Referer

Last updated: Fri, 03 Dec 2021 21:24:26 GMT

Learn how to use the Referer config.txt directive to direct EZproxy to use the referring URL instead of proxied access. **Referer** is a position-dependent config.txt directive that interacts with database definitions.

EZproxy normally operates as a URL rewriting proxy server which leverages IP authentication to provide remote users with access to databases. **Referer** directs EZproxy to use the referring URL instead of proxied access to connect a user to a database.

**Examples**

- Referer secretcode
  - Title Some Database
    - URL http://www.somedb.com/
    - D somedb.com

The value of `secretcode` may be up to 32 characters chosen from letters, digits, hyphens (-), and underscores (_).

In this example, if a user accesses the starting point URL:


then EZproxy will insure that the referring URL used for access is:

- http://ezproxy.yourlib.org:2048/referer/ secretcode

This referring URL must be registered with the database vendor to allow access.

To enhance the security of referring URL, you can change the value of `secretcode` to other text strings and update the authorized referring URLs for your EZproxy server with your database vendor, with no need to change any of your existing EZproxy starting point URLs.

**Personal privacy programs and access failure**

Many personal privacy programs suppress referring URL authentication to protect privacy. If your users employ such products, access to databases that rely on referring URL authentication can fail while providing little to no clues for users why access failed. If you choose to use referring URL, you should insure that your support staff are prepared to deal with these additional support calls.
Mixing referring URL and proxied access

Referring URL authentication begins where `Referer` appears with a referring URL code and ends when `Referer` appears with no code. This example enables referring URL access for Some Database and proxied access for Other Database and Another Database.

- `Referer secretcode`
  - Title Some Database
    - URL http://www.somedb.com/
    - D somedb.com

- `Referer`
  - Title Other Database
    - URL http://www.otherdb.com/
    - D otherdb.com

- `Referer` Another Database
  - URL http://www.anotherdb.com/
  - D anotherdb.com

Groups

The `Referer` directive is group-sensitive. When using group assignments with referring URL authentication, the Group directive should appear before the `Referer` directive. The example below configures Some Database to use referring URL and establishes that people who are members of the blue group will have http://ezproxy.yourlib.org:2048/referer/bluesecret as their referring URL, whereas members of the red group will have: http://ezproxy.yourlib.org:2048/referer/redsecret as their referring URL. Users who are members of both the blue and red groups would have bluesecret in their referring URL.

- Group blue
  - `Referer` bluesecret

- Group red
  - `Referer` redsecret
  - Title Some Database

- URL http://www.somedb.com/
  - D somedb.com

Example

- `Referer` https://referringurltosend.com
  - Title Some Database
  - URL http://www.somedb.com/
  - D somedb.com
  - Referer