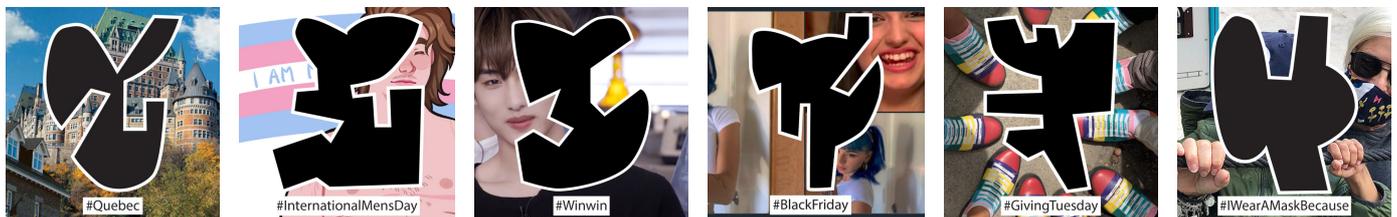


A CASE FOR KEEPING IT RANDOM

WHEN YOU ARE RANDOM ON PURPOSE, CREATIVITY, WELLNESS AND SECURITY COME NATURALLY.

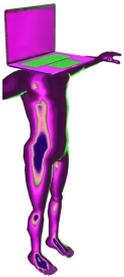
HAYAL POZANTI CREATES HER ART *with the internet in mind*. SHE KNOWS HER PIECES HAVE TO STAND OUT ONLINE IN ORDER TO FIND SUCCESS.

“I realized I needed to make something that was completely unique and did not exist elsewhere,” Pozanti says. So she invented a totally original alphabet of shapes that can be understood only if you know how to decode them. Pozanti layers these shapes to convey an encrypted message in each of her paintings. “It was in reaction to the knowledge that my artwork would be existing online and competing in an attention economy,” she says.



Shapes of Our Times, by Hayal Pozanti

Her language was created with a purposeful randomness, and much of her art relies on the randomness of the internet. In “Shapes of Our Times,” Pozanti layers the date written in her language over an image related to the top trending hashtag on social media. She pulls that hashtag and image at the same time every day, never knowing what it will be. Previous hashtags have included “#Halloween, #Oregon and #GivingTuesday.” When randomness and creativity collide, the result can be truly magical.



In 2020, the password manager Dashlane embarked on a nationwide study to better understand the impact working from home has on internet security behaviors and attitudes.

While unplanned, the study took place during the pandemic, when participants were spending more time than ever online, managing multiple business and personal logins and passwords.

Around 35 percent of respondents said that keeping track of their online account information and logins overwhelmed them. And more than 51 percent said they would be relieved if they never had to remember another password. While security risks increased due to remote-

work environments, employees' concern for company security didn't. The majority of employed Americans (70 percent), according to Dashlane's survey, believe it is their company's job to make sure their work accounts aren't hacked or breached.

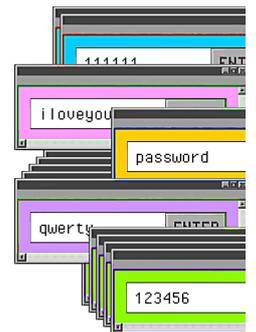


Although you may feel confident in your ability to invent unique passwords, data shows that most commonly used passwords are ridiculously simple. Year after year, "123456" and "password" make the list. So what's the key to having a safe internet experience? Randomness.

Hackable passwords are commonplace, but password managers can create and implement random passwords for all of your personal and business accounts.

Randomness isn't important just to the online experience; it's also a guiding principle of the body's immune system and an indispensable ingredient in unforgettable artwork.

Randomness is all around us, if we know where to look for it.





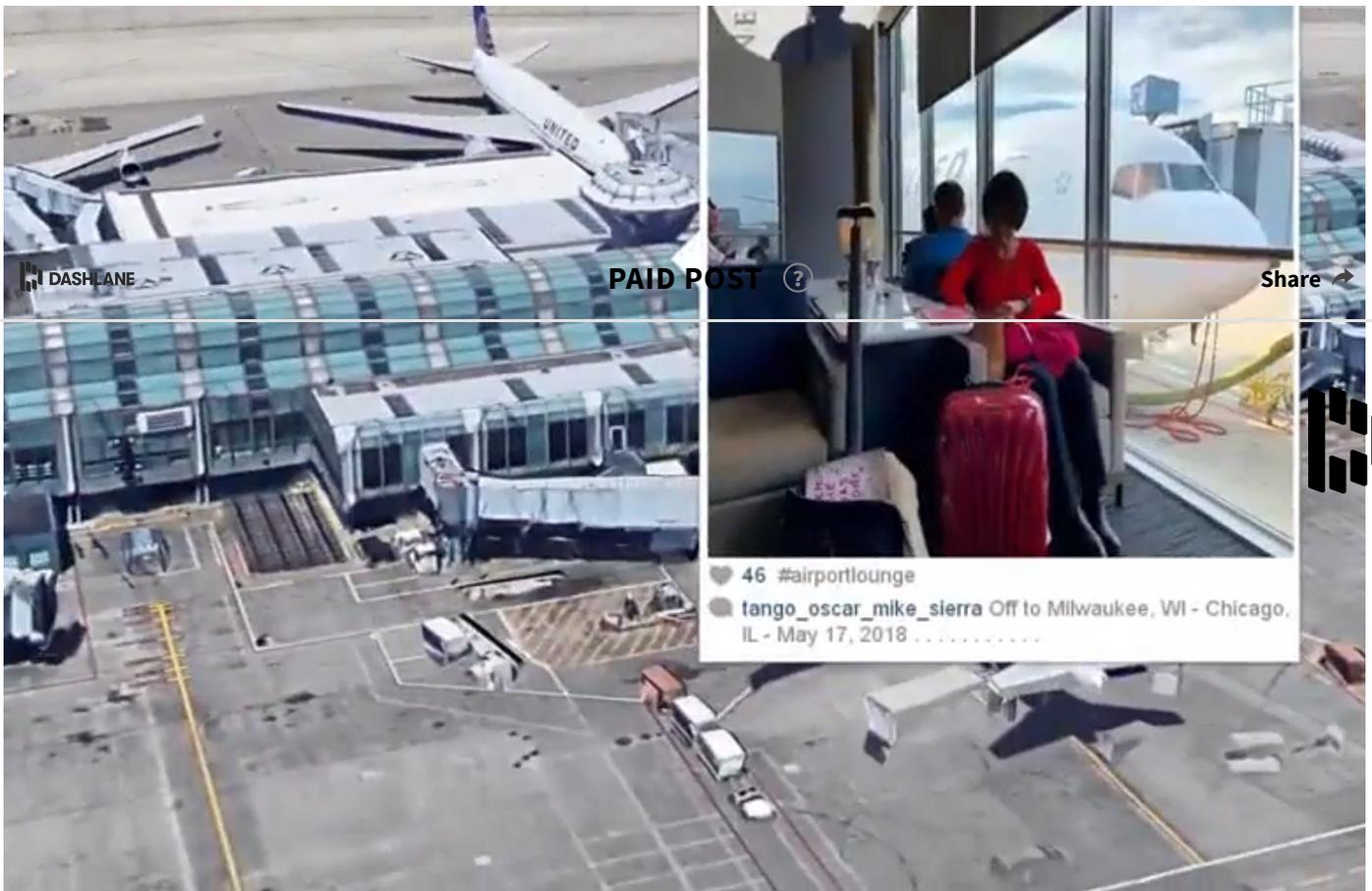
POZANTI'S PAINTING "51 (percentage of americans who expect that computers will be able to create art that is indistinguishable from that produced by humans within the next 50 years)" IS A VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF ITS TITULAR NUMBER, TRANSLATED INTO POZANTI'S CODE.



51, by Hayal Pozanti

Marc Lee, a Swiss artist, also makes art for and with the internet. His project "Airport Lounge" shows social media posts sent from airport lounges laid on top of satellite images of airports. Lee doesn't choose which posts end up in the piece. "I just take the newest social media posts," he says. "It's a strict concept. I always start with the youngest posts in the beginning. You never know who is posting what." Without this randomness, Lee says, "the piece would not work."





Airport Lounge, by Marc Lee

He isn't interested only in the unpredictability of the internet and art; he also takes what he calls "random walks." When he's in a new city, he chooses a random starting point, turns off his phone and simply walks in a straight line. He follows the streets, but doesn't use a GPS or map. He has taken these walks for six days in a row.

The goal is "to see things as they are, with no target and no plan," Lee explains. The unpredictable walks shake him out of his routine and help him relax, he says.

For both Pozanti and Lee, random doesn't mean aimless. "My randomness is very purposeful," Pozanti says. "I wanted to keep a human element in the creation process, which is intuition."

That may be what makes creativity effective. "The art that speaks to me most has some sort of inexplicable *je ne sais quoi*," Pozanti says. "I like to see some sort of considered randomness." Perhaps this speaks to us because humans actually run on randomness.

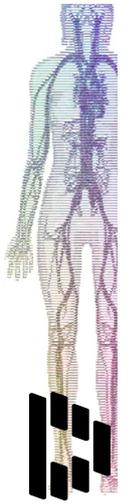


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YOUR BODY *uses randomness every day* TO HELP KEEP YOU HEALTHY. YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM IS, IN MANY WAYS, FUELED BY IT.

Your immune system produces B cells that make antibodies, the blood proteins that counteract antigens, or foreign substances. You have millions of B cells circulating, and they are deployed randomly. They arbitrarily encounter different antigens and threats in your body. B cells are not made for a specific threat; they are created as a random assortment, each addressing different threats. So as they're circulating, it's a matter of chance whether they recognize the threat in your body.



So why the randomness? “It’s because there’s so much out there that is foreign to our bodies,” explains Pooja Khanna, a Ph.D. candidate in biology. “In terms of immunity, your body doesn’t have the defenses to mount against everything,” Khanna explains. “So your body takes advantage of this randomness to fight things off.”

This process actually mirrors the randomness of a password manager like Dashlane. “With a password, you have a string of letters and numbers. That’s your code,” Khanna says. “For antibodies you have these genetic codes that are rearranged in random ways. That generates antibodies that recognize different foreign substances.”



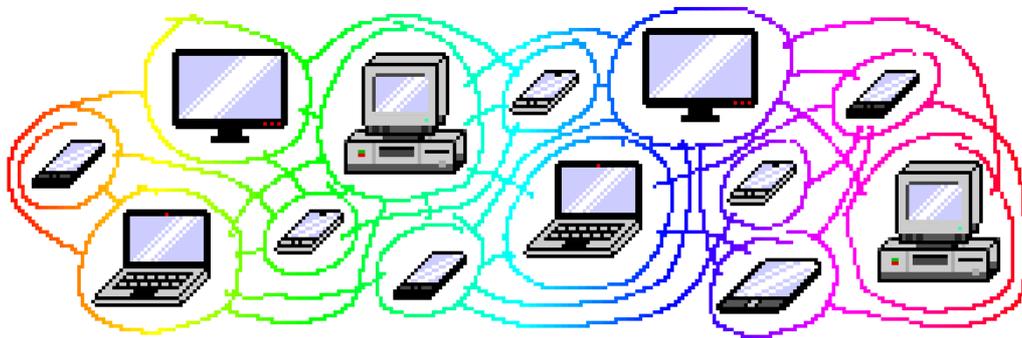
Genetics is random in many ways. Within a population, a number of organisms will have genetic mutations. The mutations themselves occur randomly; they can be helpful, neutral or disadvantageous. In humans, those mutations can be anything from eye color to number of taste buds. Did you know that 25 to 30 percent of people are supertasters, meaning they have more taste buds than the average person? That supertasting ability could have been advantageous to our ancestors, who needed to detect subtle bitterness to determine if foods were safe to eat.

Just as the randomness of your body helps protect it from negative outside forces, purposeful randomness can be used successfully in cybersecurity.



AS HUMANS, WE'RE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR PATTERNS, CONSCIOUSLY AND SUBCONSCIOUSLY. IT'S IN OUR NATURE *to seek order in chaos*. TRUE RANDOMNESS IS HARD FOR US TO UNDERSTAND, WHICH CAN BE A HUGE BENEFIT IN CYBERSECURITY.

The best password is one that is truly random. It contains no patterns, no words and no deeper meaning. It is very difficult for people and software to hack and almost impossible to remember.



Dashlane creates random passwords for each of your accounts and autofills them across devices, so you're not stuck trying to remember a strange combination of letters, numbers and symbols. Around 26 percent of people say they feel guilty when they reuse a password for multiple accounts, according to Dashlane's study. With a password management system, you'll never have to worry about reusing a password again.

People are not as careful as they should be when it comes to their passwords. More than half of those surveyed write their passwords down, either physically or digitally, which is not recommended



for all the reasons you'd expect. Plus, almost 70 percent of Americans reset their passwords at least once a month, and 18 percent do so weekly, Dashlane's study reveals.

In addition, 30 percent of survey respondents said they reuse business account passwords, while 22 percent reported that they even recycle personal passwords for business accounts.



“Even while everyone is relying on the internet more than ever, worrying about security can seem like just one more hassle to deal with,” says Derek Snyder, the chief product officer at Dashlane. “We get it. That’s why we created Dashlane: to give you a tool that doesn’t just make security easier — we make it easier to be secure than not secure.” The new year is the perfect time to take control of your security, at home and at work.

As we embark on a new year, make a resolution to embrace the random, and make Dashlane a part of simplifying and securing your personal and professional life.

– Illustrations by Erik Carter

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The news and editorial staffs of The New York Times
had no role in this post's creation.

