

# Transferring Confidential Research Data: Using a Secure Web-based File Transfer System

## Abstract for Secure Web-based File Transfer System

The Web-based file transfer system uses "state of the art" technology to provide secure and fast file transfers. This application transfers data for approved health care research (including sensitive data) from a Web-based hub. The Center for Health Research (CHR) is strongly committed to protecting the data that are transferred and strictly following IRB and HIPAA regulations.

## Advantages over Other Methods of Transferring Data:

1. Safe and easy to use.
2. Flexible administration—minimal IS/IT involvement.
3. Greater security (128-bit encryption, client certificates (digital ID), SSL, username, password, secure Web address).
4. Speed—very fast to up/download.
5. Instantly sent and received when needed. Cannot leave data on a desk, in a mailbox, or lose it in Fed Ex or USPS mail.

## Facts:

<b>Number of users:</b> approximately 161
<b>Number of File Transfer sites:</b> 18
<b>Number of files transferred in 17 months:</b> 2,850.
This does not mean individual files (a single file can be downloaded many times).
<b>Approximate seconds to upload a file:</b>
Under 500kb = ~2 seconds
20MB = ~46 seconds
73MB = ~2 minutes, 55 seconds

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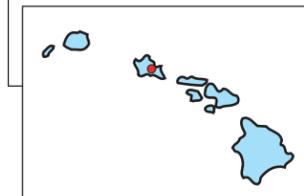
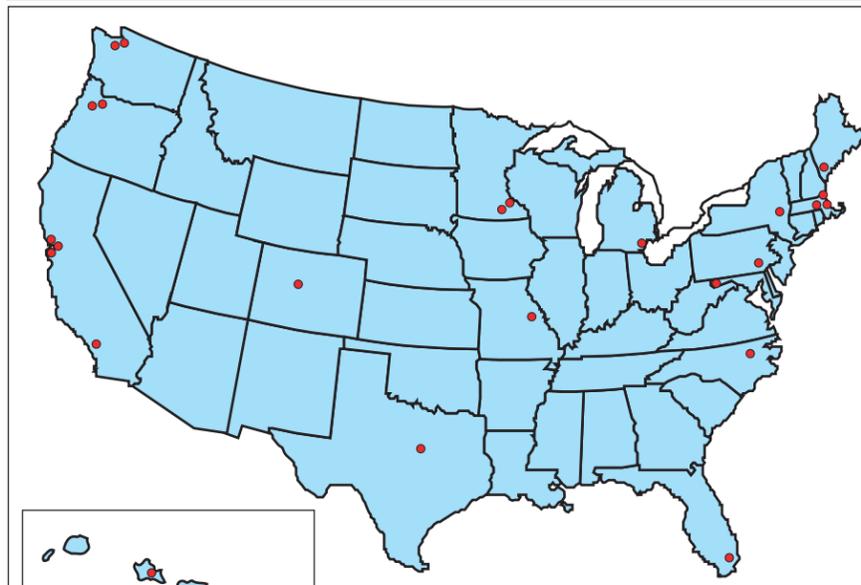
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## Secure File Transfer FAQ's

Below we list a few common questions with answers.

- Q: Who designed the file transfer system?**
- A:** KPNW's Center for Health Research (CHR) in Portland, OR funded the development and design.
- Q: Why was the file transfer system designed?**
- A:** CHR, like all research institutions, frequently transfers enormous amounts of data. With tightening IRB restrictions and the new HIPAA standards, CHR wanted a reusable, faster, more secure method to transfer files among project members that would require minimal IT/IS support. The file transfer system was designed solely for the purpose of file transfer. Files must be deleted within 14 days of being uploaded/posted.
- Q: Who can use the file transfer system?**
- A:** All projects can request to use it once their IRBs have approved the project using the file transfer system.
- Q: What is a Client Certificate?**
- A:** A Client Certificate (otherwise known as a Digital ID) is the digital equivalent of a handwritten signature and is used to help verify that you are a valid user of the Web site. You will not be able to access or view this site until you obtain a valid Client Certificate from CHR. The Certificate is automatically installed on your local PC as part of the Certificate Enrollment process. Since the Certificate resides on your local PC, you must use only that PC when accessing the site.
- Q: Who provides the Client Certificates?**
- A:** Client Certificates are provided and managed by CHR through VeriSign Inc. All Client Certificates issued by CHR are valid for one year, at which time they must be renewed.
- Q: What browser can we use?**
- A:** We recommend that clients use Internet Explorer (IE) Version 6 to access the Secure File Transfer sites. However, you can use either IE or Netscape as long as they are a very current version that supports 128-bit SSL encryption. Without support for 128-bit encryption, you will not be able to access the site. Additionally, if the browser is an older version, you may experience problems transferring files to and from the site.
- Q: Can we have several sites posting to a common area that only one user can view?**
- A:** Yes. We have designed this site to be as restrictive as needed, or as open. If 10 sites are contributing data to one coordinating center, the site can be set up so that the coordinating center can view all records from the 10 sites, but the 10 sites cannot view each other's data. Conversely, if a project would like all sites to upload data to a common area for all sites to view and have access to, they can.
- Q: Who is administering the accounts and access?**
- A:** CHR - with Gary Ansell and Don Bachman as "site administrators."
- Q: Where is the server located?**
- A:** The Secure File Transfer server is physically located at CHR.
- Q: How large can transferred files be?**
- A:** Currently, 20MB files can be uploaded. We are currently testing larger sizes, but most files can be zipped to meet the 20MB limit.
- Q: Are there any user instructions/directions?**
- A:** Yes. We have a one-page document to upload and download files, and a more detailed users' manual. This manual is available from the Site Administrator.
- Q: Who has access to our data or files?**
- A:** A "group administrator" for every project will be responsible for managing that site, will set up accounts, and will provide appropriate access and support for their project users. A few people will operate the system with broad access. These will be Gary Ansell, Don Bachman, and system engineers at CHR.
- Q: Can I use my CHR Client Certificate to access non-CHR Web sites?**
- A:** No. Client Certificates issued by CHR are valid only for use on CHR Web sites and will not be recognized by any non-CHR Web site.

## Sites Using Secure File Transfer System



Founded in 1964, the Center for Health Research/Northwest and Hawaii (CHR) conducts a program of research and demonstration projects on a broad range of health and medical care issues.

Although CHR is professionally independent, it is affiliated with Kaiser Permanente Northwest and Kaiser Permanente Hawaii.

CHR uses these large operating medical care systems as a research setting and laboratory for answering health-related research questions and for testing innovations in health care delivery and financing.

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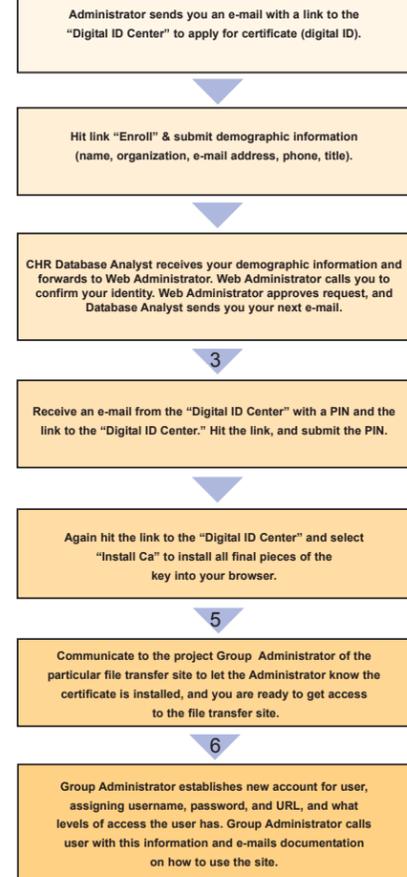


## What are we doing next?

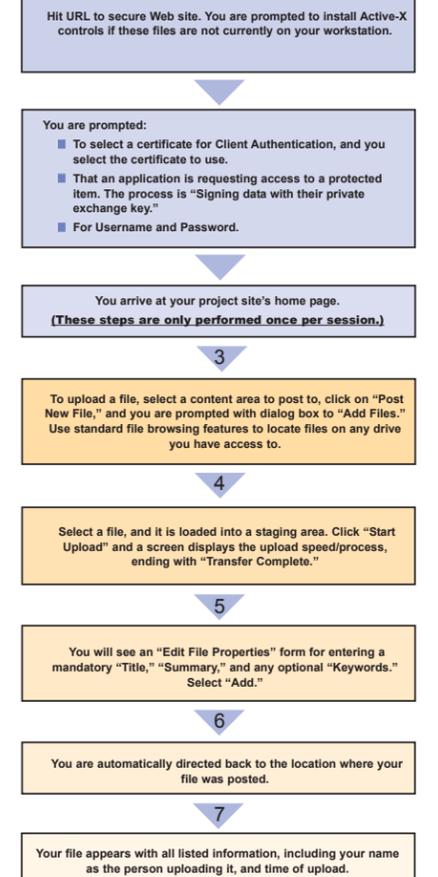
We are exploring the possibility of:

1. Using the file transfer system as a document repository
2. Pursuing 2-factor authentication, such as a smart card
3. Enhancing to .NET technology

## PROCESS TO OBTAIN A CLIENT CERTIFICATE



## PROCESS TO UPLOAD FILES



## PROCESS TO DOWNLOAD FILES

