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PARTNER UPDATE – May 18th, 2021

Hello KIS Clients,

Last September, a considerable change occurred within the SSL community that many people overlooked: *the maximum lifespan of an SSL certificate was changed to 398 days.*

> Reference: https://thehackernews.com/2020/09/ssl-tls-certificate-validity-398.html

SSL certificates are something that most people don't think about. Previously, we only had to replace expiring SSL certs every three years. Then it was every two years. And now, it's a little over one year.

This didn't seem significant until last year's announcement that Apple, Google, and Mozilla browsers will begin rejecting SSL certificates that have longer than a 398-day lifespan.

The SSL certificate expiration change is all part of tightening up IT security for everyone. SSL certificates have become an essential part of any public-facing system.

What this means for your IT shop: *You will need to track SSL certificate expirations on an annual basis and update each cert accordingly.*

The other piece of information (which often surprises people) regarding SSL certificate vendors is: *They're pretty much all alike.*

As long as the Certificate Authority ("CA") issuing the SSL certificate (e.g., Verisign, GoDaddy, Thawte, etc.) is built into your users' browsers by default, the cert will be accepted without question.

Here's a list of default CAs included with some popular browsers/OSes:

> Windows 10/2016/2019: https://ccadb-public.secure.force.com/microsoft/IncludedCACertificateReportForMSFT
>
> Chrome: https://g.co/chrome/root-store
>
> Mozilla/Firefox: https://ccadb-public.secure.force.com/mozilla/IncludedCACertificateReport
>
> iOS Devices: https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT204132
>
> MacOS Devices: https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT202858

Why is this important? The price for SSL certificates varies widely. Some SSL providers will charge $65/year for a basic single-site SSL certificate, while other providers will charge $500/year for *the very same type of certificate.* And both the $65 and the $500 cert will be accepted by your browser.

Short of a corporate guideline requiring a specific CA vendor, there's no technical reason to pay for higher-priced SSL certificates.

So...shop around for SSL certificate providers *based on price* AND whether or not their *CA is included in the above lists.* (Hint: it needs to be included in all of the browsers your users are using.)

If you need any assistance in evaluating SSL providers, we can help.

Next month, we'll talk about the different types of SSL certificates and how they're used.

Thank you,
Allan

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