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The Administrative Assistant: When Password Reuse Opens the Door ^[1]



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Major risks frequently come from simple everyday decisions, not advanced cybercriminal tools. For example, certain routines can make organizations vulnerable to fraud and security threats.

What Went Wrong – The Setup

An administrative assistant reused the same password for university email, a shopping site, and a personal streaming account. After the shopping site was breached, criminals tried the exposed password on the CU account. It worked, giving them access to internal email and sensitive files.

The Cyber Safe Fix – Different Choices, Different Outcomes

- Turn on multi-factor authentication (MFA) wherever available to add a second layer of security.
- Create passphrases (e.g., several unrelated words) rather than short, complex strings you'll forget.
- Consider using a password manager to create and store strong, unique passwords for every account.
- Never reuse university passwords on non-university sites.

The Cyber Safe Recovery – What to Do After a Slip-up

- Change the compromised password immediately; do not reuse the old one.
- If you reused that password elsewhere, change those accounts, too.
- Review recent account activity and set up alerts where available.
- Immediately report the incident to your campus IT service desk or information security. Quick reporting allows the investigative team to assess the impact and respond accordingly.

More Real-Life Situations and Choices That Went Wrong

- [The Health Care Technician](#) ^[2]
- [The Faculty Member](#) ^[3]
- [The Department Manager](#) ^[4]

About Information Security on Your Campus

Each campus employs an information security officer along with other security staff to safeguard data. They evaluate risks, implement security protocols, and address security incidents.

- [CU Anschutz](#) ^[5]
- [CU Boulder](#) ^[6]
- [CU Denver](#) ^[5]
- [UCCS](#) ^[7]
- [System Administration](#) ^[8]

Groups audience:

Office of Information Security

Right Sidebar:

Did You Know-Admin Asst

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Links

- [1] <https://www.cu.edu/security/administrative-assistant-when-password-reuse-opens-door>
- [2] <https://www.cu.edu/security/health-care-technician-when-ignoring-updates-puts-your-device-risk>
- [3] <https://www.cu.edu/security/faculty-member-one-quick-click-can-be-costly>
- [4] <https://www.cu.edu/security/department-director-mfa-fatigue-approving-wrong-request>
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