



CASE STUDY



HSBC

HSBC Invests in Enhanced Global Web Site Security with VeriSign® Extended Validation (EV) SSL Certificates



“By working with VeriSign on the deployment of EV SSL, we have been able to take one more step in securing our customer’s online experience and giving them increased confidence when they bank online with HSBC.”
Jonathan Etheridge
Lead IT Security Analyst, HSBC



HSBC

Combating global fraud and phishing threats whilst increasing customer confidence and supporting HSBC’s on-line security strategy.

+ Overview

Positioned as the world’s local bank, HSBC is one of the largest banking and financial services organisations in the world. HSBC comprises over 10,000 offices, spanning 83 countries and territories in Europe, the Asia-Pacific region, the Americas, the Middle East and Africa.

Advanced technology, including a rapidly growing e-commerce capability, supports HSBC’s international network delivering a comprehensive range of financial services: personal financial services; commercial banking; corporate, investment banking and markets; private banking; and other activities.

+ Key Challenge

With more than 80 million customers worldwide accessing 2,000 HSBC Web sites and a rapidly growing demand on internet banking services, there is a constant focus on accessibility, usability and deliverability. Combined with an increasing risk of fraud and global phishing, this focus led HSBC to review the protection of its Web sites, with an aim to further improve security and consumer confidence.

The reach of HSBC’s global internet presence and the growing number of SSL Certificates to manage across the infrastructure also presents a challenge. As a result the company was keen to centralise the control of its Web site SSL security, facilitating standardised management and reducing costs.

+ Solution

HSBC was already using strong encryption in the form of VeriSign Server Gated Cryptography (SGC) Certificates. Used on HSBC’s Web sites around the world, they protect sensitive personal and financial data by enabling information to be transmitted over the internet securely.

VeriSign SGC-SSL Certificates enable 128- or 256 bit encryption to over 99.9% of Web site visitors, permitting virtually every HSBC customer worldwide to experience the strongest SSL encryption available to them regardless of browser type or operating system. Nevertheless, the launch of VeriSign® Extended Validation (EV) SSL Certificates has taken HSBC’s Web site security to a new level.

EV SSL is a new standard for authentication. Like traditional SSL Certificates, an EV SSL Certificate facilitates secure encrypted communication between a Web site and a consumer’s browser. However, it also authenticates the genuine nature of the Web site so all visitors know they have indeed reached the site they intended to visit and not a counterfeit site.

Extended Validation refers to a rigorous process of Web site authentication that validates the identity of a business and the authority of the individual requesting a certificate before issuance.

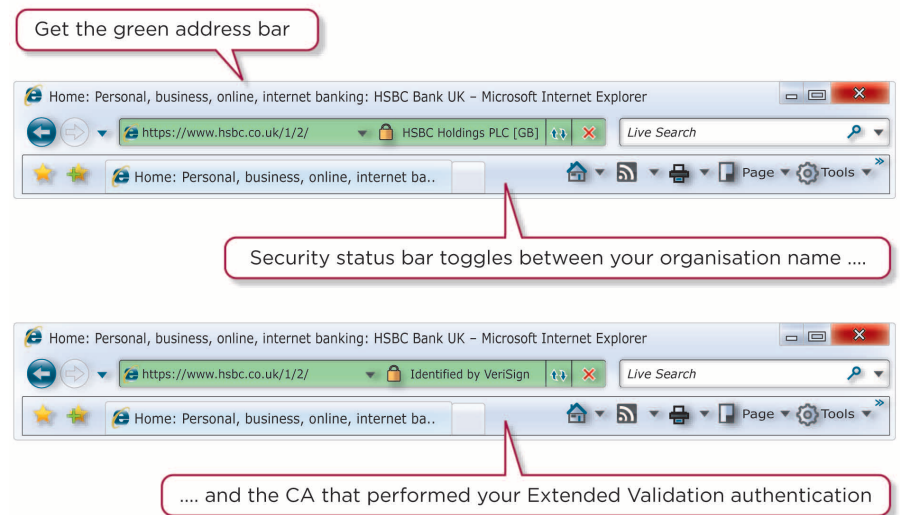


The benefits to the adopting business include:

- Clear visible demonstration that the site is highly authenticated
- Reassurance to visitors that the ownership of the domain has been validated
- Increased user confidence in online applications
- Increased protection against phishing attacks
- Clear commitment to online security to customers
- Enabling the ability to differentiate the domain and brands from copycat and competitor sites.

EV SSL contains a number of user interface enhancements aimed at making the identification of an authenticated site immediately more noticeable to the end user. These user interfaces are designed to offer the end user a highly endorsed and widely recognised level of protection from increasingly sophisticated Internet spoofing scams.

New high-security browsers (such as Internet Explorer 7) display EV SSL Certificates differently to traditional SSL Certificates. Rather than the subtle padlock symbol displayed by traditional SSL Certificates, EV SSL Certificates trigger the browser address bar in high-security browsers to change to an eye-catching green colour. This change is immediately evident to an end user and helps to further increase their confidence in transacting with HSBC.



In addition to the noticeable green colour, a security status bar prominently displays the name of the owner of that Web site and the Certificates Authority who has issued that EV SSL Certificate. This field reveals both names in turn when a visitor first arrives on the Web site.

+ All part of the service

Every VeriSign® EV SSL Certificate deployment, including those installed at HSBC, benefit from VeriSign EV Upgrader™. This innovative technology enables IE7 on Windows® XP systems to detect Extended Validation Certificates and display the EV interface conventions just as they do on Windows Vista clients. VeriSign has built EV Upgrader into the VeriSign Secured® Seal, enabling any site that currently displays the Seal to automatically enable green bars for any Windows XP visitor using IE7.



+ VeriSign Secured Seal inspires customer confidence

Along with the EV green bar HSBC uses the VeriSign Secured Seal on a number of its Web sites to further reassure customers of its commitment to online security. With instant recognition by 88% of Web users¹, VeriSign is by far the most recognisable SSL brand in the world today.

+ Managed PKI for SSL reduced cost and complexity

Finally, in order to reduce complexity and costs, HSBC also decided to manage all types of SSL Certificates from one Web-based control centre with VeriSign® Managed PKI for SSL.

When public and private keys are copied and spread across the enterprise, their protective value can be diminished. To ensure the highest standard of security and continuous protection, VeriSign recommended that HSBC use Managed PKI for SSL. Central control, reporting, customisable certificate validity periods and rapid turn-around make it as easy to support 5,000 certificates as it is to support 5.

There was no need for HSBC to invest in hardware and software to maintain its own SSL Certificate Authority. The MPKI for SSL Control Center is an easy-to-use, simple Web-based application for issuing, renewing, revoking and managing access privileges. Administrators can customise enrolment pages for their enterprise, and VeriSign manages the back-end services in its state-of-the-art facilities. Having a single replicable process for the issue of SSL certificates is in alignment with HSBC's global approach to common IT infrastructure.

+ Moving forward

To date the company has implemented its EV SSL solution on its public facing internet banking sites in the UK and is in the process of rolling out the security upgrade across the rest of the world.

Jonathan Etheridge, Lead IT Security Analyst at HSBC, said "By working with VeriSign on the deployment of EV SSL, we have been able to take one more step in securing our customers' online experience and giving them increased confidence when they bank online with HSBC."

VeriSign (NASDAQ: VRSN) is the trusted provider of Internet infrastructure services for the networked world. Billions of times daily, our SSL, authentication, identity protection, and registry services help companies and consumers all over the world to communicate and conduct commerce with confidence.

VeriSign is the leading Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) Certificate Authority enabling secure e-commerce and communications for Web sites, intranets and extranets. VeriSign continues to lead the SSL Certificate industry as a member of the CA/Browser Forum, a voluntary organisation currently focused on EV SSL Certificates.

¹ 2006, Tec-Ed study

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