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Microsoft

September 30, 2004

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Mr. Donald S. Clark
Secretary
Federal Trade Commission
Room 159-H
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20580

RE: E-Mail Authentication Summit -- Comments (Matter No. P044411)

Dear Secretary Clark:

Microsoft submits these comments regarding the November 9 and 10 E-Mail Authentication Summit (the "Summit") sponsored by the Federal Trade Commission ("FTC" or the "Commission") and the National Institute of Standards and Technology ("NIST"). As a leading technology company -- and especially as a provider of Internet access and e-mail services -- we are committed to ensuring that our customers feel comfortable using e-mail to communicate, and that e-mail remains a viable medium for business and personal communications. For these reasons, Microsoft supported passage of the CAN-SPAM Act and continues to work with government officials and other industry members to address the spam problem. Microsoft commends the FTC and NIST on their decision to hold the upcoming Summit as a complement to the Commission's thoughtful and comprehensive report to Congress on the proposed Do-Not-E-Mail Registry. We appreciate this opportunity to submit written comments in advance of the Summit.¹

As the Commission has recognized, a key component of any countermeasures to spam and online fraud is the development of an e-mail authentication system. Although existing filters look at the origin of an e-mail message as part of the process to determine whether that message is spam, there is currently no guarantee that a message originated from whom and where it says it did. The "Sender ID Framework" technology that Microsoft and other industry leaders have developed and are testing is an authentication system that will help not only to address this problem, but also curb other abuses associated with the transmission of forged and unsolicited commercial e-mail.

¹ Microsoft also submits today under separate cover a Request To Participate in the Summit.

