

## Wide Angle



Joel Indrupati

## Passwords and Pin Numbers: A Memory Muddle?

**H**ow many passwords can one remember? And, what about PIN numbers? Or those security-answers?

To unlock or open software and hardware systems today, it looks like we all need a personal memory that must rival the elephant's.

For our email, for our computer, for our mobile device, for our phone banking service, and for our TV receiver, we are now forced to remember a growing number of passwords and pin numbers.

And "the number of passwords one would need to remember is directly proportional to the sum of the electronic devices one is buying and the web services one is registering for."

This law (which was just postulated by yours truly) could have some exceptions. But companies are going the extra mile, to make our password-memory fun. Well, fun for them but frustrating for us.

They conduct free mental health check-up on us - perhaps for Alzheimer's or Amnesia - by asking us to participate in mind exercises.

They test our cerebral resilience by telling us that our password must contain at least one capital letter, one small letter, one number, and at least one 'special character'.

One Special character?

Shylock, of Shakespeare? The Joker from Hollywood? Crime Master Gogo from Bollywood?

No. They tell us it could be an exclamation mark or an ampersand, a hash or a comma, a double quote or a dollar sign.

After all this, if you still don't remember the password when you need it, you are in for trouble. You will have to answer a few security questions, the answers to which you should, now, remember.

And then they might let you reset the password.

A few days ago, no matter how many times I tried, I was unable to enter into an online web service. So, after several attempts, with all those different old passwords I could remember, I finally gave up.

And I sought to reset the password. I entered my email address after clicking on 'forgot password' section and I got the 'reset password' link by email.

Now, when I tried to make up a password, imagine my annoyance when the system says: 'Sorry. You cannot use any previously used passwords'!

Yes. I had tried to use an old one. But that is because, tell me, how many words can I really, effectively, remember?

And as if that is not enough, some websites are even telling me, "We have noticed that you have not changed your password for a long time. We recommend you change it".

There are OTPs too; One-time passwords which work if you have your phone handy when you are booking or buying online.

So, when you travel to another country and use a different temporary number, you will need another phone. Or a phone with dual Sim Card provision. Otherwise, you won't get text messages from the banks and other web service providers to help you reset.

In one way, I agree of course, it is good to see the online services becoming more and more secure. But on the other hand I feel the websites should allow us to create and use passwords without too many conditions and restrictions.

Recently, a telephone banking service told me I cannot even use two consecutive digits in my pin number! Is that not a needless restriction?

Anyway, thanks to the new biometrics-enabled devices, which recognize fingerprints and faces, at least some of the problems are now reducing.

But then, complaints aside, let us remember our past.

If we had remembered scores of telephone numbers in our head before the advent of mobile phone, we can remember these passwords and pins too.

*(The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policy or position of this newspaper.)*

# Macron to repair damage after army chief quits

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**P**resident Emmanuel Macron attempted yesterday to mend fences with the military after the resignation of the armed forces chief in a row over budget cuts for which France's new leader has drawn criticism.

General Pierre de Villiers quit on Wednesday after being publicly slapped down by Macron for protesting the government's plans to slash 850 million euros (\$980 million) from this year's defence budget.

His resignation capped a week-long spat, during which Macron made clear he would brook no insubordination as commander-in-chief, drawing a mix of criticism and respect.

Yesterday, he reassured the troops that they had his support despite the spending cuts.



French President Emmanuel Macron (L) and newly appointed French chief of military staff General Francois Lecointre deliver a speech during a visit to the French air force base

Saying he "deeply respected" the military, which is engaged in operations against jihadists in Syria, Iraq and West Africa while also defending against attacks on home soil, Macron said: "I know what the nation owes you."

He also repeated his promise to hike the defence budget by over a billion euros in 2018, in line with

his promise to raise defence spending to 2 percent of GDP -- about 50 billion euros -- by 2025.

De Villiers, a highly respected figure who prided himself on speaking truth to power, riled Macron after telling a parliamentary committee last week he would not allow the armed forces to be "screwed".

## MH370 search reveals hidden undersea world

Sydney

**T**he painstaking search for missing flight MH370 has uncovered a previously unknown undersea world of volcanoes, deep valleys and soaring ridges, according to detailed maps released by Australia.

Although no trace of the Malaysia Airlines plane was found during the search in the southern Indian Ocean -- the most expensive ever of its kind -- large volumes of data showing a detailed picture of the sea floor had to be collected to guide the probe.

Scientists are hopeful the new maps will give their community greater insight into oceans.

"It is estimated that only 10 to 15 percent of the world's oceans have been surveyed with the kind of technology used in the search for MH370," Geoscience Australia's environmental geoscience chief Stuart Minchin said late Wednesday.

"(That makes) this remote part of the Indian Ocean among the most thoroughly mapped regions of the deep ocean on the planet.

## Missing Pets



**BUBBLES** - Female, 4 yrs, spayed, owner was away - always let out in garden for a bit - but this time did not come back, not wearing collar or ID tag, Nuwaidrat (behind Jawad), 26/06/17. **39448662 or 33787650**



**POPPY** - Female Miniature Poodle, 2 yrs, micro-chipped, wearing black collar w pink paw print ID tag, has health issue, possibly STOLEN, Budaiya (Beach Villas/by new road works/back of farmers market), 10/3/17, REWARD 200BD, **36636955 or 36366128**



**BLUE** - Male Red Point Siamese, 1 yr, not wearing collar or ID, gate left open, may have been STOLEN, Saar (Almarkh 35 Ave/Cinema Saar), 19/1/17, BD50 REWARD, **35637527 or 35016599**



**DIGGY** - Male Shih Tzu/Maltese mix, 4.5 yrs, white w black spots, neutered (green tattoo mark where neutered), micro-chipped, not wearing collar or ID, gate left open, Bahraini young men tried to lure him to their truck, Busaiteen (last seen near roundabout), 5/6/17. **34477574**



**NOUS** - Male Gray British Blue Shorthair, 4 yrs, lifts left leg while walking due to surgery, pink mark on right side of face, not wearing collar or ID, escaped from house, likely stolen, Hamad Town (Roundabout 17), 25/3/17. **36250888**



**TOTO** - Male Shitzu, 8 yrs, neutered, pet sitter walking three dogs off lead and Toto ran away, barks at men and other dogs, not wearing collar or ID, Saar (close to Geant Easy), 21/4/17, REWARD BD100 **33366234 / 35592368 / 34356018**