

# 5 Simple Steps to Protect your Digital Downloads

By Priya Shah

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A couple of days ago, I was searching for a popular eBook online.

Now I'm not going to tell you the name of this eBook for reasons you'll understand in the next few minutes.

Okay, so here I was, opening Google, entering the name of the eBook - clicking search, and checking through the first few pages of search results.

- Forward to Page 5 of Google

I saw a link that looked like a PDF document.

Right click - open in new window

There, in full glory, was the eBook I was searching for!

The complete eBook, mind you, not a trial or demo - sitting there for the world to download.

And this is a product that sells for over \$25 online!!

Obviously I'm not going to tell you the name of the eBook because it would not be fair to the reseller.

But it just made me realise that one of the reasons digital theft is so prevalent is simply because... its so EASY!

Don't get me wrong. I don't condone theft of any kind - digital or otherwise.

But would YOU shell out \$25 for a product that everyone can 'legally' download off the 5th page of Google?

Most people would just shrug their shoulders, hit the

save button and thank their lucky stars.

Result: The opposite of \$ KA-CHING \$ for the sellers

One of the problems with selling digital products online is that it is so SIMPLE to do. So now everyone and their grandmother wants to do it.

But most newbies have no idea that it requires only a few simple steps to ensure a moderate degree of security for your downloads.

So here I've outlined the five most BASIC security steps That anyone selling digital products online must take.

These will take you only a few minutes to do, and you do not need any special software or programming knowledge.

## 1. ZIP THAT FILE

The biggest problem arises when sellers store their downloads as PDF documents, as in my experience above.

Now you should know that Google, Altavista and many other search engines can read and list PDF files.

While this may not be a problem for those adding content to their sites in the form of PDF newsletters and reports, it also means that you must never store a product you want to SELL as a PDF file (unless it is in a password-protected folder).

It gets worse. Google also converts your PDF files into HTML documents. So ordinary browsers not only have access to your PDF file, but - horror of horrors - they can download your SOURCE FILE as well!!

The next logical step is for them to customize it with their own links, compile it and sell it or give it away.

Result: The opposite of \$ KA-CHING \$ for the sellers ...AND the author.

A simple way of keeping your files out of the reach of spiders is to upload them as a zip file. Search engines cannot look inside zip files (yet) and list their contents.

## 2. CREATE AN INDEX.HTML FILE

You MUST have an index.html file in EVERY folder. It acts

like a curtain that keeps your files away from prying eyes.

A folder without an index file is like a house without walls. Everyone can enter and help themselves to the valuables.

The 'index.htm' file is the default file that opens when you click on the link here -

<http://ebizwhiz-publishing.com/>

If you don't create an index.htm or index.html file, you'd be allowing everyone to directly access the root directory of the folder where you store your downloads.

Here is a folder I uploaded to show you what happens when you DON'T have an index file.

<http://ebizwhiz-publishing.com/test/>

As you can see, all the files stored in it are clearly visible and ready to download.

And yes, feel free to help yourself - I won't accuse you of stealing :-)

### 3. SHOW PEEPING TOMS THE EXIT

You can use a simple script to redirect peeping Toms back to your home page.

Here's the easiest way to do it using what it called a "meta refresh tag." Add it between the Header tags like this.

```
head
META HTTP-EQUIV="refresh" content="0;URL=http://ebizwhiz-publishing.com"
/head
```

Just replace my URL with your own in the example above and paste it into the head of your document (before your text).

You can see how it works by clicking on the test folder here.

<http://ebizwhiz-publishing.com/redirect/>

Now even though you click on the folder URL, you will be sent to my home page.

### 4. SPIDER-PROOF YOUR DOWNLOAD PAGES

To prevent search engine spiders from reading and listing the download pages that link to your eBooks add the tag below in the head of the document.

This "Robot" tag tells the spider that this page is not to be spidered or indexed. As a result it should never show up on a search.

```
head  
META NAME="ROBOTS" CONTENT="NOINDEX, NOFOLLOW"  
/head
```

## 5. CHANGE YOUR DOWNLOAD LINKS OFTEN

To prevent unscrupulous people from posting your download links on forums or message boards, change the folder or file name where you store them from time to time, even if it means having to change the download links in your merchant account.

Using these methods will give you a good degree of satisfaction, knowing that you have taken the most basic steps to protect your digital valuables - and at absolutely no cost to you.

If you want greater security and more information on plugging the security loopholes in your website, you should take a look at this very revealing report by Bogdan Ravaru.

The HTML Security Report  
<http://ebizwhiz-publishing.com/secureport/>

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Priya Shah is the author of "The Genius Guides"  
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