



VeriSign Confirms Support for IETF IDN Standard

Plans for Punycode Migration; Supports Global Adoption of the IDN Standard with the i-NavTM plug-in; and Addresses Character Variants for Chinese Scripts

DULLES, VA FEBRUARY 16, 2003 -- VeriSign, Inc. (Nasdaq: VRSN), the leading provider of digital trust services, today announced that its Internationalized Domain Name (IDN) program would support the IDN standard when published by the IETF (Internet Engineering Task Force). VeriSign's IDN program offers the choice of languages other than English to businesses representing their brands and Internet users navigating the Web anywhere in the world. To further advance global adoption of the IDN standard, VeriSign announced that the capabilities of the i-NavTM plug-in will be expanded to support other registry operators following the IDN standard. VeriSign also announced improvements to its IDN program to address character variants for Simplified and Traditional Chinese scripts.

On February 14, 2003, the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) announced the prefix component of the IDNA ("Internationalizing Domain Names in Applications") RFC: **xn**. This new development suggests significant progress towards the IETF's publication of the IDN standard. VeriSign's IDN program currently uses a prefix from an early draft version of one of the RFCs, Row-Based ASCII Compatible Encoding. A migration to Punycode from this earlier draft version will be necessary. VeriSign expects to complete its deployment effort to support the published IDN standard by the summer of 2003. VeriSign also plans to provide a migration assistance program to its IDN certified registrars and their customers, representing over 900,000 names. The deployment should be transparent to the end user.

"We believe that migrating to the final IDN RFCs, expanding support in the i-Nav plug-in, and supporting character variants all represent significant milestones to VeriSign's IDN program," said Rusty Lewis, Executive Vice President and General Manager of VeriSign's Global Registry Services Division. "VeriSign has consistently worked with the broader Internet community, including local stakeholder groups, to build a better IDN service for the end user. Our announcement today as well as our recent announcements about the end user experience shows VeriSign's continued commitment to delivering an IDN product that registrants and end users really want."

In an effort to further advance global adoption of the IDN standard, VeriSign announced plans to upgrade its i-Nav plug-in to support other gTLD and ccTLD IDN programs following the IDN standard. VeriSign announced support for JPRS' .jp and KRNIC's .kr IDN programs in late 2002. Support for other gTLDs and ccTLDs in the i-Nav plug-in is expected for release in the second quarter of 2003.

VeriSign today has over 100 registrars around the world selling domain name registrations. Many are already actively registering IDNs and expect to adapt quickly to the published standard. "VeriSign has made a significant investment and consistently shown leadership in the area of IDNs," said Richard Lindsay, Chief Technical Officer of Global Media Online, a leading Internet company in Japan. "GMO shares VeriSign's view that IDNs represent a significant growth market in domain names, especially in countries like Japan where non-roman characters are so important. The rapid migration to support the IETF standards is another example of IDN leadership, and GMO is pleased to be participating in this effort to make the Internet more accessible to all peoples of the world."

Character variants are cases where different Unicode code points share the same meaning. These variants occur in Simplified and Traditional Chinese scripts, and have the potential to cause confusion for end users when using these scripts. For example, a user in mainland China entering a domain name in Simplified Chinese could be directed to one site, while another user in Taiwan entering what they would perceive as the same exact domain name in Traditional Chinese would be directed to a different destination. VeriSign will be upgrading its IDN infrastructure to address character variants such as these between Simplified and Traditional Chinese scripts. VeriSign will implement an approach that encompasses the approaches used by the China Network Information Center (.cn) and the Taiwan Network Information Center (.tw) registries.

While working to address the issue of variants VeriSign has consulted and will continue to work with all interested groups. These groups include the registries named above, KRNIC (.kr), JPRS (.jp), the CDNC (Chinese Domain Name Consortium), and the IDN Implementation Committee established by ICANN. VeriSign will provide support for other language character variants as they are identified. VeriSign's initial solution for Simplified and Traditional Chinese scripts is expected to be implemented by May of 2003.

The entire IDN standard is embodied in four Requests for Comment (RFC) – stringprep, IDNA, nameprep, and Punycode. RFC 3454, covering stringprep, was published in December 2002. The IDNA, nameprep, and Punycode RFCs are in the final editing process by the RFC Editor. VeriSign expects that the IDNA RFC, nameprep RFC, and Punycode RFC will be published soon after the IDNA prefix has been announced. Publication of all four RFCs means that the IDN standard is ready for broad implementation.

More information about VeriSign's recent announcements on its IDN program may be found at <http://www.verisign-grs.com/idn/>.

About VeriSign

VeriSign, Inc. is the leading provider of digital trust services that enable everyone, everywhere to engage in commerce and communications with confidence. VeriSign's digital trust services create a trusted environment through four core offerings—Web presence services, security services, payment services, and telecommunications services—powered by a global infrastructure that manages more than seven billion network connections and transactions a day. Additional news and information is available at www.verisign.com.

About GMO

Global Media Online was founded in 1991, and has over 430 employees. The company provides Internet infrastructure and advertising services.

Statements in this announcement other than historical data and information constitute forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933 and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934. These statements involve risks and uncertainties that could cause VeriSign's actual results to differ materially from those stated or implied by such forward-looking statements. The potential risks and uncertainties include, among others: VeriSign's limited operating history under its current business structure; the risk that VeriSign and its acquired businesses will not be integrated successfully and unanticipated costs of such integration; uncertainty of future revenue and profitability and potential fluctuations in quarterly operating results; failure of the combined company to retain and hire key executives, technical personnel and other employees; failure of the combined company to manage its growth and the difficulty of successfully managing a larger, more geographically dispersed organization; failure of the combined company to successfully manage relationships with customers, suppliers and strategic customers; network outages, network capacity constraints or security breaches; failure of the combined company's customers to accept new services or to continue using the products and services of the combined company; and competition in the various markets serviced by the combined company. More information about potential factors that could affect the company's business and financial results is included in VeriSign's filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission, especially in the company's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2001 and Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q. VeriSign undertakes no obligation to update any of the forward-looking statements after the date of this press release. VeriSign is a registered trademark of VeriSign, Inc. Other names may be trademarks of their respective owners.

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