



HTTPS: Why Your URL Must Have That Extra Letter

By Welton Hong

STRENGTH
IN THE DEATH CARE INDUSTRY //

Dedicated and focused, Bill's knowledge and experience of the death care industry provides you with value added services in connection with audited financial statements, trust fund compliance audits, multi-state taxation and much more.


Bill Newman, CPA
Partner



withum.com



withum⁺
AUDIT TAX ADVISORY



Digital Directory NOW AVAILABLE
Only \$125.00 CALL
1-800-321-7479
Visit www.nomispublications.com

Trust, of course, is an essential factor when families choose a death care provider. And if I told you about a small step you could take in each interaction with

clientele to help build trust, you'd take it, right?

Except some death care businesses haven't taken a critical step for building digital trust in 2019 and beyond.

Not running HTTPS protocol on your website in 2019 means you're behind the times in building trust with potential clientele. In fact, ever since last summer, Google has been warning people away from your site unless you have the necessary security in place.

It's a move the internet giant hinted at for years before it acted in 2018. Google's goal is to encourage all sites to use HTTPS protocol (as opposed to the less secure HTTP) by default.

To that end, users who now browse the internet via Google's highly popular Chrome browser receive a warning when they visit a URL that does not have HTTPS protection. Sites with URLs such as <http://www.acmfuneralhome.com> get the "not secure" message alongside the URL in the browser bar.

Now, if that same site had HTTPS protection (just

look at the start of your URL to see whether you have it), there would be no scary message in the browser bar. Visitors also would see a supportive padlock icon to reinforce the sense of safety to visitors.

What's so important about a single letter, and why should death care companies ensure their URL comes with the S?

First, it's just good business practice to protect your clientele. The difference between HTTP and HTTPS is that information shared between a user's browser and your website is encrypted. That makes it safer from hackers.

Even before Google's push to get brands to use HTTPS by default, a secure website was an absolute must if you took payments via your site or encouraged clientele to enter personal information. That means funeral homes with online intake forms or even guest books should be running secure encryption to protect passwords, customer names and contact information, and passwords.

A second reason to get that extra S in your URL is to ensure families in need or those looking to preplan death care actually visit your site.

Internet users of all backgrounds and ages are more aware of cyber dangers than ever before, but not everyone is fluent in internet security speak. If Google tells them a site isn't secure, that might be enough for potential clientele to bounce away from your site and visit a competitor who does have the HTTPS designation.

And while Google's processes only impact its browser, as many as 60 percent of online searchers in the United States use Chrome by default. The next two most popular browsers are Mozilla's Firefox and Internet Explorer, and they net less than 25 percent of market share combined.



Welton Hong

CONTINUED ON PAGE A19

HTTPS: Why Your URL Must Have That Extra Letter

Continued from Page A16

Also, even browsers with lower percentages of market share, such as Microsoft's Edge, still often differentiate between secure and nonsecure sites in some way.

No matter how you look at it, scoring that S on your HTTP is both the right thing to protect customers and the best practice for online marketing.

But where does a funeral home or other death care company find that extra S?

One way is to ensure your site is protected by an SSL certificate. This ensures a secure connection is activated between the web server hosting your content and the browser used to access that content. SSL isn't exactly the same as HTTPS, but an SSL certificate is perhaps one of the easiest ways to get the HTTPS URL.

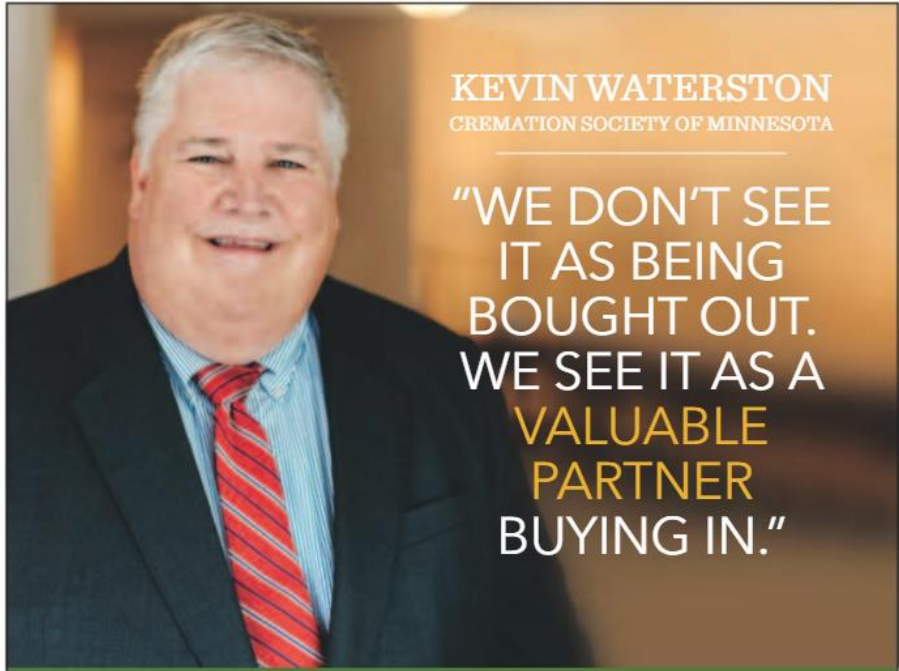
Here's the good news about moving from an outdated HTTP protocol to an HTTPS protocol: It's not expensive, time-consuming, or even difficult to do.

Still, it is a technical process, and a mistake in the migration could render your site useless or impede functionality for users, both of which negate the entire purpose of making the change to begin with.

SSL certificates can cost as little as \$70 per year, but you can't get them from Google. You can purchase them from your hosting provider, and some site hosts even include security as part of a hosting package to help sweeten the deal.

I recommend that death care companies shop around for the best deals on secure website hosting if they aren't already committed to a host company, and you might want to involve seasoned IT professionals if you're planning to migrate to a secure URL on your own. That way, you avoid any hiccups in the process that could mitigate the bump in traffic or Google page rank that you earn by adding the extra S.

Welton Hong is the founder of Ring Ring Marketing® and a leading expert in creating case generation from online to the phone line. He is the author of Making Your Phone Ring with Internet Marketing for Funeral Homes. For more information, visit www.FuneralHomeProfits.com.



KEVIN WATERSTON
CREMATION SOCIETY OF MINNESOTA

“WE DON'T SEE IT AS BEING BOUGHT OUT. WE SEE IT AS A VALUABLE PARTNER BUYING IN.”

When we looked to team with Foundation Partners Group it was for a lot of reasons. Stability. Innovation. Experience. But the main reason was their middle name: Partners. They truly have shown their intent to work side by side with us in growing Cremation Society of Minnesota beyond the success story it has already become. We weren't looking for someone

merely to buy our business, we were looking for someone to buy into our vision. Because this isn't just about our future. It's about the future of our family members, our employees and our customers. While we've been pioneers in cremation services, FPG has been a pioneer in the entire industry. Today we're on a course to being better, together

Foundation Partners Group
4901 Vineland Road, Suite 300
Orlando, FL 32811

Get in Touch
1-888-788-7526
FoundationPartners.com

