CAUCE, SpamCon Foundation and CAUCE Canada Endorse Trusted Email Open Standard

WASHINGTON, DC —May 2, 2003— Three respected consumer advocate organizations today endorsed the Trusted Email Open Standard proposed by ePrivacy Group at the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Spam Forum. The Coalition Against Unsolicited Commercial Email (CAUCE), CAUCE Canada and the SpamCon Foundation all support the proposed open standard as a way to help consumers and email providers reliably separate legitimate email from spam, and to help bulk email senders comply with current and proposed anti-spam legislation.

The Trusted Email Open Standard (TEOS) is based on technology developed and in use by ePrivacy Group that allows senders of email to make verifiable assertions in the header of a message regarding their identity and the content of the message. ISPs and consumers can then use those assertions to manage their incoming email traffic as they see fit, for example sorting, filtering or whitelisting by sender, content or other assertions (for complete standard see http://eprivacygroup.net/teos).

"The SpamCon Foundation believes that an open standard such as this will benefit the entire international Internet community by creating an environment in which email senders can voluntarily decide to provide trustworthy identification about who they are and what their messages say," said SpamCon Foundation President Laura Atkins. "These assertions will help users and ISPs make informed choices about what email they will accept."

At this week's high-profile FTC Spam Forum, marketers, ISPs, consumer advocates and technology companies have all called for a consensus-based effort to deploy tools that email senders can use to add verifiability to their messages. Voluntary certified trustworthiness tools, panelists have argued, can provide enormous benefits to marketers, ISPs and consumers by reliably separating legitimate messages from spam, enabling automated compliance with message labeling laws, and reducing the spoofing of sender identity.

In addition to describing how such tools work, the Trusted Email Open Standard provides plans for an independent, nonprofit board to oversee their rapid deployment. The proposed Trusted Email Oversight Board gives multiple organizations the authority to create programs that "certify" email based on a set of standards that program participants then agree to meet. Individual programs, and ultimately the oversight board, ensure compliance by senders with those standards.

"CAUCE Canada believes that the concept of creating multiple authorities which may set their own standards for appropriate behavior by senders of email will give consumers the most power to decide which certified email to accept and which to reject," said CAUCE Canada Chairman Neil Schwartzman. "Consumers can decide which certified email programs meet their personal standards for their inboxes and make their decisions accordingly."

Right now, the process of sorting legitimate messages from spam without verified identity and trusted assertions creates significant costs for ISPs and situations where requested, legitimate messages are deleted as spam by automated tools.

"CAUCE supports this open standard for adding verifiability to email as a means of assisting legitimate marketers in their communications with consumers and decreasing the potential damage of blacklists and other such spam-filtering solutions to legitimate, opt-in communications," said John Levine, CAUCE Board member and FTC spam event panelist.

About CAUCE

CAUCE is the world's largest Internet-based advocacy organization, with more than 50,000 members across the United States and supporters across the world. It supports and works toward passage of legislation prohibiting unsolicited email advertisements. CAUCE has no budget, no office and is run by an all-volunteer board using donated resources. For more information about CAUCE, visit its Web site at http://www.cauce.org.

About SpamCon Foundation

The donation-supported, nonprofit SpamCon Foundation (http://www.spamcon.org) helps the Internet community protect email as a viable medium of communication and commerce.

About ePrivacy Group

ePrivacy Group is working to end spam by adding trust, privacy, and intelligence to email through industry initiatives like the Trusted Email Open Standard and products like Postiva™, which makes possible the Trusted Sender program overseen by TRUSTe, and SpamSquelcher™, which dramatically reduces spam's impact on ISPs and enterprises. Founded by leading experts in privacy and security who provide education and consulting services to Global 1000 enterprises, ePrivacy Group is a privately held company based in Philadelphia, with offices in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C.

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