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## VeriSign Internet Trust Index Pinpoints Who Trusts the Internet, Who Doesn't, and Why

### Released Today, New Semi-Annual Report Monitors Online Trust Across U.S.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (Marketwire) - RSA Conference, Booth #1212 -- VeriSign, Inc. (NASDAQ: VRSN), the trusted provider of Internet infrastructure services for the networked world, today released its inaugural VeriSign Internet Trust Index Report, a rigorous new method to help gauge and understand the level of confidence American adults have interacting and transacting with different types of Web sites.

The inaugural [VeriSign Internet Trust Index Report](#) scores the overall U.S. trust level at 61.5 on a scale of 100, with zero representing no trust and 100 representing absolute trust in the Internet. While trust levels vary widely among specific users, an Internet Trust Index score of 61.5 suggests that consumers have a modest level of confidence in their online activities. The score also suggests that, for online businesses and Web site operators to compete and grow, they must work harder to earn the trust of more consumers.

The VeriSign Internet Trust Index measures trust by surveying thousands of U.S. adults to capture relevant behaviors and attitudes that relate to Internet usage, while providing diagnostics that help trace why trust levels vary among individuals or groups. The VeriSign Internet Trust Index also helps to gauge how worries over online security and privacy threats affect consumers' behaviors on the Internet.

The March 2010 VeriSign Trust Index Report is based on written and online interviews conducted with 6,403 individuals from Nov. 4 to Dec. 18, 2009. The data is weighted against U.S. Census Bureau statistics to ensure the results are representative of the U.S. adult population. The survey is conducted for VeriSign by TNS, the world's largest custom research company, which also conducts the monthly Consumer Confidence Survey® for The Conference Board.

The inaugural March 2010 report helps to establish a baseline measurement of trust among Internet users. Every six months, VeriSign will issue a new VeriSign Internet Trust Index Report, enabling researchers to not only determine how trust levels change over time, but why. VeriSign will issue the next report in the third quarter of 2010.

#### Key Findings

Among the key findings in the inaugural VeriSign Internet Trust Index Report:

- Trust levels rise as users spend more time online, and as consumers grow more educated about the Internet and the risks they face online. Frequent users (those who go online three or more times a week) have a VeriSign Internet Trust Index score of 80. These users tend to be younger (42 years on average) than infrequent users (who, at an average age of 56, go online no more than once a week, and in some cases never). By contrast, infrequent users have a VeriSign Internet Trust Index score of just 24.
- Frequent users (24 percent) are twice as likely to have been victims of identity theft, or to have known a victim, than infrequent users (12 percent). It's unclear if this has reduced their frequency of use, and frequent users still see the Internet as a positive influence on their lives.
- Half of frequent users (51 percent) and infrequent users (50 percent) agree that the amount of information on the Internet is overwhelming. They also agree that no information is safe from hackers or other threats.
- The more frequently people use the Internet, the more likely they are to employ proven safeguards. More frequent Internet users tend to ignore emails from senders they do not know, install virus protection, ignore pop-ups and delete cookies and temp files, limit the amount of personal

information they put on the Internet, and make purchases only on well-known sites.

- Trust levels increase by more than 60 percent when users check for security seals, the Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) padlock, a green address bar, or https when making online purchases or sharing personal information. More than half (52 percent) of frequent users look for these visual security indicators, compared to just 5 percent of infrequent visitors.
- Among less frequent users, about four out of 10 would never conduct online bill pay or online banking because of security concerns. Roughly one-third would never manage investments, shop/purchase online because of security issues.

## Report Uncovers Differences Among Demographic Groups and Regions

VeriSign Internet Trust Index research also captures demographic data that shows how Internet engagement and trust levels vary across various subgroups and populations. Those findings include:

- Though equally active online, men and women tend to engage in different activities. Men check sports scores more often, while women engage in social networking more. Women are more concerned about being online than men when conducting financial activities and releasing personal information online.
- Users in the Pacific region are more likely to engage in a wide range of online activities. Across all regions (see editor's note below), up to half or more of overall users would never engage in such activities as online dating, social networking, adult content, virtual networks, managing stocks online and logging into work remotely. However, the Pacific region (compared to Mountain and West North Central regions) is less inhibited to engage in these activities, most likely due to the West Coast's more tech-savvy contingency.
- Trust in the Internet is highest in West North Central, New England and Mountain regions, and lowest in East South Central and East North Central regions.\*

The research also reveals Internet Trust Index scores for six key subgroups within the Internet user community, which helps reveal how different levels of trust play out. For instance, two subgroups, "Connected Homemakers" and "Men Who Follow Sports," are in many ways very different (the first is predominantly women, and the second is 100 percent men), yet they share an Internet Trust Index Score of 81. They also share similar experience levels with technology, optimistic attitudes toward the Internet and its relevance in their lives, and security habits.

But the differences couldn't be starker between "Super Internet Users" and "Retired, Infrequent Users." With an average age of 37, Super Internet Users have a VeriSign Internet Trust Index score of 86, one of the highest of all subgroups. They are savvy, everyday users of the Internet, with 69 percent looking for security seals and other indicators while on the Internet. In contrast, the VeriSign Internet Trust Index score for "Retired, Infrequent Users" is just 20. As technology novices, they feel the Internet is not as relevant to them, so they tend to be less educated about security indicators and security software.

A complete summary of all profiles is available in the [VeriSign Internet Trust Index Report](#).

"Trust is the currency with which Web sites build lasting relationships with consumers. Without it, people and organizations won't freely share information or purchase online," said Mark McLaughlin, president and chief executive officer of VeriSign. "Designed and implemented by the same researchers responsible for the Consumer Confidence Index, the VeriSign Internet Trust Index introduces a new, ongoing indicator gauging behaviors and attitudes about the Internet experience. The inaugural report uncovers a vast disparity between those who use the Internet frequently and those who go online rarely or never -- a disparity that results in a severe trust gap that might prevent some infrequent users from making use of needed online services. Insights like this are why we've initiated this research, and we look forward to following it further."

The complete VeriSign Internet Trust Index Report is available at [www.trustthecheck.com/trustindex/default.aspx](http://www.trustthecheck.com/trustindex/default.aspx). For more information on how to stay safe online, visit [www.trustthecheck.com](http://www.trustthecheck.com).

About VeriSign

VeriSign, Inc. (NASDAQ: VRSN) is the trusted provider of Internet infrastructure services for the networked world. Billions of times each day, VeriSign helps companies and consumers all over the world engage in communications and commerce with confidence. Additional news and information about the company is available at [www.verisign.com](http://www.verisign.com).

Statements in this announcement other than historical data and information constitute forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended. These statements involve risks and uncertainties that could cause VeriSign's actual results to differ materially from those stated or implied by such forward-looking statements. The potential risks and uncertainties include, among others, the uncertainty of the production of future VeriSign Internet Trust Index Reports on the timeline set forth herein or not at all. More information about potential factors that could affect the company's business and financial results is included in VeriSign's filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission, including in the company's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2009 and quarterly reports on Form 10-Q. VeriSign undertakes no obligation to update any of the forward-looking statements after the date of this press release.

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