

## Pass-thoughts to replace passwords

Researchers from the University of Berkeley's School of Information have come up with an ingenious device that might, one day soon, replace the need for passwords. A press release explains: "Instead of typing your password, in the future you may only have to think your password." Their research explored the feasibility of brainwave-based computer authentication as a substitute for passwords. This resulted in the creation of the Neurosky MindSet headset – a \$100 device that can read brainwaves. The team believes this new technology is secure, accurate, and user-friendly. They also believe people would be willing to replace passwords with pass-thoughts.



The project's findings were unveiled at the 2013 Workshop on Usable Security at the Seventeenth International Conference on Financial Cryptography and Data Security. Team leader Professor John Chuang explained his new technique provides a more fail-safe and cheaper solution than things like fingerprint scans, retina scans, or facial or voice recognition. He said his team's inexpensive headset connects to a computer wirelessly using Bluetooth and is little different to headsets used with mobile phones, music players, and other computing devices. However, security experts expressed concern regarding the ability of software that can "hack" people's minds to extract things like ATM PINs.