UC SANTA BARBARA

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Data Security

The emergence of big data has taught us that information is an extremely valuable commodity. And, as with anything of value, there are people who want to steal it. October is National Cyber Security Month, and the occasion serves as an opportune reminder that our data requires as much protection from would-be thieves as our physical valuables do.

“Let's face it, everyone is getting hacked. From individuals to large corporations and even governments,” said Kip Bates, associate director of cyber security at UC Santa Barbara. “Our goal is to create a culture of cybersecurity awareness to protect not only our organization but the individuals who work here.”

It can be overwhelming to consider all the ways in which your information may be vulnerable. Fortunately, the campus’s Information Security Team has launched a new campaign this month to help the campus community develop strong security habits. The team plans to highlight three themes this year: the benefits of passphrases, the importance of multi-factor authentication and eight smart habits to improve your security.

The team released an article offering advice on some convenient ways to strengthen your passwords. Some actions seem fairly intuitive — like never share your passwords with others — while others are less obvious. For instance, a password’s length is more important than its complexity, according to the team. That’s why they recommend using passphrases, which are often longer than a single word, yet still memorable. However, “complexity still counts,” the team notes.

They offer are a few other suggestions for improving your security:

- • Use different passwords for different accounts.
- • Use multi-factor authentication (MFA).
- • Use a password manager, a secure service that organizes and centralizes your passwords.

Keep an eye out for videos and social media posts throughout the month, as well as new articles on the UCSB Information Security website.

The Information Security Team will also host a free event on campus on Monday, Oct. 22, with computer science professor, and renowned cybersecurity expert, Giovanni Vigna. Vigna, a member of the campus's Computer Security Group, will discuss the role artificial intelligence plays in computer security, and developments in machine learning being put to use in cyber security.

Tags
Artificial Intelligence

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.