

## Re: Server Security

**Source:** <http://linux.derkeiler.com/Mailing-Lists/Debian/2004-12/2712.html>

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**From:** Sam Watkins (*swatkins\_at\_fastmail.fm*)

**Date:** 12/17/04

Date: Fri, 17 Dec 2004 16:06:52 +1100

To: debian-user@lists.debian.org

On Sun, Dec 19, 2004 at 09:29:28AM +0000, Dave Ewart wrote:

> *On Sunday, 19.12.2004 at 09:16 +0000, Jeffrin Thalakkottoor wrote:*

> > *How To Configure It On The Server Side ...*

> >

> > *Configure The Server That A File On The Server Can*

> > *Only Be Viewed But Not Downloaded.*

>

> *In order to 'view' you \*have\* to have already downloaded the file. What  
> you suggest cannot be done.*

Realplayer seems to do this quite effectively (at least to stop the average person being able to download it without special tools).

It would be possible to create a similar system for textual information.

With the assistance of a sufficiently evil OS and browser, or a weird animation technique, you could probably even prevent the user capturing an image of the media – but they could still run their monitor lead through a video recorder. Or point a camera at the screen.

Some people write javascript code that disables the right button (with save as) in IE, and pops up a message "you can't download this!". But of course if you disable javascript or use a decent browser you can.

Sorry to say I'm firmly on the side of the user who wants to download content rather than the media provider who wants to protect their copyright and build their profits – but maybe your application is different? What sort of files do you want to protect?

Another technique is to display the file bit-by-bit, possibly using scripts or images, so that they would have to suffer a lot of work, or be a really good programmer, to be able to snarf it. O'Reilly does something like this with their online bookshelf "safari" thing, it makes the thing almost unusable and incredibly annoying. They have the worst content / megabytes ratio of any website I've ever seen, their html is horrible.

so in summary you can't just "configure" this sort of thing with today's internet servers – although microsoft is working toward it with their

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"trusted computing" ideas. You have to do perform devious and evil hacks that will probably reduce the value of your content until the whole endeavour is not worthwhile.

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