



## HOW TO ... Restrict access to Websites delivering pharmaceutical information



Are you providing drug information through a website to doctors and pharmacists? Be aware that European law envisages information on drugs for human use as advertising, particularly the information provided by pharmaceutical industries (EU directive 92/28). Be aware also that in certain countries also the prescribing information (leaflets for patients and datasheet for doctors) must be delivered to health professionals only to avoid undue pressure from the patient in the giving of prescriptions. According to European law, drug information should be conveyed exclusively to doctors (prescribers) and pharmacists (dispensers) of drugs. To protect your website therefore you should implement a reliable procedure of selected accesses for the areas where you are supplying advertising on drugs - a sort of headache in internet.

The couplet “username” and “password” is a good system. But who would be entitled to receive them. A way could be asking your reps to distribute preliminary usernames and passwords, with a possibility of changing them into personal ones even though this is not the way internet and the information provided for the web, works. Websites are generally found through navigation and accesses required in the net and reps could be a good way of promoting your website. In some countries a self-declaration stating the profession might be accepted; others might be more comfortable with details of membership of professional societies or even a copy of the degree. It is an object of debate whether an electronic self-declaration would be accepted with or without details of membership of professional societies or require a faxed confirmation and provide access after it and in the case of the electronic self-declaration whether you foresee a check on a certain percentage of the data supplied. If you decide for both an electronic self-certification and faxed documentation or delivery through your reps, the time involved in defining the process and its management is tremendous.

Furthermore you are expected to keep a file of your transactions or of the documents faxed and it is probably enough to decide to make you settle for a window-website, instead of a very informative website. One way round this issue is the adoption of a central

service, like DocCheck (<http://www.doccheck.com>) largely used in Germany and in 5 other European countries.

DocCheck is a free service which enables the access to restricted areas of different websites with one personal password. The advantage is not only for the supplier of information, which is free from the trouble of checking its access, but also for the user, who has one only password to remember. It complies with the European directives and local laws on drug information and privacy.

For an example see <http://www.Roteliste.de>. In case you decide to do everything yourself you should keep in mind four very important points:

1. the legal environment, i.e. the legal status in your country of a self-declaration, a faxed document, an electronic statement, etc.
  2. the law on advertising drugs for human use
  3. any directive or circular letter issued by your health authorities about the use of internet
  4. any code of practice issued by the local association of pharmaceutical industries on the use of internet
- Benchmarking, i.e. looking at what other websites are doing, is a good practice provided that you check the feasibility of the process you are willing to implement with your health authorities.

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