

Actinic Digital Download White Paper

Actinic have introduced a Digital Download capability into their products. In designing this feature, the two core drivers were :

- Ease of use
- Security

Ease of use

Setting up digital download is frighteningly easy. Simply double click on the product in the Actinic tree, click on the “Digital Download” tab, browse to the file which contains the content for sale, click OK and then upload the site. When a buyer purchases this product, their receipt and confirmation email both contain a link which when clicked on will cause the content to download. This link expires after a period of 24 hours (this can be configured differently by the merchant if desired). Any number of products can include digital content, and one, many or a mixture of digitally downloadable and normal products can be bought on one order.

A few other options are available such as bypassing order processing for digitally downloadable products. After all, if the product is digitally downloaded and there is no associated physical product, there is no need to track whether it has been shipped yet or not. Actinic also offers the facility to re-send a digital download link to customers who make a purchase but fail to download it before the link expires.

Security

Actinic uses encryption, digital signatures and obfuscation as the security methods for digital download. Downloadable files are stored in a directory that is available to the web server. This directory contains an index.html file which provides no clue as to the directory contents, so a directory listing is not available. Individual file names are obfuscated to such an extent that it is infeasible for a potential hacker to determine them. When a purchase is made, the successful buyer is provided with a URL that consists of a call to an Actinic script with a unique parameter which has embedded in it both the product and expiry time. This parameter is encrypted and also has an MD5 signature which it is computationally infeasible to generate or break.

The method of storing files in a directory available to the web server is not as secure as having the directory outside of this domain, but it is sufficiently secure for normal commercial content. Adopting this method makes for a much easier set up that will work on any web server where Actinic already operates. A knowledgeable developer who wishes to move the directory out of the server path can do so by setting a parameter in the standard Actinic script.

Notes

Digital Download is a standard feature in the Actinic Catalog and Actinic Business ranges and Actinic Enterprise. It is set up via a tab in the product dialogue and an additional two options in Business settings | Options. These are:

- Auto ship Digital Download products
- File download expiry time

Digital download files are not included in snapshots because their size might make snapshots unusable. For this reason, it is recommended that digital download files are stored in a directory under the Site1 directory where they can easily be copied.

Actinic manages the upload and obfuscation of file names to the correct directory on the web server.