

A look at how to keep passwords safe, secure

We were purchasing a large-ticket item and sat down at the finance person's desk to finalize the deal. He stepped away to get something. While he was gone, we noticed sticky notes all up and down the side of his monitor. Each one had one or more website addresses, user names and passwords, all sitting there. What a risk!



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Anyone could snap a picture and gain access to these accounts. Don't know if he appreciated it or not, but we told him this was risky and he might want to rethink this tracking system.

Password vaults

To keep your online accounts as safe as possible, you should use strong passwords and use a different password for each account or website. (See my password security tips in the April 18 issue of the Business Ledger.)

This can add up to a lot of passwords. Writing them down and carrying them around is not safe.

We don't recommend sticky notes on your



There are a number of options for keeping your passwords safe and secure.

monitor or in your top desk drawer, either.

To keep track of all your logins and password, we recommend using a password vault. In the vault, you store all the websites, application names, etc. along with their specific user name and password information, every place you visit and ever account you log into. You then just use one 'master' password to get into the vault.

A couple options

There are two password vault software programs

we use and like.

Take a look at Kee Pass at www.KEEPASS.INFO — this is a favorite in our office - and it's free. Another password vault option is Last Pass, which offers a free version and a premium version.

How does a vault work?

- **Step one:** Create a 'super' user name and password for the password vault.

- **Step two:** In the vault, enter each website you visit or program you log into, along with your user name and password.

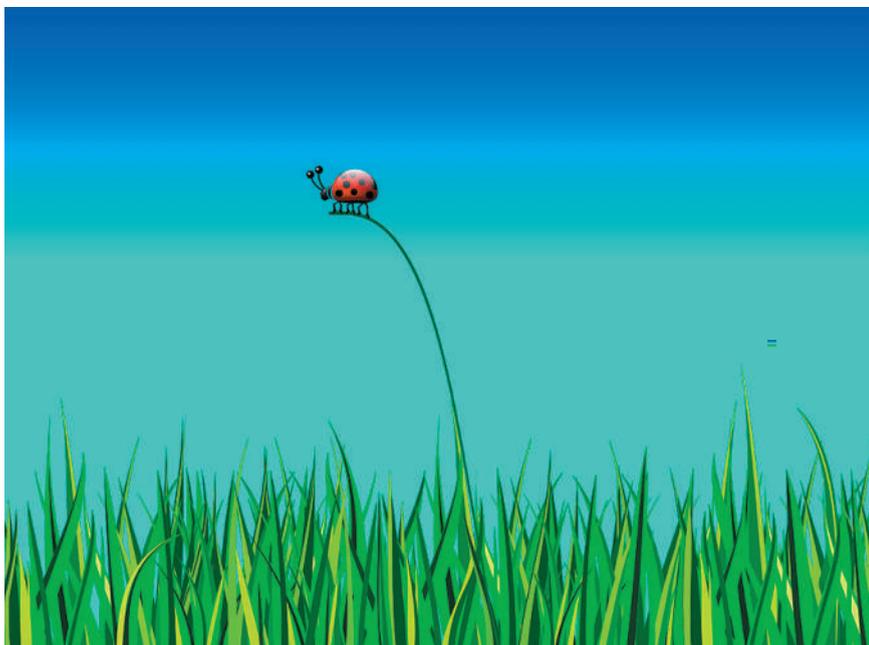
- **Step three:** When you want to log into any of your accounts, launch the vault from your laptop or desktop computer.

- **Step Four:** Click the URL in the vault, select 'auto-type', and you're in.

Getting started

How to get started? Choose a vault software and download it to your laptop or desktop computer. Start with just one or two sites and practice using the software. When you're ready, enter the rest of your sites, logins and passwords. When it's time to change passwords, let the vault auto-generate new ones.

- *Catherine Wendt is president of Syscon Inc., a technology solutions business based in Hinsdale.*

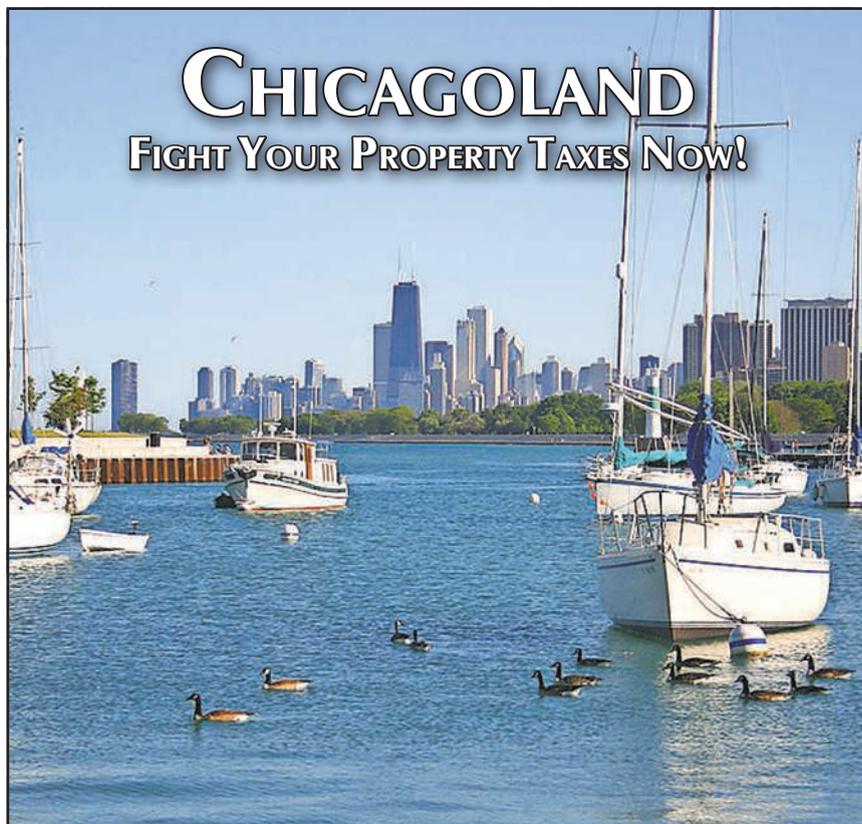


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