

Password protected web directories and other options

It is possible to restrict access to a part of your website. Restrictions could take the form of a password prompt, or access granted only from certain IP addresses.

The .htaccess mechanism

The Apache webserver has a mechanism to set options for a part of a website, by putting a file named `.htaccess` in the directory for which those options should be set.

Note: directories inherit `.htaccess` settings from their parent directories, so if you have a password set on `~username/secret`, then `~username/secret/too` will also be password protected, unless you place a `.htaccess` file in it which ends the protection.

Another note: the `.htaccess` file only has effect for access through the webserver. It does nothing to restrict access for local users; use Unix filesystem permissions to achieve that goal (but: somehow you will need to make sure the webserver still has access, not an easy task! See [ACLs](#))

Creating a password file

Make a password file, using the command `htpasswd`:

```
htpasswd -c ~/.htpasswd username
```

where `~/.htpasswd` is the file to create (can be anywhere on disk) and `username` is the username to use for logging in (so this has no necessary relation to your own username!). The command will prompt for a password, and then create a file with the username and the password in encrypted form. You can add multiple users by running the command again without the `-c` option (which stands for "create").

Sample .htaccess file

Here is a sample of what to put in `.htaccess`. Of course you should include the right path to your password file (which doesn't have to be in the web directory).

```
AuthUserFile /home/user/.htpasswd
AuthGroupFile /dev/null
AuthName "Highly classified information"
AuthType Basic

<limit GET POST>
require valid-user
```

```
</limit>
```

Other parts you may want to change:

- AuthName is the text displayed in the password dialog, so you can change this to something useful (in fact, the protection scheme is not suitable for highly classified information!)
- In stead of `require valid-user` you can also use `require user username` with a specified username or list of usernames. This may be useful if you have one `.htpasswd` file with multiple usernames, and some users should have access to one part of the site, and other users have access to other parts.

Other options

The `.htaccess` file can also be used to set some options for the directory, when viewed through a web browser. The most common one is, to grant access to make a directory listing, useful when a directory is meant for downloads. The option to set is:

```
Options +Indexes
```

More information about `.htaccess` files and related options can be found on-line, eg in the [Apache htaccess tutorial](#).

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