

IP Authentication and Referrer Pages

Introduction

IP Authentication and Referrer pages are two methods we can use to ensure that only authorized Indirect users have access to the content our customers are publishing through RSS or Hosted pages. It allows us to open the published FPinfomart content to Indirect users WITHOUT having UserID's and Passwords for them.

IP Authentication

What is an IP Address?

- An IP address is the "internet address" of a computer. A good analogy in the physical world would be a phone number. David's phone number is 888-555-1212. While we know it as David's phone number, any phone book can be used to match that name (David) to a phone number (888-555-1212)
- In the "virtual world," (i.e. on the Internet) every computer has an address. A computer's Internet address is called an IP address. An IP address is ALWAYS a set of 4 numbers, separated by periods. Each number can be between 1 and 255. An example of an IP address looks like this: 204.101.86.10

How are IP addresses used to provide access to FPinfomart content?

- If we carry our physical world analogy ("phone number") forward, IP-authentication is like saying that we are authorizing use of the product only from specific phones. The computers at CanWest can tell whether or not you are calling from an authorized phone number through the computer equivalent of Caller ID – we'll only "pick up the phone and talk to you" if we recognize your number. If you're not calling from an authorized phone number you cannot access the product! In the Internet world, what we mean is that you can only access the product from a computer whose IP address is recognized by our server.
- If a client distributes the address of an RSS feed to his Indirect users (for use in their own personal RSS readers), we must know the IP Address of those Indirect Users in order to allow access to the content.

Why would a client want to use IP authentication?

- If they have a known group of users (large or small) who will be accessing the product
- If they wish to ensure that the product can ONLY be used from inside the workplace
- If the first 2 conditions apply and they do not necessarily have an Intranet from which to launch the product
- If they prefer to have their Indirect Users read the feed through their own RSS readers

Are there any disadvantages to IP authenticated access?

- Product cannot be used from a non-authorized computer - therefore, no off-site usage, and not everyone in the organization can have access (this can also be seen as an advantage in some cases, though!)
- If IP addresses change (due to network restructuring), then they will need to get set up again after the change
- Customer Service involvement if they wish to add additional terminals

Referrer Page Access

What is a Referrer Page?

- A Referrer Page is a specific Web Page. Every Web Page has an address ("URL") which is unique. A simple URL looks like this: <http://www.fpinfomart.ca>. Some Web pages have a more complex URL which might look like this: <http://www.cnn.com/2007/LIVING/homestyle/09/07/o.dyi.projects/index.html>

How are Referrer Pages used to provide access to FPinfomart content?

- The customer places a link to one of our Hosted Pages within their Intranet. They tell us the URL of the page on which they've placed that link, and we enter that URL in our database.
- When someone clicks the Intranet link to access the FPinfomart content, our server can identify whether or not the click came from within an authorized Referrer page (i.e. one listed in our database).
- If we recognize that URL as an authorized Referral, then we'll allow access. If it is not a known Referral Page then we won't allow access.

Why would a client want to use Referrer Pages?

- If they have an Intranet and want to allow everyone who can access the Intranet to access the Hosted Page.
- If they can provide access to the Intranet outside the building (e.g. via UserID and Password to the Intranet), then they can provide access to the FPinfomart content wherever they provide access to their Intranet.
- If they use their Intranet to aggregate information tools for their content users.
- Provides some measure of access security, as user must be able to access the Intranet in order to access the product.

Are there any disadvantages to Referrer Page access?

- User must be able to access the Referral Page to access the FP product. If this is on-site only, then the users have no off-site access to the FPinfomart content
- If the client makes frequent changes to their intranet, then the referrer page address could change. They must notify us each time this happens.