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ePrivacy Group Welcomes Microsoft Support for Trusted Email Open Standards:
Chairman Bill Gates Presents Key Elements to Congress

WASHINGTON -- May 22, 2003 -- /Xpress Press/ -- When ePrivacy Group's privacy and anti-spam experts made public their Trusted Email Open Standard at the Federal Trade Commission's Spam Forum last month, their hope was to gain industry backing for their plan to eliminate spam, email spoofing and fraud. Those hopes were realized yesterday when Bill Gates, Chairman and Chief Software Architect of Microsoft Corporation, articulated the key elements of the standard in an open letter to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

"We have been discussing the standard with Microsoft and other leading players in the industry for many months now," says Vincent Schiavone, President and CEO of ePrivacy Group (www.eprivacygroup.com). "We are thrilled at the extent to which Microsoft has taken these principles on board, and at such a high level."

"Clearly Mr. Gates appreciates the importance of the Trusted Sender™ Seal as well as global independent trust authorities to oversee industry best practices and supervise email certification and customer dispute resolution," adds Schiavone. "Microsoft has been evaluating the Trusted Sender™ Seal in the MSN unit for over a year now and we are very pleased with the results."

"When we launched the Trusted Sender™ program in January of last year, the goal was to provide legitimate commercial trusted senders with independent third party certification of their commitment to industry best practices. The Trusted Sender™ 'seal' to which Mr. Gates refers helps consumers and ISPs differentiate legitimate email from spam. Microsoft MSN was one of the first to join the Trusted Sender™ program," notes Schiavone.

It was at Microsoft's suggestion that ePrivacy Group developed the Trusted Email Open Standard (TEOS) as a roadmap to the widespread deployment of a mix of technology and best practices that can put an end to spam. TEOS describes how email senders can make secure and verifiable assertions about their identity and the content of every email message. Consumers and their Internet Service Providers (ISPs), as well as enterprises, can use those assertions to manage their incoming email traffic, sorting, filtering or whitelisting by sender, content or other assertions.

ePrivacy Group has offered to make the enabling technology available on a royalty-free basis, if major ISPs agree to implement the new standard.

"Microsoft made it very clear to us, as did Mr. Gates' letter to Congress, that any technology used to identify legitimate senders of email or associate that identity with assertions or a seal has to be based on royalty-free open standards," says Schiavone. "Although contributing core technology to open standards is a considerable burden for a small, privately-held company, we agreed with Microsoft that it was necessary in order to establish the needed federation of email trust authorities and best practice programs."

"Mr. Gates' letter moves us all that much closer to turning back the tide of spam that threatens to drown us all," said Schiavone. "Unfortunately, unless AOL and Yahoo join Microsoft in supporting Trusted Email Open Standards and Trusted Sender™ Seals, they could effectively kill this initiative, which would mean we'd all find even more spam in our inboxes."



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TEOS has already attracted widespread support from consumer advocacy organizations like the Coalition Against Unsolicited Commercial Email (CAUCE) and the SpamCon Foundation.

“Corporations and industry associations have also expressed strong interest,” says Stephen Cobb, Senior VP of Research at ePrivacy Group and one of the main authors of TEOS. “That’s because TEOS helps bulk email senders comply with current and proposed anti-spam legislation.” Cobb notes that in the last three weeks, more than 10,000 people have downloaded the standard from <http://eprivacygroup.net/teos>.

Commenting on Mr. Gates’ call for legislation, Ray Everett-Church, ePrivacy Group’s Chief Privacy Officer, notes that: “Creating legislated safe harbors for Trusted Senders would definitely speed adoption of best practice programs by marketers and make it easier to keep spam out of inboxes.” Attorney Everett-Church is a co-author of TEOS.

About ePrivacy Group

ePrivacy Group is working to end spam by adding trust, privacy, and intelligence to email through initiatives like the Trusted Email Open Standard and patent-pending technology like Postiva™, which powers the Trusted Sender program overseen by TRUSTe, and SpamSquelcher™ which dramatically reduces spam's impact on ISP and enterprise resources. Founded by leading experts in privacy and security, ePrivacy Group is a privately held company based in Philadelphia, with offices in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. For more information see <http://www.ePrivacyGroup.com>.

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