

Finding a Balance between Security and Convenience

Credit union IT employees face security challenges internally each and every day, and now they must comply externally with FFIEC guidelines for stronger authentication for their online banking members. Most users are content with typing in their username and password to sign-in to their account on the credit union's online banking site. So, to comply with new regulations, credit unions are challenged with finding a solution that delivers this same type of convenience to the member yet incorporates the new strong authentication process that the FFIEC soon will require.

PKI (public key infrastructure) enables users of a basically insecure public network such as the Internet to securely and privately exchange data through the use of a public and a private cryptographic key pair that is obtained and shared through a trusted authority. While PKI is one of the most well established and strongest forms of authentication available today, only a Certification Authority like Comodo can deliver solutions based on this secure yet highly complex platform. As a result, we have chosen to use it as the foundation for our S.A.F.E. Solution (Secure and Authenticated Financial Engagements) because PKI-based systems have emerged as one of the most secure, fastest, easiest and most cost effective solutions on the market today. The result is that Comodo has introduced digital certificates to provide secure authentication without sacrificing usability. Further, authentication can be bi-modal – credit unions can authenticate members and vice versa. No other PKI- based mutual authentication provides this level of authentication capability.

Within Comodo's S.A.F.E. solution, the Mutual authentication solution is the key offering for credit unions. This solution includes two modules that can be purchased separately or as a package; a) Comodo Two Factor (TF) so credit unions can authenticate the member and b) Comodo Content Verification Certificates (CVC) so members have a non-spoofable way to verify the credit union site identity.

Comodo TF was developed with the understanding that 99% of members will do their online banking from either their home or office computer. With a quick and easy one time, automated install of a digital certificate on these machines, members will instantly be authenticated upon subsequent logins with nothing but their normal username and password. There are no integration issues for the credit union, and no passwords are stored on the authentication server. We call this "Plug 'n authenticate" since it requires no online banking application integration. On those rare occasions where a member may be accessing from a different machine, challenge questions – which members can setup themselves - can be put in place to handle the additional authentication requirements for that particular session.

However, authenticating the member to the credit union's website is only one part of the equation. The member needs to be assured that they are truly on the credit union's real website. That is why we developed a unique solution to this problem: Comodo Content Verification Certificates (CVC) that ensure that the online member can authenticate the credit union's legitimate website. This ingenious solution protects against phishing, pharming and Man-in-the-Middle attacks that cyber-criminals are increasingly deploying. CVCs can be used in a variety of locations, such as the username and password sign-in box, or the credit union's logo. When the member places their mouse cursor over this protected content, it will display a green border OUTSIDE the browser environment and they can then be 100% assured that they are on the correct website.

As a leading Certification Authority, we can deliver an unparalleled suite of Identity and Trust Assurance solutions to the credit union movement. We don't change the end user experience; we just secure it end to end in both directions in an elegant and affordable manner.



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Andrew J. Pynes is Executive Vice President of Worldwide Sales & Marketing at Comodo. Mr. Pynes brings over twelve years of sales, marketing and management experience in the high technology industry to Comodo, most recently as the sales & marketing executive with one of North America's leading IT consulting/systems integration firms. Prior to joining Comodo, Mr. Pynes' career also includes tenures with one of North America's largest IT Value Added Reseller (VAR)/Systems Integrators, a leading eCommerce consulting firm, and an ERP implementation and custom application development firm. Mr. Pynes holds a B.A. and graduated with honors from the University of California, Santa Barbara.

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