

Re: Securing Software with License

Source:

<http://www.tech-archive.net/Archive/DotNet/microsoft.public.dotnet.general/2006-01/msg01020.html>

- *From:* "Frans Bouma [C# MVP]" <perseus.usenetNOSPAM@xxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Thu, 26 Jan 2006 00:51:12 -0800
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Playboy wrote:

- > I need advice on how to best to protect software with licenses.
- >
- > We are developing a windows application that people can purchase and
- > download off the net, but the software needs to be protected by
- > licensing.
- >
- > The software is being written in vb.net v1.1.
- >
- > If anyone knows any beeter places to post this message, please let me
- > know.

I'd go for signed xml files. You can create them at your own server and add any info you want, like the name of the customer. Signed xml is easily read with .NET code and checked (it's build in).

Another approach is a key-code but that's less personal to the customer and you run the risk of having your serial codes end up on some crack site.

You can also purchase a commercial licensing library, like Xheo licensing. These typically implement a few different ways of doing licensing, like signed xml files or serial numbers.

Either way, you have to protect your own code from disassembling and removal of the protection code. So obfuscate the code, sign your assemblies, check at random places that the public token on the assemblies is still yours and if not set a random variable to null so the app crashes somewhere else.

That said, also read:

<http://software.ericSink.com/bos/Transparency.html>

about how far you should go in protecting your own software, as the more you do to protect your software, the more you likely will annoy your (potential) customers. :)

FB

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My .NET blog: <http://weblogs.asp.net/fbouma>
Microsoft MVP (C#)

- *Follow-Ups:*
 - ◆ ***Re: Securing Software with License***
 - ◇ *From:* john smith

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