Press Release

Open eCard project releases ISO/IEC 24727 based open source eID middleware

[Hannover, March 5th, 2013] The Open eCard Team releases the sources of the ISO/IEC 24727 based Open eCard App and provides an alternative to proprietary eID middleware solutions as well as the basis for the development of open applications in which all interested citizens can participate.

Sources of the ISO/IEC 24727 based Open eCard App released under GPL

In order to use national eID cards and electronic health cards in the internet, a corresponding software application running on the computer system of each citizen is required. Interoperability across borders is achieved by supporting the international standard ISO/IEC 24727 (Identification cards – Integrated circuit card programming interfaces). Against the background of currently available eID applications and the obvious room for improvement, industrial and academic experts have joined forces in the Open eCard project (http://openecard.org) to provide a lightweight and platform-independent implementation of the ISO/IEC 24727 standard in order to provide an open source alternative to proprietary middleware solutions. Today an important milestone has been reached: The initialization phase of the project has been completed and the Open eCard App, which can be used for remote electronic identification with selected smart cards, was released as open source under the GNU General Public License (GPL) version 3. The sources of this software, which runs on different desktop computer platforms as well as Android-based smartphones, are now available for download under http://source.openecard.org. Finally, an open source based alternative to proprietary eID clients is available that runs as a browser-independent application on the computer of the citizen and can be activated via a localhost-link or browser extensions to support legacy applications. The online functionality of selected eID cards, such as the German eID card (“Personalausweis”) for example, can now be used without any proprietary software.

Transparency, trust, security, usability and broad acceptance

The release of the sources of the Open eCard App is associated with an increase in transparency, trust and security in the applied eID technology. With the platform independence, the CardInfo support, the provided security mechanisms, the continuous improvement of the user experience, and the active participation of each citizen, the Open
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eCard Team hopes to improve the general acceptance of smart card based identification processes and to give an impetus to open and citizen-centric e-government initiatives.

Basis for the development of true “Citizen Apps”

Today's release of the sources of the Open eCard App provides the basis for the development of true “Citizen Apps” in which all interested citizens can actively participate. "You do not have to be a computer scientist or security expert to make valuable contributions," says Prof. Dr. Thomas Wieland, an expert in identity management from Coburg University and member of the Open eCard team. "Anyone can contribute his or her ideas and proposals under http://citizen.openecard.org, for example, to increase the usability of the Open eCard App or to propose new applications for smart card based identity cards."

From now on all interested citizens have the power to influence the development of the software and can introduce other citizens to the usefulness of eID technology. This creates an open community that is superior to initiatives of the authorities, arbitrarily scalable, and last but not least free for the taxpayer. "The ISO/IEC 24727 based Open eCard App provides an interesting alternative to proprietary eID middleware solutions and an excellent foundation for the development of open e-government applications," said Dr. Detlef Hühnlein, CEO of ecsec GmbH and project manager of the Open eCard project.

Open eCard Team on Tour

In the near future, the Open eCard Team is attending the following events and is looking forward to talking to you:

- **17.03.13** (10:00-11:00) – Chemnitzer Linux Tage 2013, room V6, Andreas Kuckartz: „Open eCard“
- **19.03.13** – IT-Forum Oberfranken, Bamberg
- **14.05.13** (16:30-17:00) – 13. Deutscher IT-Sicherheitskongress, Dr. Detlef Hühnlein: „Starke, kosteneffiziente und benutzerfreundliche Authentisierung in der Cloud – ein Widerspruch in sich?“ (in German)
- **15.05.13** (15:30-16:00) – 13. Deutscher IT-Sicherheitskongress, Moritz Horsch: „Die Open eCard-App für mehr Transparenz, Vertrauen und Benutzerfreundlichkeit“ (in German)
- **10.-11.09.13** – Open Identity Summit 2013, Kloster Banz

The Open eCard team is calling for participation!

The Open eCard team is an open community, which invites all interested citizens and relevant institutions and organizations to participate. Anyone wishing to support the
development of the Open eCard App can join the Open eCard Team at http://join.openecard.org.

About the Open eCard project

The Open eCard Team consists of industrial and academic experts, who have joined forces to provide an Open Source and platform-independent implementation of ISO/IEC 24727, such that arbitrary applications can easily access arbitrary smart cards for authentication and signature purposes. A first result of the project is the Open eCard App, which provides an Open Source alternative to proprietary eID clients.

Number of words: 811

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