

Topic: Online Certification/Authentication of Documents re: Business Entities  
 Question by: Robert Lindsey  
 Jurisdiction: Virginia  
 Date: 05 April 2011

Jurisdiction	Question(s)		
	<p>(Q1) Who are the primary customers of the online certification/authentication?                      (Q5) Describe the customer process used to obtain online certification/authentication.                      (Q6) What feedback has been received from customers?</p>	<p>(Q2) Is online certification/authentication being used for copywork that is issued both electronically and in paper?                      (Q3) Does the certification/authentication satisfy a legal requirement?                      (Q4) Give the main reason(s) for providing online certification/authentication.                      (Q7) Please provide the main reasons if you decided not to provide online certification/authentication.</p>	<p>For the jurisdictions that offer this service are you using a certification number on the authenticated instrument that would allow it to be verified online? For example, if I receive a certificate that has the aforementioned number I could go online and validate that it was issued by that office and it is in fact valid.</p>
Manitoba			
Corporations Canada			
Alabama			
Alaska			
Arizona			
Arkansas			
California	<p>At this time, California does not issue online electronic certifications at this time, but we have hopes of doing so one day!</p>		

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<b>Colorado</b>	<p>(Q1) Service companies, banks, law firms.</p> <p>(Q5) Each entity has a “summary” page that provides the entity’s name, principal office address, registered agent name and address, formation date, periodic reporting month, and status. If the entity is in good standing, the summary page has a link to obtain a certificate of good standing. When the person clicks on the link, they receive the certificate, which they can print out, save, etc. The certificate has a validation number printed on it that can be used to verify the authenticity of the certificate. The validation process is done online. The certificate of good standing is free if obtained online, but we charge if someone sends a request for us to provide them with a paper certificate.</p> <p>(Q6) They appreciate it and would like to see more services available online.</p>	<p>(Q2) Certificates of good standing are the only certificate that is available online. We would like to provide certified copies of documents online, but we do not have that capability yet.</p> <p>(Q3) Yes.</p> <p>(Q4) Reduces costs and turn-around time, and provides customer self-service 24/7.</p>	
<b>Connecticut</b>			
<b>Delaware</b>			

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<p><b>District of Columbia</b></p>	<p>We have not started our online service but hope to do so in the next couple of weeks.</p> <p>(Q1) We envision to have service companies, law firms and others to use our new online system.</p> <p>(Q5) Go the website, search for the company, go to the order screen, pay and certificate will pop up in pdf. For formation filings, customer will go through several steps to answer some question, pay and give confirmation and we will get the filing at backend queue ready for paralegal review.</p> <p>(Q6) More payment methods such as charge accounts (our online system will only accept credit cards); more online filings covering all aspects of corporate filings – from formation to dissolution.</p>	<p>(Q2) No.</p> <p>(Q3) Yes, we have laws in place that allow for digital signature and online certificates.</p> <p>(Q4) Cost efficient, not staff involvement for good standing certificates, no commute/parking cost for customers, etc.</p>	

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<p><b>Florida</b></p>	<p>(Q1) Everyone generally but primarily service companies and law firms. We offer only Certificates of Status (COS), not Certified Copies with documents attached.</p> <p>(Q5) Customer goes to our website, selects “electronic certification”, selects a payment type (credit card or prepaid account), enters a file number, the screen appears, and they print the certificate. The certificate includes authentication numbers that can be entered into the system from our website to verify that the certificate is legitimate and has not been altered. The seal prints in color if the user has a color printer.</p> <p>(Q6) No complaints. The service companies love it</p>	<p>(Q2) I’m not sure I understand this question. The online COS can be ordered electronically and is available instantly. The requestor prints it out in “paper” form. If requested by mail, a “paper” certificate is usually turned around on the same or next day</p> <p>(Q3) Yes, our statute provides that a certificate generated electronically must be accepted in all courts and in all legal proceedings.</p> <p>(Q4) Fast. Easy. Efficient.</p>	
<p><b>Georgia</b></p>			

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<b>Hawaii</b>	<p>(Q1) To be specific the top customer is CSC and from there the other primary customers are law firms, banks and other private companies.</p> <p>(Q5) They would go to our website, <a href="http://www.businessregistrations.com">www.businessregistrations.com</a>, select "Business Name Search", enter the entity name, go to "Buy Available Docs" tab, select documents to purchase, go to shopping cart, enter delivery option (email, mail or pick up) and payment. (see screenshots below)</p> <p>(Q6) We have happy &amp; satisfied customers and in turn the customers have happy &amp; satisfied clients.</p>	<p>(Q2) Yes.</p> <p>(Q3) Yes.</p> <p>(Q4) Cost efficiency, less manual work, immediate and ease in obtaining copies, certified copies and/or certificates of good standing.</p>	
<b>Idaho</b>			
<b>Illinois</b>			
<b>Indiana</b>			
<b>Iowa</b>			
<b>Kansas</b>	<p>Kansas does not provide online certification/authentication. We may consider it in the future once our new systems are in place.</p>		
<b>Kentucky</b>			

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<p><b>Louisiana</b></p>	<p>(Q1) We just launched our certified copy and certificates of existence online this past Monday. Certificate of good standing were already online. Customers are same as other states, law firms, service companies, businesses and individuals.</p> <p>(Q5) Customers go to our website at <a href="http://www.sos.louisiana.gov/tabid/819/Default.aspx">http://www.sos.louisiana.gov/tabid/819/Default.aspx</a> and search for the entity name. Click on details to display information on record. Click on tab “Buy Certificates and Certified Copies”, select document(s) to purchase, check out and they are sent an email where they may retrieve their documents.</p> <p>(Q6) Very positive. Customers like ease of ordering online and immediate turnaround. We expect to hear a lot more since this is only the 5th day in.</p>	<p>(Q2) Yes.</p> <p>(Q3) Yes.</p> <p>(Q4) Cost effect, less manual work and quick turnaround time. In addition service is available 24/7.</p>	

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<b>Maine</b>	<p>(Q1) Law Firms, Banks &amp; Service Companies, and business individuals in need of a certificate of legal existence or certified copies of corporate filings.</p> <p>(Q5) To obtain copies of corporate filings, the customer searches the entity using our interactive corporate search, they then select the filings they want copies of and whether they want plain copies or certified copies. To obtain a certificate of legal existence/good standing, they customer searches the entity using ICS, and then they select the want a certificate of legal existence. The then pay for the copies or the certificate using their subscriber account login or by credit card. Once payment has been approved, a PDF is downloaded for them to print the documents.</p> <p>(Q6) They seem very pleased with the ability to download the copies or certificate immediately online.</p>	<p>(Q2) Electronically for the most part, if the filings they have selected have images, they download the images with the certification attached. If the filing doesn't have an associated image, they would select these to be sent from our office. The certificate does have an authentication number and date that our office issued the certification. This authentication number can be verified on our website.</p> <p>(Q3) Yes.</p> <p>(Q4) Reduces the workload for our staff not having to produce these in-house. Approx. 96% of the certificates of legal existence and copy requests are now done online.</p>	
<b>Maryland</b>			
<b>Massachusetts</b>			
<b>Michigan</b>	<p>The State of Michigan currently does not offer online certification/authentication of documents.</p>		
<b>Minnesota</b>			
<b>Mississippi</b>			

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<p><b>Missouri</b></p>	<p>(Q1) Law firms and service companies predominantly, but also individuals using them for small claims court and closings.</p> <p>(Q5) If the images are available online, the customer goes to the website, completes a registration process, searches for the entity, selects and requests the documents they want certified, completes the payment process and prints the certificate and documents. If the images are not yet available online, the process is the same up to the point of printing the certification and documents. A notice is generated indicating the certification and the documents will be available within three working days.</p> <p>(Q6) They love it!</p>	<p>(Q2) Unclear exactly what you are asking. The online certificate can be ordered electronically and is available instantly. The requestor prints it out in “paper” form. If requested by mail, a “paper” certificate is usually turned around on the same or next day.</p> <p>(Q3) Yes.</p> <p>(Q4) Customer service—they are available immediately.</p>	
<p><b>Montana</b></p>	<p>Montana currently does not offer online certification/authentication of documents. Certified copies may be requested online and paid for with a credit card, however, the request is fulfilled by this office manually.</p>		
<p><b>Nebraska</b></p>			

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<p><b>Nevada</b></p>	<p>Nevada only does certificates of Good Standings online.</p> <p>(Q1) Business owners, Banks, Attorney’s &amp; RA’s</p> <p>(Q5) The customer must log in with a user name and password. Once logged into the system, the customer selects Commercial Recordings, and then selects Good Standing Certificates, enter the Business Name in the Entity Search and then select the correct name wanted for the Good Standing. Select Request Certificate of GS and then add to cart and proceed through checkout. Once the job has been committed the Customer then goes back into the Job History Folder and downloads the Good Standing Certificate all in black and white. There is a unique number assigned to each document and it can be verified online.</p> <p>(Q6) Once the customer’s realized the certificates could be verified online they use it regularly.</p>	<p>We do not authenticate documents online because they require a live signature with a silver seal. We do have problems particularly with Russia because the Certified Copies are not in color.</p> <p>(Q2) Copies of Corporate Documents are not available online at this time. Only Good Standing certificates are available online.</p> <p>(Q3) Yes.</p> <p>(Q4) Faster service for the customer and less manual work.</p> <p>Addendum to Nevada’s response: A Customer can get certified copies of document they file online (Articles or Annual Reports) at the time of filing and they are also provided the verification code.</p>	<p>For any certificate provided, online or otherwise, they can be verified online.</p>
<p><b>New Hampshire</b></p>			
<p><b>New Jersey</b></p>			
<p><b>New Mexico</b></p>			
<p><b>New York</b></p>			
<p><b>North Carolina</b></p>			
<p><b>North Dakota</b></p>			

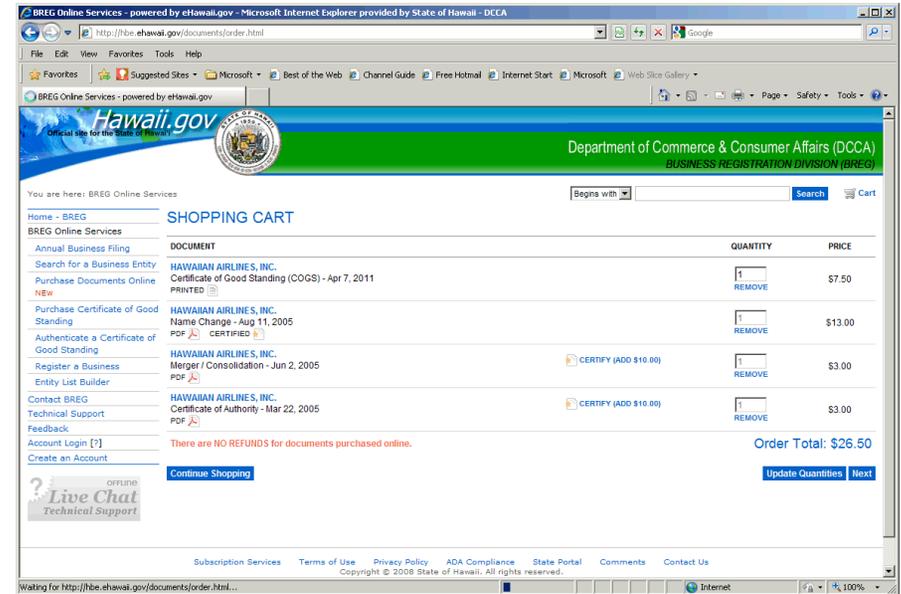
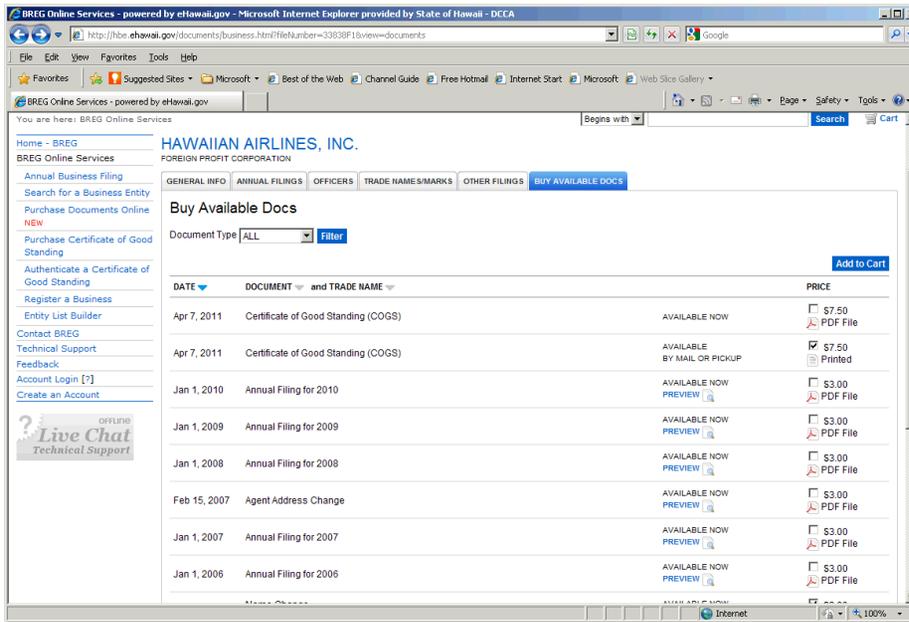
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Ohio			
Oklahoma			
Oregon			
Pennsylvania			
Rhode Island	<p>Filers can order certificates of good standing, legal existences, certificates of fact, and "other" certificates (i.e. certificate of revocation) online via our website. All of our certificates are numbered and we will be publishing a "look-up" on our Business Filings page. However, at this time we do not return the certificate electronically.</p> <p>We do; however, issue all of our filing evidence electronically. Every article of incorporation, amendment, merger, certificate of authority etc., that is filed with this office is affixed with an electronic certificate as part of the document image. All filings are imaged and available for viewing and/or printing through our online database. Filing evidence can be retrieved at any time. Click here to see an example of an article of incorporation:  <a href="http://uccserver04.risos.local/CORP_DRIVE1/2009/0603/000034647/0001/200946142860_1.pdf">http://uccserver04.risos.local/CORP_DRIVE1/2009/0603/000034647/0001/200946142860_1.pdf</a></p>	<p>Click here  <a href="http://sos.ri.gov/documents/business/evidence%20of%20filing.pdf">http://sos.ri.gov/documents/business/evidence%20of%20filing.pdf</a> to obtain a copy of our procedure to "Obtain Evidence of Filing." This process has saved thousands. We have eliminated the cost of printed certification paper that was once used to issue the certificate, an envelope and postage. Not to mention processing time for our clerks. We've added convenience and accessibility to our filers and not experienced any legal challenges.</p>	
South Carolina			
South Dakota			
Tennessee			

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<p><b>Texas</b></p>	<p>(Q1) Over 80% of the copy/certificate requests are submitted and fulfilled online through SOSDirect. While we have not done a customer survey, we expect that this includes all levels of customers: law firms, service companies, business &amp; individuals.</p> <p>(Q5) Customer must have a SOSDirect account. Account can be established online. Client id email to customer within 15 minutes of requesting account. Customer logs in to SOSDirect using client id and password, enters payment information, and then proceeds to order copies/certificates. There are two paths for ordering: conduct a search and then order based on search results or proceed directly to order interface and enter order information. Documents (copies and/or certificates) are emailed to the customer as a pdf attachment. Additionally, customer may retrieve information from the customer's briefcase on SOSDirect. More detailed information on process available at: <a href="https://direct.sos.state.tx.us/help/help-corp.asp?pg=order">https://direct.sos.state.tx.us/help/help-corp.asp?pg=order</a>.</p> <p>(Q6) No problems using certificates in court because they look exactly like certificates produced inhouse. Each certificate does have a unique document number associated with the certificate which can be verified online.</p>	<p>(Q2) Not sure that I understand this question. If you order online, you receive an email with the ordered documents attached as a pdf. If you call and order, you are faxed or mailed copies of the ordered documents.</p> <p>(Q3) The online certificates include a facsimile signature and seal and are used in the same manner and look like the certificates that are printed on our printers.</p> <p>(Q4) Better customer service at a lower cost. The computer system fills orders for copies or certificates without intervention by a SOS employee so long as there is an image available if copies are ordered. If requests for copies are received and the documents have not yet been imaged (pre-August 2001 documents), then a SOS employee pulls the paper document or the microfilm document and converts it to an image so that the next time an order is placed for that document, it can be handled automatically by the system. In addition, service is available 24/7 allowing customers to place and receive orders on nights, weekends and holidays.</p>	

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<b>Utah</b>	<p>Utah offers online certificates of good standing only. All other certifications come through the office staff. We do place a certification stamp on online business filings. We hope to offer more certifications online in the future.</p> <p>(Q1) businesses and service providers</p> <p>(Q5) customer goes to business entity search, looks up particular entity, clicks button for good standing/existence, payes by credit card, downloads and prints certificate</p> <p>(Q6) It is very well received. We rarely get in house requests now.</p>	<p>(Q2) certificates are available for any active entity whether filed online or inhouse</p> <p>(Q3) yes - statutes</p> <p>(Q4) ease, efficiency, and convenience</p> <p>(Q7) n/a</p>	
<b>Vermont</b>			
<b>Virginia</b>			
<b>Washington</b>			
<b>West Virginia</b>			
<b>Wisconsin</b>			
<b>Wyoming</b>			

**Additional comments:**

Hawaii’s screenshots per commentary above:



**Full text of email:**

Virginia is interested in gathering data about online certification/authentication of documents. Please let us know your answers/thoughts to the following questions:

1. Who are the primary customers of the online certification/authentication?
2. Is online certification/authentication being used for copywork that is issued both electronically and in paper?
3. Does the certification/authentication satisfy a legal requirement?
4. Give the main reason(s) for providing online certification/authentication.
5. Describe the customer process used to obtain online certification/authentication.
6. What feedback has been received from customers?
7. Please provide the main reasons if you decided not to provide online certification/authentication.

Virginia knows and appreciates the time and effort that it takes to complete these surveys but your feedback is vital for all jurisdictions contemplating this subject matter.

Thanks and I look forward to seeing everyone in Winnipeg!

Robert N. Lindsey  
Assistant Deputy Clerk  
Tyler Building, 1300 East Main Street, P.O. Box 1197, Richmond, VA. 23218-1197  
804-371-9424 Work [Robert.Lindsey@SCC.Virginia.Gov](mailto:Robert.Lindsey@SCC.Virginia.Gov)

Question added 08-Apr-2011:

For the jurisdictions that offer this service are you using a certification number on the authenticated instrument that would allow it to be verified online? For example, if I receive a certificate that has the aforementioned number I could go online and validate that it was issued by that office and it is in fact valid.

Thanks, Robert