

# **E-Government Moves Forward as Federal Bridge Certification Authority Conducts First Cross-Certifications**

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WASHINGTON, DC - The Federal Bridge Certification Authority (Federal Bridge) today cross-certified with the public key infrastructures (PKI) of the U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Department of the Treasury, U.S. Department of Agriculture National Finance Center, and National Aeronautics and Space Administration, allowing them to trust and validate the digital signatures on files issued and received by each other.

PKI certificates can be used to affix user unique digital signatures to electronic documents, forms, and any other digital files, offering four benefits: authentication, transaction integrity, non-repudiation, and confidentiality. "The Federal Bridge is a key component of E-Authentication," said Mark Forman, Associate Director for Information Technology and E-Government. "It will serve as a facilitator to unify islands of automation across government and demonstrates the huge potential for integration of federal systems. The Federal Bridge is a key component of E-Authentication and eventually will serve to bridge all levels of government." The process of exchanging digital signatures mirrors many interagency communications.

"This is a crucial piece in the drive toward e-government," said Federal Technology Service Commissioner, Sandra Bates. Today's cross-certifications with the Federal Bridge, "makes real the vision of a ubiquitous, interoperable PKI," according to Marty Wagner, GSA's Associate Administrator for Governmentwide Policy at the General Services Administration. "We are working with additional agencies, states, other allied governments and Bridge Authorities to effect interoperability through cross-certification with the Federal Bridge. These four agencies are the leaders," said Judith Spencer, Chair of the Federal PKI Steering Committee.

The Federal Bridge is a partnership between the Federal PKI Steering Committee and the Federal PKI Policy Authority and is a collection of hardware, software, policies, and procedures enabling federal agencies and other entities, to trust and validate digital signatures issued by participating PKIs. GSA's FTS operates the Federal Bridge for the federal government. Additional information is available at <http://www.cio.gov/fpkisc>.

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