Sitelok Credits Plugin

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Chapter 1 Introduction

What is the Sitelok Credits plugin?

The Sitelok Credits plugin allows you to setup a system of user credits that can be used to charge for or control downloads from your members area. We also provide some PHP functions that can be used to charge or add credits for other user actions such as visiting a page. This would allow you to charge for viewing videos for example (video on demand).

Credits can be added to a users account manually via the control panel, automatically added periodically by being a member of specific usergroups or by purchasing products that have credits allocated to them.

Credits can be automatically deducted when users download files from the members area using the siteloklink() function. The number of credits used can be defined per usergroup, file location or even within the siteloklink() function call. You can decide also if users are allowed to re-download files again without using credits and for how long.

The Credits plugin is a great way to charge for access to downloads or other content without requiring a payment for each transaction. Its also a great way to ensure that subscribers to your site don't download all your content in a short time and then cancel. You can effectively limit downloads to a certain number per day, week or month as needed.

The PHP API functions provide the basis for setting up complex credit based charging for access to various features on your site. As you can add credits too you can also reward users for certain actions.

Chapter 2 Installation

Installing for the first time or upgrading

1) Extract the contents of the zip file to your PC.
2) Upload the plugin_credits folder to your existing Sitelok slpw folder using FTP. There are no special permissions required on most servers.
3) Login to the Sitelok control panel.
4) Open the following URL in the browser

http://www.yoursite.com/slpw/plugin_credits/install.php

which will start the installation process. If all is well you will be taken to the plugin preferences page where you will see the plugin listed.

If you have any problems with installation please let us know so that we can help you.

Disabling the Plugin

To disable the Credits Plugin select **Plugin Preferences** in the **Plugin** menu option of Sitelok. Uncheck the enable box for the plugin and click the **Save** button. You can enable it again in the same way.

Uninstalling the plugin

To permanently remove the plugin and its settings follow these steps.

1) Disable the plugin as above.
2) Click the delete icon next the plugin in the disabled plugins section.
3) Confirm the action in the alert box.

If the plugin is uninstalled successfully you will be returned to the plugin preferences page.

Chapter 3 Configuring the plugin

Before you can provide users with credits or use them for downloads we need to setup the plugin.

You can access the Credits plugin configuration by selecting **Credits** from the **Plugins** menu.

The configuration page is split into sections which we will describe in detail here.

Download credits

In the download credits section you can set how many credits are used when downloading a file secured by siteloklink().

Allow siteloklink() override

If checked then you can set the number of credits to use for the link within the siteloklink() fiunction itself. This is the number of credits that will be used no matter which usergroup the user belongs to or any default setup in the plugin.

To allow this feature check the **Allow siteloklink() override** checkbox.

Default download credits

This is the default number of credits to use when using a download link unless a specific value is defined for members of specific usergroups or for files in specific locations.

Usergroup or file location specific credits

To set a number of download credits to use for members of a specific group or for files downloaded from a specific file location (see the main Sitelok manual for details about file locations) click the ✚ icon to add a new rule.

Members of [Select group ‡] from [any location ‡] use [1] credits ✖

Select the usergroup and file location you want to set the credits for. You can set the rule to apply to a specific usergroup and file location, a specific usergroup and any file location or any usergroup but a specific file location. You cannot set 'any group' and 'any location' together in a rule though as that is effectively the same as the Default Credits setting.

Important
When a user makes a download Sitelok will determine the **minimum** number of credits that apply to the download link based on the users group membership.

Automatic Credits

If you wish users to automatically receive a certain number of credits periodically then you can set that up in this section. These can be set by usergroup membership. Click ✚to add a usergroup setting

Members of [Select group ‡] get [100] credits on joining then [50] every [1] [months ‡] [no rollover ‡] ✖

Set the usergroup and the intial credits to apply when a user joins. Then set the credits to apply for each period that you define. So for example you can have the user receive 100 credits when they join a usergroup and then 50 credits each month thereafter.

If you set the credits to rollover then any credits remaining at the end of the period will be retained and the new credits added. If not then any existing credits related to that rule will be lost when the new credits are added.

Important

Existing users of a usergroup will get the joining credits the first time they make a download that requires credits.

Single payment purchase

In this section you can define credits to be applied to the user when they purchase specific products (single payment). To add a product click the ✚ icon

Purchase of [Select product ▼] gets [100] credits valid for [1] [months ▼] ✖

Assuming you have defined some single payment products in a payment plugin you should see those listed. Select the required product and the credits you want to add. You also should set an expiry time for those credits.

The single payment products can either be products that create or update membership or other products that can be used just to add credits.

Subscription payment purchase

In this section you can define credits to be applied to the user when they purchase subscription products (recurring payments). To add a product click the ✚icon

Purchase of [Select product ▼] gets [0] on subscription, [100] on [1st ▼] payment and [100] thereafter [no rollover ▼] ✖

Assuming you have defined some subscription products in a payment plugin you should see those listed.

Credits on subscription

This is the number of credits the user gets when they subscribe. This is useful if you have a Paypal subscription with a trial period as it allows credits to be applied before any payment is made. If you don't use a trial period then you can set this to 0 normally.

Please note that 2CO always that the first payment with the subscripton so you would normally set this to 0 for 2CO products.

Credits on 1st/2nd/3rd payment

You can set which payment (first, second or third) will first apply the defined credits to the users account. This is useful when you use a trial period for example.

Credits thereafter

These are the credits that are applied for each payment after the first applicable payment set.

Rollover

If you set the credits to rollover then any credits remaining when the next payment is received will be retained and the new credits added. If not then any existing credits related to that product will be lost when the new credits are added.

Settings

Insufficient credits URL

This is the page the user is sent to when they click a download link but have insufficient credits. Normally it is best to enter the URL without the http:// www.yoursite.com part. So for example

/folder/nocredits.php

Log credit activity

Check this box to have credit usage added to the main Sitelok log.

Log re-downloads

Check this box to have free re-downloads added to the main Sitelok log. If you don't check this box then only downloads using credits will be added to the log.
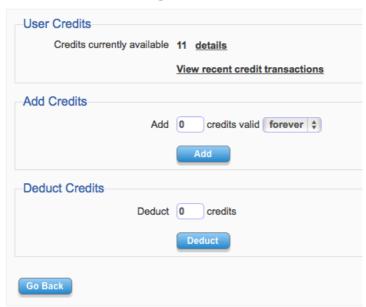
Important

No matter how you set the log settings above Sitelok will still log downloads if you have enabled this in the Sitelok configuration.

User credit details

You can view how many credits a user currently has by clicking the 🪙 displayed to the left of the users entry in the Sitelok main page (or in the 📄 menu).

Clicking the **details** link will show the list of available credits (whether they are from group membership or products etc). Clicking the **recent activity** link will show the log of most recent credit transactions.

If you wish to add or deduct credits from the users account you can do so from this page too.

Chapter 4 - Credits for downloads

Probably the most common use for credits is to control downloads. By assigning and using credits you can either charge for downloads or control them to stop users subscribing to your site and downloading everything immediately.

The Credits Plugin can automatically deduct credits when a download using the siteloklink() function is used. This function is described in the main Sitelok manual but we will take a quick look here too.

File Locations

File locations are special folders where you can store files for download. As the location of these folders are never known by the user the files are secure (you can secure the folders further with .htaccess if you wish).

By default when you install Sitelok a folder with a name like slfiles_xxxxxx is created for this purpose. This is the default file location. The path is shown in the Sitelok configuration page

If you wish to organise files you can use sub folders within the folder or create new file locations as well. For example if you use Amazon S3 for file storage you can set that up as a file location and naming it accordingly.

Using siteloklink()

Assuming that you have the file you wish to download in the default file location you can use the siteloklink() function like this on your page.

`<a href="<?php siteloklink('testfile.zip',1); ?>">testfile.zip</a>`

The 1 in the second parameter tells sitelok that this is a download not an embedded file (such as an image).

If the file is in a subfolder you can use

`<a href="<?php siteloklink('subfolder/testfile.zip',1); ?>">testfile.zip</a>`

If the file is in another file location that you have setup then use the link like this (assuming you named the file location ebooks).

<a href="<?php siteloklink('testfile.zip**:ebooks**',1); ?>">testfile.zip

Notice that we just added :ebooks after the filename.

Once you start using the siteloklink() function you can have downloads recorded in the Sitelok log and use plugins like this one and/or the PDF Watermarking plugin for example.

If you wish to override the number of credits charged when the download link is clicked you can set this in the siteloklink() like this.

<a href="<?php siteloklink('testfile.zip',1,0,**7**); ?>">testfile.zip

In this example the user will be charged 7 credits no matter which usergroups or other rules are setup in the plugin. To set the credits inside the function you must enable the **Allow siteloklink() override** option in the plugin settings.

The extra 0 parameter above is an optional link expiry time which in most cases can be left set to 0 (for no expiry) as the link is only valid for the logged in user anyway. As the credit parameter is the fourth parameter we need to include the expiry parameter as well.

Displaying credits left for the user

The following PHP function call will return the number of credits left on the users account.

$credits=sl_getcredits();

On members pages you can easily display the number of credits left using the function something like this

You have **<?php echo sl_getcredits(); ?>** credits left

This gets displayed only when the page is loaded so its best not to use it on the same page where you have download links or other credit actions as it won't update instantly (only if the page is refreshed). You could use it on a users edit profile page for example.

Chapter 5 - Credits for other actions

Although primarily used for charging and controlling access to downloads you can use the Credits Plugin to deduct or add credits to a users account when they perform other actions. For example you may want to charge credits when the user views videos on your site like video on demand. Or you may like to reward users by giving them credits when they view a page of advertising. We provide some simple PHP API functions to do this.

Credit action labels

When you add or deduct credits from a user we use a label to identify what the action was for. For example if you charge credits for viewing a funny cat video page you could label it FUNNYCAT. By using a label we can set how long the charged action is valid for before credits would be deducted again for the same action. So for example you could charge a user 10 credits to access the page labelled FUNNYCAT but allow them to return to the page free for 24 hours without getting charged again.

Making labels valid for the current session only

Normally when deducting credits (or adding them) we set the time in minutes before the user gets charged again for the same action. The user can return at any point until that time and view the page without getting charged again. If you prefer to make the time valid only for the current session just use the label like this

"FUNNYCAT".$slcreditsessiononly

You can still set a time in which case the credits won't be charged for the rest of the session (when they login again a new session start) or the time expires, whichever happens first.

Deducting credits

To deduct (charge) credits you can use the following PHP function call.

sl_deductcredits(credits,label,reuse);

credits This is the number of credits to deduct
label Unique label used for logging and referencing
reuse Minutes before this call can be used again (-1 for never)

The function returns 1 if the credits were deducted ok, 2 if the user had insufficient credits, 0 if the label has been used before and can't be reused yet or -1 for other errors. For example

<?php sl_deductcredits(1,'viewed tutorial',1440); ?>

would deduct 1 credit from the users account for the label 'viewed tutorial'. If this call is used again with the same label by this user within 24 hours (1440 minutes) they won't be charged again. So in other words they could visit the page again free for 24 hours.

For a label valid for this session only use $slcreditsessiononly like this

<?php sl_deductcredits(1,'viewed tutorial'.$slcreditsessiononly,1440); ?>

Practical examples

In practice if you want to charge credits when the user lands on a page its best to place the call in the Sitelok snippet at the top of the page and to check the returned value so you can redirect the user elsewhere if they have insufficient credits. Something like this.

```php
<?php
$groupswithaccess="CLIENT";
require_once("../slpw/sitelokpw.php");
$res=sl_deductcredits(1,'viewed tutorial',1440);
if ($res==2)
{
  sl_redirecttourl("/nocreditsleft.php");
  exit;
}
?>
```

This way the user will never see the content of the page without getting charged credit first. After they have been charged they can visit the page again within 24 hours (1440 minutes) without getting charged again.

Instead of redirecting when the user has insufficient credits you could just hide content on the page like this.

```php
<?php
$res=sl_deductcredits(1,'viewed tutorial',1440);
if ($res!=2)
{
?>

Place html code here to be viewed only if user charged
credits or within free access period. For example place
Vimeo player code here.

<?php } ?>
```

Adding Credits

To add credits you can use the following PHP function call.

sl_addcredits(credits,expiry,label,reuse);

credits This is the number of credits to add
expiry   The number of minutes the credits will be valid for (0 for no expiry)
label   Unique label used for logging and referencing
reuse   Minutes before this call can be used again (-1 for never)

The function returns 1 if the credits were added, 0 if the label has been used before and can't be reused yet and -1 for other errors.

So for example

<?php sl_addcredits(10,10080,'viewed adverts',1440); ?>

would add 10 credits to the users account that remain valid for 7 days (10080 minutes). The credit call has the label 'viewed adverts' which can't be reused by this user for the next 24 hours (1440 minutes). This ensures that if they refresh the page they won't get more credits.

Other API calls

We have some other API calls that more advanced users may find useful when using credits.

Checking if a user can re-download a file

Depending on how you have setup the plugin when a user uses credits to download a file they can redownload again free for a certain period. This function will return the the time left for a certain file.

$res=sl_redownloadtimeleft("test.zip");

The function returns 0 if the user has not downloaded this file within the period specified in the plugin settings so would be charged for the download (if applicable). Returns -1 if the user can download free at any time or the number of seconds left to download free.

Checking if a deduct credits label has been used

When you use the sl_deductcredits() function you can define the reuse time which determines if the user is charged again when the function is called again (page visited again). This function will return the time left for a certain label.

$res=sl_reaccesstimeleft("viewed tutorial");

The function returns 0 if the user has not been charged for this label so would be charged if sl_deductcredits() is used, -1 if the user can access the label (page visit or whatever) again at any time or the number of seconds left for free access.

If you use session based labels use the function like this

$res=sl_reaccesstimeleft("viewed tutorial".$slcreditsessiononly);

Checking if an add credits label has been used

When you use the sl_addcredits() function you can define the reuse time which determines if credits are added again when the function is called again (page visited again). This function will return the time left for a certain label.

$res=sl_readdcreditstimeleft("viewed adverts");

The function returns 0 if the user has not received the credits for this label (page visit or whatever) so would receive them if the sl_addcredits() function is called, -1 if the user can not receive the credits for this label again at any time, or the number of seconds left before the credits would be added again.

If you use session based labels use the function like this

$rres=sl_readdcreditstimeleft("viewed adverts".$slcreditsessiononly);

Get a list of files that can be re-downloaded free

This function will return a list of files that have been downloaded and charged for and that can be re-downloaded free.

$files=sl_redownloadfiles();

This function returns an array of data like this

$files[0]['file']   The filename
$files[0]['timestamp']   The timestamp when originally downloaded
$files[0]['untilts']   The timestamp when free access expires. If 0 then
                   free access never expires.

Get a list of labels that can be re-accessed free

This function will return a list of labels that have been accessed and charged for and that can be re-accessed free.

$labels=sl_reaccesslabels();

This function returns an array of data like this

$labels[0]['label']   The label
$labels[0]['timestamp']   The timestamp when originally accessed
$labels[0]['untilts']   The timestamp when free access expires. If 0 then
                   free access never expires.

Get credits for any user

This function will return a specific users current credits.

slapi_getcredits(userid);

userid   This is the numeric user id (not the username)

Add credits for any user

To add credits for any user you can use the following PHP function call.

slapi_addcredits(userid,credits,expiry,label,reuse);

userid   This is the numeric user id (not the username)

credits This is the number of credits to add
expiry   The number of minutes the credits will be valid for (0 for no expiry)
label   Unique label used for logging and referencing
reuse   Minutes before this call can be used again (-1 for never)

The function returns 1 if the credits were added, 0 if the label has been used before and can't be reused yet and -1 for other errors.

So for example

```
<?php slapi_addcredits(23,10,10080,'viewed adverts',1440); ?>
```

would add 10 credits to user id 23 that remain valid for 7 days (10080 minutes). The credit call has the label 'viewed adverts' which can't be reused by this user for the next 24 hours (1440 minutes). This ensures that if they refresh the page they won't get more credits.

Deducting credits for any user

To deduct (charge) credits for any user you can use the following PHP function call.

```
slapi_deductcredits(userid,credits,label,reuse);
```

userid   This is the numeric user id (not the username)
credits This is the number of credits to deduct
label   Unique label used for logging and referencing
reuse   Minutes before this call can be used again (-1 for never)

The function returns 1 if the credits were deducted ok, 2 if the user had insufficient credits, 0 if the label has been used before and can't be reused yet or -1 for other errors.

So for example

```
<?php slapi_deductcredits(23,1,'viewed tutorial',1440); ?>
```

would deduct 1 credit from user id 23 with the label 'viewed tutorial'. If this call is used again with the same label by this user within 24 hours (1440 minutes) they won't be charged again. So in other words they could visit the page again free for 24 hours.

Chapter 6 - Support

Hopefully if you have followed this manual carefully everything will be working fine. However sometimes things don't go quite so smoothly so if you have any questions or problems then please check the FAQ on the support page or email us.

Support area: http://www.vibralogix.com/support/

Email: support@vibralogix.com