Restricting users to specific folders via SFTP

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How to Restrict SFTP Connections to Specific Ports?

Overview: This article explains how to restrict SFTP connections to specific ports using SSH configuration, chroot directories, and user group settings to enhance security.

SFTP, or Secure File Transfer Protocol, is a subsystem of SSH used for securely accessing, managing, and transferring large files of data. **Chroot** or **change root** is a security feature that restricts users to a certain directory and prevents them from accessing locations outside of their specified directory. To restrict SFTP connections to specific ports you can have another **ssh daemon running on a different port** and force **internal sftp** for users connecting on that port alone.

Step 1: Create a separate directory for Ezeelogin gateway users for file transfer.

```
root@gateway:~# mkdir -p /sftp/ezadmin
```

Step 2: Apply suitable permissions for the '**/sftp**' directory.

```
root@gateway:~# chmod -R 755 /sftp/
```

Step 3: Edit the SSH configuration file, and add the following lines at the end.

```
root@gateway:~# vim /etc/ssh/sshd_config

Port 22
Port 2244

Subsystem sftp internal-sftp
Match LocalPort 2244 Group ezuser
  ChrootDirectory /sftp/%u
  ForceCommand internal-sftp
```

Step 4: After making changes to the SSH configuration file, restart the SSH service for the changes to take effect.

```
root@gateway:~# systemctl restart sshd
```

From the above configuration users connecting to the port **22** via **ssh** would be assigned to the **ezsh shell** and provide **SFTP** access for specific users under the group "**ezuser**" on a custom port, **2244** which ensures that the users under the group **ezuser** is limited to their home directory under '**/sftp**'. This chrooting mechanism increase security by limiting users access to their specified directories and prevent them from navigating to other directories outside of their specified directory.

```
root@AD-LAPHP-06:~# ssh admin@192.168.1.66 -p 2244
admin@192.168.1.66's password:
This service allows sftp connections only.
Connection to 192.168.1.66 closed.
root@AD-LAPHP-06:~#
```

```
root@AD-LAPHP-06:~# sftp -P 2244 admin@192.168.1.66
admin@192.168.1.66's password:
Connected to 192.168.1.66.
sftp>
sftp>
```

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