Using Secure Websites
University Technology Services
July 2007
Key Ideas

• Some websites have implemented better security than others

• Verification of security is important

• You can easily check security of any website
When Do I Check Security

- Always do a security check when you are...
  - Entering private information
  - Using a credit card online
  - Making banking transactions
  - Connected to an insecure wireless network
First Check: https://

- Check the URL in the web address line
- URL’s beginning with http:// are the most common
- URL’s beginning with https:// are more secure
- Look for a padlock in the lower right corner of the screen
What is Secure about https://

- Data entered on the website will be encrypted during transmission making the data very difficult to intercept
- It validates that the website is really who they claim to be
- It shows a certificate when the website is secure
- A browser warning is generated when a website fails the certification
Example - Webmail

http://webmail.oakland.edu

- Note: Webmail’s default login method is “cleartext”

- Cleartext transmits login information that can be intercepted – it is not secure

- Clicking on “Secure” changes the beginning of the URL to https:// and the padlock appears in the lower right corner of the browser showing that encryption is enabled
Security Alert

What happens when I receive an alert that the certificate on website does not match a trusted authority?

• Click on View Certificate
• Read details
• Check Issued To, Issued By and dates
• Does this match your expectations?
Failure - What do I do?

• If a website fails the security certificate and you do not trust the certificate authority, do not enter any data on the website!
Install the Certificate

• If you do trust the certificate authority, click on Install Certificate

• Check the button to automatically select the certificate based on the type of certificate

• Click on OK

• Click on YES to proceed
Example - Internet Native Banner

- Java plug-ins for the Banner Oracle environment cause different behavior

- The actual error message may vary depending on your browser and operating system, but the general content is similar

- Check the box for “Always trust content from this publisher” and click RUN
Check Privacy Statements

• Data you enter on a website can be used for any purpose decided by the creator of the website as stated in the website’s privacy statement

• Check the privacy statements of websites BEFORE you enter your data

• Know how your data will be used!
Conclusion

• Check for https:// and the padlock icon on websites

• Use secure websites for private data entry and transactions

• Read and accept authoritative certificates

• Read privacy statements before entering data
Any Questions?

• Contact the UTS Helpdesk
  ▫ Call 248-370-4357
  ▫ x HELP (x 4357)
  ▫ Email - helpdesk@oakland.edu