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CYBER IDENTITY: SPECIFICATION OF A TOP LEVEL SERVICE (TLS) FOR VERIFYING IDENTIFIERS

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CEN WORKSHOP AGREEMENT

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English version

Cyber Identity: Specification of a Top Level Service (TLS) for verifying identifiers

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Foreword

The production of this CEN Workshop Agreement (CWA) was accepted at the CEN/ISSS Electronic Commerce Workshop at the 16th plenary meeting held on 23 October 2003 in Brussels.

At the meeting, Mr Adrian and Otto Müller, representing the EDIRA Association at the Zurich Chamber of Commerce, gave a presentation on the EDIRA Top Level Service (TLS). The Workshop agreed to develop a document providing an analysis of the service, in the framework of the wider issue of cyber identity.

The document was drafted by an ad hoc team composed by Mr Adrian and Otto Müller and Man Sze Li, IC Focus.

Three draft versions of the document were released for comments to the CEN/ISSS Electronic Commmerce Workshop respectively in July, September and October 2003.

The final draft was approved unanimously at the Workshop plenary meeting on 15 October 2003 in Brussels.

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Introduction

Cyber identity is the key to the further development of transactions in the electronic world. It is a fundamental element of a trusted framework for eBusiness to enable development of interoperable eBusiness applications and services[1]. Domain names, e-mail-addresses or other existing identification schemes satisfy the need for unique identification only partially. Additional identification-systems which are complementary to the Domain Name System (DNS) - the only identity infrastructure which is truly ubiquitous in the online environment - must be established. The concept of a Top Level Service (TLS) is such a system and focuses on easy implementation and integration of proven identification systems.

Identification of business partners in commercial transactions and of citizens in public administration has always been a critical issue. In most countries registers of citizens, of businesses and their managers exist as public or private services. Most of these registries are very reliable. They contain information which can be linked to electronic identification-systems. But they are domain specific and cannot easily be scaled to work in a global context. By participating in a TLS these traditional registration organizations can generate added value for themselves and for the Cyber world. Most importantly, the TLS provides a mechanism for global mapping of cyber identities leveraging on what already exists at the operational level.

Today, traditional and new registries are databases with identifiers as primary or secondary retrieval keys for their entries (businesses or other entities). These identifiers have a syntax specific to such a registry (code issuing organization). In order to support a world-wide unique identification no such organizations wants to give up its code issuing scheme for some new scheme. Therefore, only a meta-registration scheme by which such existing code schemes are registered will provide a world-wide unique identification of businesses and entities thereof. A TLS according to this CWA is such a system.

Annex C (Applications) shows what a TLS is about at a practical level. In directories and documents owners and specifications of entities require codes for identification. Each element in a directory is specified by the identifier of the directory-owner and the identifier that has been given to the element by the directory-owner. A TLS allows to verify such identifiers. As a specific application Annex C5 shows how such a TLS supports .eu domain registration.

Annex E shows that an implementation already exists: EDIRA TLS by the EDIRA association. See www.edira.org (TLS section).

A demonstration of TLS is available for testing on the EDIRA web site. The system represents an enhancement of UDDI, ebXML registry and other eBusiness information systems. It is not intended to have reverse capability. A link to the .eu registry, currently under implementation in accordance with the .eu Regulation, is foreseen.

Note

The TLS proposed in this document comprises concepts, techniques and examples of implementation. In particular the specification defined can be built upon to serve different needs for the management of cyber identity. The authors of the document are aware that technologies for cyber identity management are rapidly evolving; in due course there is likely to emerge a need for a unified approach to managing the identities of **organisations**, **people** and **objects**[2] which need to be interlinked and mutually referenceable. We believe that the TLS could be a key element for global identity management in this global context. Suggestions as regards the augmentation and enhancement of the TLS to meet such emerging needs are most welcome.

---

[1] Recommendations of *CEN/ISSS report and recommendations on key eBusiness standards issues 2003-2005 (July 2003)* and *CEN/ISSS Roadmap for addressing key eBusiness standards issues 2003-2005 (August 2003)*.

[2] Notably via the use of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags, for which there are proposals for DNS type mapping to entries in existing registries.

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