Access Certificates for Electronic Services (ACES) - Enabling government to citizen interaction via the Internet

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Abstract:
The Government Paperwork Elimination Act mandates the ability for Federal agencies to accept electronically submitted forms from the public, many of which require a signature. This, along with the drive to provide information and services via electronic media (the Internet) while still protecting the rights and privacy of individuals and the integrity of the information, requires agencies to consider means of positively identifying their constituents for the purpose of effecting these communications. The Access Certificates for Electronic Services (ACES) program utilizes industry partners providing COTS solutions designed to facilitate secure on-line access to Government information and services by the Public through the use of a public key infrastructure (PKI). ACES Certificates utilize digital signature technology to provide Authentication, Access Control, Data Integrity, and Technical Non-repudiation of Information. The ACES vision is that a single member of the public or a business representative would have one digital signature certificate with which he or she could do business with a variety of Federal agencies, including the electronic signing of forms prior to submission. By aggregating requirements, the Federal Government can reduce the costs of

administering a PKI while providing a user-friendly environment for the public. This Panel will discuss the value of public key technology and digital signatures for doing business on the Internet, present actual case studies, and provide a live demonstration of an ACES transaction.

Federal agencies need strong authentication of individual identities when providing privacy act controlled information or providing benefits and services to members of the public. In today's world this is accomplished through face-to-face meetings between the individual and a government representative or via written request and "wet" signature. However, there is a requirement to move many of these processes to the electronic medium of the internet, mandated both by the Government Paperwork Elimination Act and a need to work smarter in the new information age. The fundamental problem for Federal agencies making this move is the inherent anonymity of the Internet juxtaposed against this requirement for strong authentication. One solution is offered by public key technology through the use of trusted third party-issued digital signature certificates. The ACES contract, developed by the General Services Administration, Federal Technology Service, in cooperation with the Office of Governmentwide Policy provides this solution.

Summary of panelist's topics:

David Temoshok will speak on ACES policy and a case study, the Access America for Students Initiative in which four agencies are partnering to deliver electronic services to post-secondary student populations.

Stanley Choffrey will speak on implementation of ACES, lessons learned, an update on the Certificate Arbitrator Module (CAM), and a demonstration of the CAM in action.

Background of the audience.

This session will be useful to Federal agency program managers and technical staff, who are looking for a PKI and Digital Signature solution to satisfy requirements for secure on-line access to Government information and services. It will also be useful to private businesses, and organizations that exchange information with the Federal government.

Judith Spencer
Ms. Spencer has been involved in the Information Systems Security field for the past 25 years.

She is currently the Director, Center for Government-wide Security in the Office of Information Security, Federal Technology Service, at the General Services Administration.

For the past three years, Ms. Spencer has managed the Federal Information Security Infrastructure Program, which seeks information systems security

solutions for internet-based communications using public key technology. This office was responsible for developing the ACES Program.

David Temoshok
David Temoshok is responsible for electronic commerce policy in the Office of Government-wide Policy of the General Services Administration. This includes responsibility for policy for the GSA ACES Program.

David also currently serves as the Inter-Agency Task Force Leader for the Access America for Students Program. This program was created by Vice President Gore to provide access to a wide range of government services electronically to secondary and post-secondary students, schools, and related industry service providers on a nationwide basis.

Prior to this appointment, David served as Chairman of the Federal Smart Card Task Force to provide leadership and coordination for the development and implementation of smart card systems across the Federal Government. In December 1993 David was appointed to serve as the Director for Systems Design and Development for the Federal Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Task Force. The Federal EBT Task Force was created by Vice President Gore to direct the rapid implementation of systems to deliver both federal and state government benefits electronically on a nationwide basis. EBT systems are currently in operation in over 40 states.

In addition, David has served as the USDA Director of Grants Management and numerous other managerial and financial management positions in public administration.

Stanley Choffrey
Mr. Choffrey is the senior technical specialist to GSA's Center for Government-wide Security. The Center is tasked with providing public key infrastructure services in support of Electronic Commerce and Electronic Messaging government-wide. Mr. Choffrey has extensive experience in PKI technology to include Federal Security Infrastructure and commercial PKI systems. Mr. Choffrey's security background includes projects from classified secure voice system to network encryption system for both classified and sensitive systems. He is currently the Program Manager on the GSA Access Certificates for Electronic Services (ACES) initiative. Mr. Choffrey also oversees the Federal Bridge Certification Authority operations and Certificate Arbitrator Module development.