

Alliance offers businesses digital signatures

GlobalSign, an European Internet Certification Authority (CA) has announced the development of a partnership with the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) allowing the BCC's national network of Approved Chambers to act as local third-party Registration Authorities (RAs) issuing Digital Certificates for secure Internet transactions.

UK businesses will be able to request their Digital Certificates at their local Approved Chamber, enabling them to carry out E-business with full trust. Approved Chambers of Commerce have strong experience in issuing certificates such as export documentation and certificates of origin to the British community. Based on their strong public and private sector links, they are

a legitimate partner to act as the 'trusted third-party' in the issuing process of digital certificates.

With this collaboration, Approved Chambers will be extending their services to businesses by helping them organize their trade relations on open networks such as the Internet. Trade over such networks as the Internet requires the elimination of the anonymity of trade partners, assuring the confidentiality of transactions and applying Digital Signatures with the same legal power as hand-written signatures.

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Illegal software use, publishers fined

Two European publishing companies, Current Science Group and Aladdin Books Ltd have agreed to pay the Business Software Alliance (BSA) a total of £100 000 compensation for having unlicensed copies of software belonging to BSA member companies on networks in offices within the UK. The Current Science Group was initially contacted by the BSA in July 1997 following an investigation of a call to its hotline. The management of the publishing company was surprised to find that the company had insufficient licences for the software it was using. The company promptly removed unlicensed copies, replacing them with legal licensed copies and paying appropriate compensation for past unlicensed use.

London, UK-based Aladdin Books Ltd agreed back in May of this year to pay a settlement to the

BSA for using unlicensed Microsoft and Adobe software. In this case, the BSA was also alerted to the infringement by a call to its hotline. A spokesperson for the BSA said: "Being forced to pay out cash settlements is a deterrent to those who break the copyright laws: the illegal copying and distribution of software is something that needs to be punished. It is a particular shame that publishing firms — who rely on copyright laws for their livelihood — ignore those laws when it comes to their own use of copyrighted software."

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Computer virus cover withdrawn

According to Sophos, users are being left without insurance protection against virus attack because insurance companies are excluding viruses from their policies. The move by the companies follows the recent increase in viruses and increased press attention. Even the limited number of companies which make provision for viruses within their policies, do not protect against hardware damage, which could have serious implications. The survey, carried out by Sophos, reveals that many of the leading commercial insurance companies lacked knowledge on viruses. Some even assumed that viruses fell into the same category as the millennium bug.