled.
MIXEDCONSONANT-	(BCDFGHJKLMNPQRSTVWXYZ)
	also (bcdfghjklmnpqrstvwxyz) if enabled.
MIXEDALL -	(#\$@) (0-9) (A-Z) also (a-z)
	and (.<+ &!*-%_>?:=) if enabled. Must have one of each category for multiple MIXEDALL positions.
SPECIAL -	(#\$@) also (.<+ &!*-%_>?:=) if enabled.
ANYTHING -	any symbol from any group stated above (only includes lower case and special characters if they are enabled.

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Crafting Complex Passwords: ACF2 Password Options

- length (from 1 to 8 characters)
- special characters  $(.<+|\&!*-\%_>?:=)$
- mixed case passwords
- may require at least one of each: alpha, numeric, upper case, lower case, national or user-defined
- cannot contain all numbers
- allows all vowels









Crafting Complex Passwords: ACF2 Password Options

- check number of consecutive characters (like 345 or XYZ)
- previous password (and how many ACF2 remembers up to 64 previous passwords)
- checks number of consecutive similar symbols between old and new passwords
- checks for logon ID in password
- checks number of consecutive characters to match user name in password



- must contain all numbers
- no vowels allowed

#### Crafting Complex Passwords: TSS Password Options

- length (from 4 to 8 characters)
- special characters (&\*^:=!-%.?\_|)
- mixed case passwords
- may require at least one of each: alpha, numeric, upper case, lower case, special character, special character (not in first or last position)









Crafting Complex Passwords: TSS Password Options

- restricts number of pairs of repeated characters
- cannot contain user's ACID or any word of the ACID name
- initial characters cannot match prefix entries in the Restricted Password List
- restricts use of words in RPL
- does not allow password similar to previous password





Crafting Complex Passwords: TSS Password Options

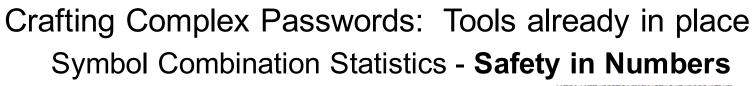
- may impose a mask requires specific symbol types per each position in a password:
  - a alphabetical character
  - v vowel

40

- c consonant
- x non-vowel (including national characters)
- ? any character



in San Antonio 2016



Formula N\*N\*N\*N\*N\*N\*N or N<sup>P</sup>

- 8 positions, (A-Z) (a-z) (0-9) (#\$@)
- 105121592435831203028018291425108048 1757467289097777279380008164706001614 1922218427255025425688767179049460165 1221066118630674427862203919494504712 19407726719478268482601476990902640134 1868386894277415599185592524595395943 1855584840635342207222582848864815845 15109659609402522887971089314566913686 10477555132379641451523746234364542851 17447808478489684332144571386875194350 18940907186494231961567945208095146551
- 318 trillion combinations (203 trillion, no repeats)
- 8 positions, (A-Z) (a-z) (0-9) requires 2 x (#\$@)
  - 678 billion combinations (356 billion, no repeats)





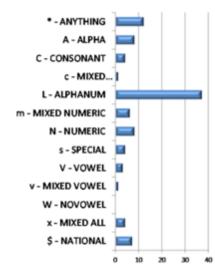
#### Crafting Complex Passwords: RSH Consulting Survey

RSH Consulting survey symbols are in common use.

Looking at all your RULEs collectively, which of the following character types have been specified?

42

Responses	Count	Percent %
* - ANYTHING	12	22.2%
A - ALPHA	8	14.8%
C - CONSONANT	4	7.4%
c - MIXED CONSONANT	1	1.9%
L - ALPHANUM	37	68.5%
m - MIXED NUMERIC	6	11.1%
N - NUMERIC	8	14.8%
s - SPECIAL	4	7.4%
V - VOWEL	3	5.6%
v - MIXED VOWEL	1	1.9%
W - NOVOWEL	0	0%
x - MIXED ALL	4	7.4%
\$ - NATIONAL	7	13.0%
Total	54	



(source: http://rshconsulting.com/surveys/RSH\_Consulting\_RACF\_Survey\_049\_Password\_Rules.pdf)

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43

# **Complex Passwords - Fact and Not Fiction**

Crafting Complex Passwords: Expert Recommendations

- Auditing Essentials Volume 2
  - Taming RACF SETROPTS
  - Mastering CA ACF2 GSO
  - Controlling CA Top Secret
- Includes Defense Information Systems Agency's Security Technical Implementation Guides (DISA STIGs)
- DOD recommendations

By Julie-Ann Williams, Mark Underwood, Craig Warren.

(http://www.newera-info.com/eBooks.html)









Crafting Complex Passwords: RACF - Experts Recommend

- 8 character length (AE2, DOD, DISA STIG)
- requires at least one special characters (AE2, DOD, DISA STIG)
- allow for mixed case (AE2, DISA STIG)
- password history should be 10 or higher (DISA STIG)
- rules: (DOD recommendations)
  - 8 character length
  - mix of alpha, numeric, special (at least one of each)
  - no repeated / no consecutive characters (req exit)
  - no user info in password (req exit)



#### Crafting Complex Passwords: RACF - Experts Recommend

- DISA STIG for Secure RACF Implementation

RULE 1 LENGTH(8) \$mmmmmm RULE 2 LENGTH(8) m\$mmmmm RULE 3 LENGTH(8) mm\$mmmm RULE 4 LENGTH(8) mmm\$mmm RULE 5 LENGTH(8) mmmm\$mm RULE 6 LENGTH(8) mmmmm\$mm RULE 7 LENGTH(8) mmmmm\$mm

All passwords 8 characters long with one national symbol, all others mixed numeric.

WHAT IF?... Modularity...more control over rules... userid or group specific...

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#### Crafting Complex Passwords: ACF2 - Experts Recommend

- password length 8 characters (AE2, DOD, DISA)
- requires at least one alpha, numeric, special character (AE2, DOD, DISA STIG)
- requires at least one upper case (DISA STIG)
- requires mixed case (DISA STIG)
- LID not allowed in password (AE2, DOD, DISA STIG)
- restrict use of user's name (DISA STIG 4 char)
- password cannot be all numeric (DOD & DISA STIG)
- consecutive repeated chars not allowed (AE2, DOD, DISA STIG)





Crafting Complex Passwords: ACF2 - Experts Recommend

- special characters (#\$@) (AE2, DOD, DISA STIG)
- cannot begin with reserved word prefix (DISA STIG)
- compares new and old passwords (DISA STIG (3))
- allows vowels (AE2, DISA STIG)
- enable password history (AE2, DISA STIG (10 64)





#### Crafting Complex Passwords: TSS Expert Recommends

- 8 character length (AE2, DOD, DISA STIG)
- repeated characters not allowed (DOD, DISA STIG)
- no consecutive characters (DOD only)
- cannot contain user ACID or any word of ACID NAME (DISA STIG)
- checks similarity of previous passwords (DISA STIG)
- requires at least one of each: alpha, numeric, special character (in PASSCHAR control option - minimum #\$@) (DOD, DISA STIG)





Crafting Complex Passwords: TSS Expert Recommends

- requires at least one upper and one lower case (DOD, DISA STIG)
- initial characters cannot match prefix entries in the Restricted Password List (DISA STIG)
- Cannot contain user ID, name, phone number or standard dictionary word (DOD, DISA STIG)
- enable password history (AE2, DISA STIG (10 or more))





Crafting Complex Passwords: Expert Recommends

"...you can end up making the new password rules SO complex it can be a virtual impossibility **for a standard issue human being** to come up with a new password that fits those rules."

(source: z/Auditing Essentials - VOLUME 2 - For CAACF2 -

The More I Think The More Confused I Get

Julie-Ann Williams, Mark Underwood, Craig Warren http://www.newera-info.com/eBooks.html)

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**Complex Passwords - Fact and Not Fiction** 

Crafting Complex Passwords: Tools the user brings – Professional and personal integrity.

- Intelligence with smarts, you can be clever, too.
- A system for crafting complex passwords.





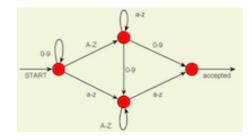


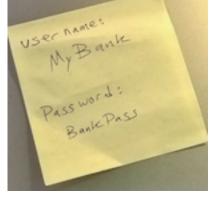
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#### **Complex Passwords - Fact and Not Fiction**

#### Crafting Complex Passwords: A system

- Rule of thumb:
  - Don't be LAZY)
  - Don't go CRAZY













Crafting Complex Passwords: A system

- Mnemonics vs Words
  - Can foil a dictionary or reserved word attack
  - Personal: easy to remember, difficult to guess
- Substitution of symbols and numbers for letters words
  - @ for a, # for H, \$ for S
  - 7 for L, 1 for i or I, 8 for B





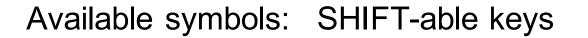
Crafting Complex Passwords: A system

- Rhythmic element to further obscure the mnemonic
  - The rhythm element is imposed on the password by which keystrokes are SHIFT-ed and which are not.
  - Remember the keystrokes and the rhythmic element.



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Crafting Complex Passwords: A system

Sample passwords created by this method:

dQ6Fj@lC DYkt#T4j 11MHi\$Fc

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Crafting Complex Passwords: Mnemonic with swap & rhythm source: do quick brown foxes jump around lazy cats? MNEMONIC: D Q B F J A L C

MNEMONIC: DQBFJALC[LEVEL 1]SWAP:DQ6FJ@LC[LEVEL 2]RHYTHM:. | . | . | . |PASSWORD:dQ6Fj@lC[LEVEL 3]



(contains upper/lower case, numeric, special symbols)

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Crafting Complex Passwords: Mnemonic with swap & rhythm source: Do you know the way to San Jose MNEMONIC: D Y K T W T S J

MNEMONIC: DYKTWTSJ	[LEVEL 1]
SWAP: DYKT3T\$J	[LEVEL 2]
RHYTHM:	
<b>PASSWORD:</b> DYkt#T4j	[LEVEL 3]



(contains upper/lower case, numeric, special symbols)

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Crafting Complex Passwords: Mnemonic with swap & rhythm source: I left my heart in San Fran cisco MNEMONIC: I L M H I S F C

MNEMONIC: ILME	HISFC [LEVEL 1]
SWAP: ILME	H <b>1\$</b> FC [LEVEL 2]
RHYTHM:	•     •
<b>PASSWORD:</b> ilm	H1\$Fc [LEVEL 3]



(contains upper/lower case, numeric, special symbols)

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Available symbols: SHIFT-able keys (RACF special symbols)



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Available symbols: SHIFT-able keys (ACF2 special symbols)



NOT symbol - PC: alt + 0172 Mac: option + L

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Available symbols: SHIFT-able keys (TSS special symbols)



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Crafting Complex Passwords: RACF - special characters **SOURCE:** Great minds think alike. Not so! Be unique.

MNEMONIC: G M T A N S B U

 MNEMONIC: GMTANSBU
 [LEVEL 1]

 SWAP:
 G3T@N5BU
 [LEVEL 2]

 RHYTHM:
 |.|.||..

 PASSWORD:
 G3T2N%bu
 [LEVEL 3]



(contains upper/lower case, numeric, special symbol)

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#### Crafting Complex Passwords: ACF2 – special characters

**SOURCE:** Ada Lovelace wrote programs well before their time **MNEMONIC:** A L W P W B T T

MNEMONIC:	ALWPWBTT	[LEVEL 1]
SWAP:	A <b>73</b> PWB <b>+</b> T	[LEVEL 2]
RHYTHM:	•   •   •   •	
PASSWORD:	a&3PwB=T	[LEVEL 3]



(contains upper/lower case, numeric, special symbols)

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Crafting Complex Passwords: TSS – special characters **SOURCE:** Some rabbits love carrots stolen from my garden **MNEMONIC:** S R T. S F М G **MNEMONIC:** SRL<sup>^</sup>SFMG [LEVEL 1] **5**RL**^\$**F**3**G SWAP: [LEVEL 2] . . . . . . . **RHYTHM:** 

PASSWORD: 5Rl^4F3G [LEVEL 3]



(contains upper/lower case, numeric, special symbols)

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Crafting Complex Passwords: TSS – special characters source: Chicken cross the road? Get to other side.

 MNEMONIC: CCTRGTOS
 [LEVEL 1]

 SWAP:
 C{TRG2OS
 [LEVEL 2]

 RHYTHM:
 ||.||.|.
 .

 PASSWORD:
 C{tRG2OS
 [LEVEL 3]



(contains upper/lower case, numeric, special symbols)

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Crafting Complex Passwords: RACF – special characters

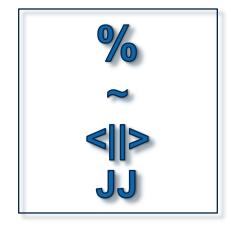
- SOURCE: This is me %. How do I look?
- MNEMONIC: T I M % H D I L

 MNEMONIC: TIM%HDIL
 [LEVEL 1]

 SWAP:
 +I3%#D1L
 [LEVEL 2]

 RHYTHM:
 .|.||||.

 PASSWORD:
 =I3%#D!1
 [LEVEL 3]



(contains upper/lower case, numeric, special symbols)

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Crafting Complex Passwords: RACF – special characters

**SOURCE:** USA rocket ship emoji **PASSWORD:** <1U%s\*@=



(contains upper/lower case, numeric, special symbols)

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Closing:

- Security Administrators fortify the walls of the castle.
- The USER holds the keys to the kingdom:
  - Protect your user ID and password (and rules).
  - Come up with a system to craft complex passwords.
  - Change passwords regularly.
  - If you must write them, obscure them, keep them safe.







#### Why Complex Passwords Should Be Fact and Not Fiction

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70

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