**Research Question:**

Do people use the same passwords for different accounts?

**Hypothesis:**

If I survey a large group of people, then the majority will say they do use the same passwords for different accounts.

**Materials:**

1. Signed consent form to participate in the trial
2. Writing utensil
3. Lab notebook
4. 12 human subjects from 5 families

**Procedure:**

1. Approach first participant.
2. Ask the participant the question: “Do you use similar passwords for different accounts?”
3. Gather results into a chart which will then be turned into a graph to show the results (yes or no).
4. Repeat for the other 11 subjects.

**Directions for survey**

1. Each human subject will be given a “Human Informed Consent Form” to ensure they are willing to partake in this experiment and are knowledgeable of the content of the experiment.
2. The participant is asked the question: “Do you use similar passwords for different accounts?”
3. The answer that is received from the participant will be recorded further use.

**Results:**

Seventeen percent (17%), or two out of the twelve participants, responded with No, they do not use the same passwords for all of their accounts. On the contrary, eighty-three percent (83%), or nine out of the twelve participants, responded with Yes, they do use the same passwords for all of their accounts.

Another factor that was observed throughout this experiment was the differing of responses between age groups. One hundred percent (100%) of the participants that were under eighteen responded with No, they do not use the same passwords for all of their accounts. However, the participants that were of ages eighteen and older had differing results. Seventy five percent (75%) of participants eighteen and older responded with Yes, they do use the same passwords for all of their accounts, while twenty five percent (25%) responded with No, they do not use the same passwords for all of their accounts.

**Conclusion:**

The results of this experiment proved my hypothesis to be correct. The majority of participants responded Yes, they do use the same passwords for all of their accounts to the question they were asked. Meanwhile only a small sample had responded with No, they do not use the same passwords for all of their accounts.

The results found in this experiment show that it is widely accepted practice to use just slight variations of one password for a plethora of different accounts (bank, social media, etc.) However, this practice is very unsafe as it increases the likelihood of important information being stolen. When a person comes in contact with your password, they are able to access the account that password belongs to. If you have many similar passwords or the same password for every one of your accounts, then the person who has that password can access all of your other accounts. The results also showed that participants older than 18 years of age were less likely to use the same passwords, since 75% of adults used the same password and 100% of children used the same password. This may be because of the difference in maturity of the two groups; adults tend to be safer when it comes to passwords.

If I were to do this experiment again, I would change a few factors of it. First of all, I would ask a wider audience to gain more data. Gaining more data would allow a better and more proper representation of the general population. Although I asked a wide range of ages since I asked families, I would also ask a much more diverse audience, since I want to represent a more general population in my findings.

**Abstract:**

As Pew Research Center states, “Overall, 84% of U.S. households own a computer, and 73% of U.S. households have a computer with a broadband connection to the internet….” Clearly, a large quantity of people use the internet; however, they need to be safe while doing so. The purpose of this experiment was to find whether the average American does or does not use the same password for all of their accounts, as this under most conditions very unsafe. My hypothesis that if I survey a group of people, then the majority will say they do use the same passwords for different accounts, was proven true in my experiment. To test my hypothesis, the first thing that I did was find people willing to partake in this experiment, whom I then proceeded to ask the question of “Do you use similar passwords for different accounts?” After I asked the participant the question I would record their answer (yes or no). I would then repeat this process with eleven more people. In the end, I found that eighty-three percent of the participants responded yes to the survey, whilst only seventeen percent of the surveyed responded with no. Also, it can be seen in the data that 25% percent of adults responded with no, while 0% of children respond no. This is alarming, as it is unsafe for people to use the same passwords for all of their accounts—however, it can be seen in the results of my experiment that the majority of people do this.

**Works Cited**

Rainie, Lee, and D’vera Cohn. “Census: Computer Ownership, Internet Connection Varies Widely across U.S.” *Pew Research Center*, 19 Sept. 2014, www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/09/19/census-computer-ownership-internet-connection-varies-widely-across-u-s/. Accessed 2 Jan. 2017.

“Why You Should Use Different Passwords.” *University of Illinois*, Board of Trustees at the U of Illinois, security.illinois.edu/content/why-you-should-use-different-passwords. Accessed 2 Jan. 2017.