



DO I NEED TO USE **HTTPS** SSL/TSL AND CERTIFICATES?

WHAT IS IT?

HTTPS is a web protocol used to encrypt communications between a user and a webserver; these encrypted communications are sent over SSL or TSL. In order to use SSL or TSL your domain must have a security certificate to validate that your site is what it purports to be.

DOES IT HELP WITH SEO?

Yes, Google does factor usage of HTTPS into its ranking algorithm, so utilizing it could improve your SEO. However, it's a small factor and doesn't outweigh quality content, so if your content is good you aren't going to lose out to a site with poorer content but which is using HTTPS. If your content quality is poor but you implement HTTPS, you're still not going to beat out a site with better quality content who isn't using HTTPS.

If you need help deciding if HTTPS is right for you, please read on.

**HTTPS IS A SMALL
FACTOR IN GOOGLE'S
SEARCH ENGINE
RANKINGS.**

WHEN YOU MIGHT NEED TO IMPLEMENT HTTPS



IF YOU ARE TRANSMITTING OR ASKING A USER TO TRANSMIT INHERENTLY PRIVATE DATA (SUCH AS FINANCIALS, ID INFO, ETC.):

Private data such as financials, id info, etc. which is sent over the internet needs to be encrypted. An example of this is the Economic Gateway admin, which does use HTTPS to ensure that user info is safe from attacks. The standard pages and modules on the front end of an Economic Gateway site don't send or request this type of data. If you are using the restricted pages functionality where you require member users to log in to view certain pages then you may wish to implement HTTPS.



IF YOU NEED THE SEO BENEFIT:

If you are in a highly competitive group for search engine rankings then the small bump the use of HTTPS can offer may be of sufficient value to offset the cost.



IF YOU ARE REQUIRED TO USE HTTPS BY A GOVERNMENT OR OTHER FUNDING SOURCE:

Some groups make the use of HTTPS a requirement for any project with which they are involved as a safeguard; in those cases you may be required to implement it regardless of whether your Economic Gateway site performs any operations which require encryption.



CUSTOMER SATISFACTION:

If being able to show on your site that you use HTTPS offers some sense of security which will make your audience more comfortable and likely to interact with you in a desirable way then you may wish to invest in implementing

WHAT TO DO

If you wish to implement HTTPS on your site, please notify Golden Shovel of your intent. As your first step, you will need to acquire a certificate from a Certificate Authority. GSA does not sell or register certificates on behalf of clients, so you are responsible for purchasing your certificate and renewing it on whatever schedule you select. Certificates are available through many online Certificate Authorities (CAs). (GoDaddy is a popular option, but there are many others, depending on your budget and any other requirements you may have.) Once you have purchased your certificate you will need to work with Golden Shovel to key the certificate and implement HTTPS on your site.

WHY YOU MIGHT NOT WANT TO USE HTTPS

COST. To use HTTPS you must have a certificate; the cost of a certificate can vary quite a bit, but can range from free to over \$1000 dollars depending on who you purchase from (more trusted sources cost more money), and that cost is an annual fee. If your organization has a tight budget and no strong need for a certificate you may wish to try running your site without one. Implementing HTTPS can be done at any time, but bear in mind that the change in your site URLs (going from using 'http' to 'https' means all your URLs have changed) may have its own effect on your SEO for a while.