

Protecting Documents on the Web from Public Access

SIR branches often want to prevent the public from viewing files stored on the web. A typical question is:

“In a WordPress environment, how can I protect a branch roster document that is in .pdf, .docx, or .xlsx format?”

Method 1: Store the document in a folder or in the WordPress **media library**, then link to it from a password-protected web page.

- Advantage: Inaccessible from the WordPress web page without a password
- Disadvantages: Can be accessed from the web without a password. May be indexed by Google Search. Shared password.

Method 2: Store the document as a **Google doc** with a non-private URL, then link to the Google doc from a password-protected web page.

- Advantages: Inaccessible from the WordPress web page without a password. Not indexed by Google Search. Document does not need to be uploaded to web server.
- Disadvantage: Google doc can be accessed directly from the web without a password if its URL is discovered.

Method 3: **Convert the document** to a password-protected web page.

- Advantage: Web page is inaccessible without a password.
- Disadvantages: Additional steps needed to convert document to HTML. Must not store the source document on the server. May be indexed by Google Search. Shared password.

Method 4: Password-protect/**encrypt the document**

- Advantage: Document is inaccessible without a password.
- Disadvantages: Additional steps required to encrypt and decrypt document. May be indexed by Google Search. Shared password.

Method 5: Store the document in a folder that is protected with a **.htaccess password**

- Advantages: Document is inaccessible without a password. Document cannot be indexed by Google Search.
- Disadvantage: Shared password.

Method 6: Use a **WordPress plugin** that password-protects the document.

- Advantage: ?
- Disadvantage: ?