



pixelock boosts confidence in password generation tool with thawte ev ssl certificates

Pixelock is a web-based password generation tool that allows users to create and remember complex yet easy-to-use pass codes for online banking, email, and other password-protected sites. Instead of creating and storing passwords, Pixelock works by generating random codes associated with “click points” selected by users on images of their choice. When users want to access their pass codes, they click the same points and Pixelock regenerates the particular alphanumeric sequence associated with the image. Launched in 2008 by a small team of developers, Pixelock is headquartered in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Challenge

SHOW USERS THAT ONLINE PASSWORD TOOL IS LEGITIMATE AND SECURE

Today’s headlines are filled with news about major Internet data breaches and the latest scams to lure people into giving out sensitive information online. For the team at Pixelock, the intense spotlight on web-based security is a boon for business—and one of the biggest challenges the company faces. “People are extremely cautious about sharing their passwords online, which is good, but it means we have to work that much harder to earn their trust,” says Rex Green, Engineering Manager at Pixelock.

As Green points out, building that confidence means more than just securing the company’s web-based tool. “Even though we don’t store passwords, we still needed to prove that we’re not some fly-by-night company that would take users’ information and disappear,” he says. “As a security services company, if we don’t have people’s trust, we don’t have anything.”

With these concerns in mind, Pixelock began searching for a widely recognized SSL security solution that would help users see that its web-based tool was secure while demonstrating that the company was legitimate and safe to work with.

Solution

SSL SECURITY FROM A PROVIDER WITH A WORLDWIDE REPUTATION FOR TRUST

Before officially launching the Pixelock web site, the company used a test SSL certificate provided by its web hosting service. The certificate did not meet the company’s needs, so the team turned to a name that was well-known at home and around the world—Thawte. “We’re based in South Africa, but most of our users are in the United States, the United Kingdom, India, and Australia,” says Danny Kopping, Lead Web Architect at Pixelock. “We felt good going with a homegrown company that would be recognized no matter where our users happened to be.”



SOLUTION SUMMARY

Industry:

- Security services

Key Challenges:

- Overcome user uncertainty about entrusting passwords to a third-party service
- Secure web-based password generation system and protect user data
- Demonstrate company legitimacy by working with a well-known name in SSL security

Solution:

- Thawte® SSL Web Server Certificates with EV

“Using Thawte SSL security has definitely helped us present a very professional image to current and potential users. Even if people can’t explain what SSL does, they’re used to seeing the Thawte seal on banking sites and other sites they rely on. That helps to put Pixelock on the same trusted level.”

**—Rex Green, Engineering Manager,
Pixelock**



Given their focus on building trust with users, Kopping and Green opted for an SSL certificate with Extended Validation (EV). “When you get an EV SSL certificate, your company has to undergo a more rigorous vetting process than for an everyday certificate,” Kopping says. “Some of our users will know that, but even if they don’t, they’ll still see the green Extended Validation bar in their web browsers and see our name next to our web site address. Either way, using EV SSL from Thawte is a simple but powerful way to show users that our site is secure and that we’re a legitimate business.”

Results

REASSURING USERS AND BUILDING TRUST IN UNIQUE PASSWORD TOOL

With Thawte EV SSL certificates on its site, Pixelock has been able to build confidence in its online password tool and boost its credibility as a trustworthy security services provider. “Using Thawte SSL has definitely helped us present a very professional image to current and potential users,” says Green. “Even if people can’t explain what SSL does, they’re used to seeing the Thawte seal on banking sites and other sites they rely on. That helps to put Pixelock on the same level of trust as a bank.”

According to Green, Thawte SSL security has also helped users feel comfortable using a unique tool that is fundamentally different from other password services. “People are used to desktop software for password storage and browser plug-ins, but Pixelock doesn’t work like other tools,” he says. “With Thawte, people know that our system is secure and they can use it without worrying about the safety of their private information.”

Future

TURNING TO THAWTE TO SECURE TOOLS ON MORE DEVICES

Going forward, Pixelock plans to expand beyond its web-based system and develop tools that can be used on tablet computers, smart phones, and other devices. “Our plan is to offer our tools to any user that has a screen and an Internet connection,” says Green. “We’ve been very happy with Thawte, and we can’t think of any reason why we should switch. We’re definitely going to stick with Thawte.”

Results:

- Provides easily recognizable signals—including Thawte seal and green EV bar—that tool is safe to use
- Instills trust in unique password generation service that users may be unfamiliar with
- Establishes company as trustworthy security services provider

About Thawte

As the first international certification authority to sell SSL certificates, Thawte delivers practical and competitive value – without compromise.

Thawte digital certificate solutions are backed by an unblemished reputation, a global perspective, a proven track record of customer focus, and 17 years of experience you can rely upon.

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