



DGI Update: Your Trusted Source for Interoperability Test Lab Services

April 2009

Commentary: Certificate Exchange Management: Don't Let your Trading Partners Expire!

All AS2 Trading Partner communications depend on digital certificates. These certificates are used to ensure secure communications over SSL and to encrypt and sign messages. Without certificates, this security would not be possible.

Certificates are issued by Certificate Authorities or are issued by the AS2 product as Self-Signed. In either case, certificates have the property of an expiration date. That is, certificates are issued to be valid for a period of time (i.e., one or two years). Once they expire, they are no longer valid and any trading relationships that depend on those certificates will no longer work until a new valid certificate is installed. If a trading partner's certificate expires before it is updated, your AS2 exchanges with that trading partner will cease to operate immediately on the date the certificate expires. In order to avoid business shutdown, it is important to have your trading partner's certificates updated before they expire.

As the number of AS2 trading relationships continue to grow, it becomes very difficult to track which trading partners have expiring certificates. Wouldn't it be nice if AS2 products automatically handled this exchange and updated the certificates which are close to expiration?

Fortunately, back in 2004, with the help of GS1 eCom Technical Group (eTG), a Certificate Exchange Management (CEM) document for AS2 was written and submitted to Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF). The document describes how to automate this exchange and update the certificates before they expire. It relieves the AS2 administrators of the tedious task of implementing manual procedures to detect, communicate, and update certificates which are due to expire.

The CEM specification also serves as a guide for AS2 developers to implement

this CEM feature into their AS2 products. Currently, five AS2 vendors have implemented CEM. However, for CEM to have the biggest impact and reward, the majority, if not all, AS2 vendors should implement the CEM feature into their AS2 product.

AS2 end-users may have an influence on whether or not their supply chain implements and deploys CEM. It is important for end-users to become aware that automating the exchange of certificates under AS2 has been standardized. Those desiring to use CEM could request that their AS2 vendor supports and implements CEM.

If you need help with managing your certificates, we encourage you to ask your AS2 vendor about CEM!

[Drummond Certified AS2 Products with CEM Profile](#)
[CEM Standard Info](#)

White paper: Key Success Factors for Building a Successful Interoperability Program

Many industries are challenged with interoperability issues and the related costs are significant. Often interoperability testing is driven by the technical experts, yet a variety of skills and stakeholders are needed for success. This whitepaper calls for industry stakeholders to address six critical factors in building successful interoperability testing programs.

[Download free white paper](#)

Drummond Group (DGI) is the trusted interoperability test lab offering testing services throughout the product life cycle. Auditing, QA, conformance testing, custom software test lab services, and consulting are offered in addition to interoperability testing. Founded in 1999, DGI has tested over a thousand international software products used in vertical industries such as automotive, consumer product goods, healthcare, energy, financial services, government, petroleum, pharmaceutical and retail. For more information, please visit www.drummondgroup.com.