

TECHNOLOGY

Worst password is easy as 123...456 for hackers

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The world's worst password has been identified as "123456" as internet users continue to ignore advice to create complicated, hard-to-guess phrases. Security application firm SplashData analysed more than five million passwords leaked online and found the numeric code

was the most commonly used, followed by "password". "Donald" was a new entry in the annual list, debuting at number 23. Other popular passwords included "12345678" in third place, "sunshine", "iloveyou" and "princess". "Monkey", "football" and "qwerty" were also widely deployed, alongside other basic numeric codes including "111111", "666666" and "654321".

Users' insistence on using easily guessable passwords makes them vulnerable to being hacked, Morgan Slain, chief executive of SplashData, said. The company estimates that around 10 per cent of people have used at least one of the top 25 passwords in this year's list. "Hackers have great success using celebrity names, terms from pop culture and sports, and simple keyboard patterns," Mr Slain said.

SPOTLIGHT

The cost of Christmas is going up

Modest treats of yore have been replaced by a modern-day thirst for luxury. By **David Woode**

It's the most wonderful time of the year – especially if you're a food or toy retailer. Christmas is a boom time for the high street, or what's left of it, and this year premium bottles of fizz, Instagram-inspired rainbow trees and Lego's Harry Potter Hogwarts Express are among the items which retailers expect to fly off the shelves this Christmas. And with nine shopping days to go before the big day, it's predicted we will spend £47.7bn – up 4 per cent on last December, when sales reached

a record £45.8bn, says the market research group Mintel. Despite economic gloom and Brexit jitters, Britons are expected to stock up on panettone, fine cheeses and wines while online retailers are banking on last-minute discounts on home entertainment, clothes and toys. Christmas sales account for 34 per cent of annual spending on toys and amount to £1.2bn and it's predicted that children aged 11 and under will unwrap at least 10 toys each this year. This year the most sought-after



1950s

'Sage and chestnut stuffing was a must'

ROSALIND RATHBONE, 75, founder of the Cookery School in Fitzrovia, central London

"A turkey at Christmas was the most wonderful treat, it was beyond luxury. We never cooked our potatoes around the turkey; instead we used oil and they were crispy and delicious. Sage and chestnut stuffing was a must – one in the front and the other in the back. I'd make a fruit cake and we all used to help with the Christmas pudding. We'd scrub silver sixpences and boil them before my mother added them to the mixture. She'd sometimes add a half crown and if you got that it was like the jewel in the crown."

1980s

'I got my first cassette recorder'

CLAIRE SHIELS, 47, is a business publicist from Newcastle

"I was 10 in 1981 and I have vivid memories of unwrapping my first radio cassette recorder. Looking back, it was very basic but it meant everything to me. I switched on the radio and Bucks Fizz's "Land of Make Believe" was playing. My whole family would gather at 12pm for turkey and all the trimmings, which were made in a pressure cooker. The adults would have a glass of Asti Spumante, too. We never watched The Queen's speech but we did tune in to Christmas Top of The Pops. In later years, I'd tune into TV shows The Box of Delights and The Children of Green Knowe.

toys include Barbie's Ultimate Kitchen (£44.99) and Monopoly Fortnite edition (£22), according to the Toy Retailer Association's Dream Toys list. But how has Christmas become the consumer colossus it is today? And how does it compare with 40 or 60 years ago? Retail analysts point to the fact we now have more money to spend. In turn, increased choice and greater access has transformed our festive experience. Richard Perks, Mintel's director of retail research, told i: "The big difference comes down to the fact the

real incomes have grown substantially. "The way we live now and spend is very different to the 1950s and 1980s. "Young people's expectations and the way spend their – and their parents' – money has changed." Rewind to the 1950s and the wounds of the Second World War were still visible. Despite materials being in short supply due to import restrictions, there was a growing demand for children's toys. In December 1957, the Council of Industrial Design reported that the toy industry's annual turnover had soared

Real incomes have grown substantially. And young people's expectations have changed

to £34m-35m (£833m today), from a pre-war figure of £3m. Among the best-selling toys that decade were Matchbox cars and Viewmaster stereoscopes. And while children's toys have become bigger and pricier since then, our Christmas dinner appears to have stood the test of time. In the early-mid 1950s, a festive meal was viewed as a fancier Sunday roast: chicken was more common with few splashing out on a turkey. It was accompanied by all the trimmings such as roast potatoes, Yorkshire pudding, carrots, cabbage and, of course, brussels sprouts. Afterwards, a Christmas pudding was the norm but for those with money, cheese, crackers and a glass of port were the ultimate in Yuletide indulgence. Rosalind Rathbone, founder of the Cookery School in central London, says back then, Christmas trees were far less fancy than today's. "We'd have a star on the top and a few baubles hanging from it but it wasn't dripping in lights and elaborate decorations, she says. "If you were lucky to have fairy lights that was amazing. At that time we didn't buy anything in abundance. Each thing we had was special and we all focused on it."

But by the 1980s, Christmas became bigger and bolder – and more expensive. Shoppers found themselves with more options and opportunities to indulge. When the original Star Wars films were released in 1977, the Millennium Falcon cost around £20. With the release of The Last Jedi in 2017, the toy, priced at £50, remains on bestseller lists. "The growth of supermarkets and a desire for designer fashion has given consumers more choice," says Richard Perks. "Also, the development of prepared food is another factor; as 60 years ago everything was made from scratch." This year the cheapest Christmas dinner for eight will set you back £24.90, revealed Good Housekeeping magazine, which analysed items bought from 10 supermarkets. But back in 1988, your festive meal would have set you back £14.11, according to data from the Office for National Statistics and Retromash, a nostalgia website. The Bank of England says a typical UK household spends over £2,000 a month, rising to £2,500 in December. The business of Christmas looks set to boom for many years to come.

News in brief

HEALTH

Boy, 4, uses Siri to dial 999 for mum

A four-year-old boy used Siri on his mother's iPhone to call 999 after she collapsed. Beau Austin from Hook, Pembrokeshire, was with his pregnant mother Jess when she passed out from the side effects of medication. He asked Siri to dial 999 and told the operator, "My mummy's sick", and that he was four and alone with her. Beau, who loves talking to devices such as Alexa and Siri, has now been given a bravery award. His mother came round to confirm her address for an ambulance before fainting again. Control room staff talked Beau through how to keep his mother conscious.

PEOPLE

Prince William thanks cadets

The Duke of Cambridge warned officer cadets about the "great demands" that service life places on families as he represented the Queen for the first time at the Sovereign's Parade at the Royal Military Academy in Sandhurst. William, who graduated from Sandhurst in 2006, spoke of the "immense privilege" that came with serving in one of "the finest military academies in the world" as he addressed cadets celebrating the completion of a year's intensive training at the academy.



SPORT

Councillors ban leading hunt

A leading hunt is being forced to find another meeting site after being banned from assembling on council-owned land for health and safety reasons. The Duke of Beaufort's Hunt in Gloucestershire has met on New Year's Day at the Tetbury Rail Lands for the past 20 years. But Tetbury town councillors voted to stop the meeting there. Hunt members described the decision as "short-sighted". The council said there were concerns over the narrowness of the land and contact between pedestrians, dogs and horses.

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