

I'm impressed, says e-tech visitor – May 2002

The chief technical officer of offshore certificate authority Certeca Limited, Matthew Barnett, during his visit to the Isle of Man from the Grand Cayman branch of the company that has an office in Athol Street, Douglas said he was 'very impressed' by the island's e-commerce infrastructure and the receptiveness of clients to the concept of digital signatures and encryption.

Formed in the Island one year ago, Certeca provides e-business solutions, principally to the offshore finance sector, in the form of secure digital certificates that only authorised individuals can access via an e-business system. Mr Barnett was on a two day visit to the island and had been introduced by his colleague, Paul Jarvis, Certeca's Douglas based European business development manager.

Mr Barnett said:

I've been most encouraged by how pro-active the Isle of Man is in the way it embraces e-commerce, and the level of services and infrastructure provided to support it. Before setting up our European hub, we looked at other jurisdictions, but the Isle of Man stood head and shoulders above the others, especially in terms of foresight and planning. It's most refreshing seeing how well people deliver on strategy over here.

Mr Jarvis said that there was still a need to educate clients about the benefits of digital certificates.

There's still a fair degree of scepticism surrounding the concept of digital ID technology. In the past there's been so many disparate technological elements that needed to be brought together to deliver the system, but in the past 18 months great strides have been made. That said, we're not selling the technology, but the system itself, which we see very much as an enabler for anyone conducting their business over the internet.

Mr Barnett said:

The Isle of Man is well positioned to develop the enormous potential of digital certificates, but part of the challenge faced by Certeca is to help clients understand the cost benefits as well as the security benefits of the system. We've seen how clients focus on the physical security of their business – alarms, fire alarms, fire doors etc – but not always to the same extent when it comes to the transactional side. In developing and promoting the facility, Certeca has been working with a number of business partners, including XKO and PDMS here in the Island. We're also only issuing digital certificates to individuals through registered financial service entities, professional service firms, the government and regulators. Already we're finding clients thinking 'outside of the box' and approaching us asking 'can we do this?' or 'what if we did this?' with the system, which is very encouraging. In the few days I've been in the Isle of Man I've observed that the environment is extremely conducive to growing our business here, and I look forward to developing more initiatives in the future.

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