

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20549

FORM S-8

**REGISTRATION STATEMENT
 UNDER
 THE SECURITIES ACT OF 1933**

VERISIGN, INC.

(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

Delaware
 (State or other jurisdiction of
 incorporation or organization)

487 East Middlefield Road
Mountain View, CA
 (Address of principal executive offices)

94-3221585
 (I.R.S. Employer
 Identification No.)

94043
 (Zip code)

GUARDENT, INC.

2000 STOCK OPTION AND INCENTIVE PLAN
 (Full title of plan)

(Name, address and telephone
 number of agent for service:)

James M. Ulam
Senior Vice President, General Counsel and
Secretary
VeriSign, Inc.
487 East Middlefield Road
Mountain View, CA 94043
(650) 961-7500

(Copy to:)

Nancy A. Spangler, Esquire
Piper Rudnick LLP
1775 Wiehle Avenue, Suite 400
Reston, Virginia 20191
(703) 773-4000

CALCULATION OF REGISTRATION FEE

Title of Securities to be Registered	Amount to be Registered(1)(2)	Proposed Maximum Offering Price Per Unit(3)	Proposed Maximum Aggregate Offering Price(3)	Amount of Registration Fee(3)
Common Stock, \$0.01 par value	687,659	\$4.7893	\$3,293,405	\$417.27

- (1) Represents shares subject to outstanding options of Guardent, Inc. assumed by Registrant and subject to the Guardent, Inc. 2000 Stock Option and Incentive Plan.
- (2) Pursuant to Rule 416 under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, this Registration Statement also covers an indeterminate number of shares of Common Stock that may be offered or issued by reason of stock splits, stock dividends or similar transactions pursuant to the Guardent, Inc., 2000 Stock Option and Incentive Plan.
- (3) Estimated solely for purposes of calculating the registration fee pursuant to Rule 457(h)(1) of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended.

PART I
INFORMATION REQUIRED IN THE SECTION 10(a) PROSPECTUS

Item 1. Plan Information. (1)

Item 2. Registrant Information and Employee Plan Annual Information. (1)

(1) Information required by Part I to be contained in the Section 10(a) prospectus is omitted from the Registration Statement in accordance with Rule 428 under the Securities Act and the Note to Part I of Form S-8.

PART II
INFORMATION REQUIRED IN THE REGISTRATION STATEMENT

Item 3. Incorporation of Documents by Reference.

The following documents filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "Commission") are incorporated by reference in this registration statement:

(a) the Registrant's latest annual report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2002, filed pursuant to Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the "Exchange Act"), which contains audited financial statements for the Registrant's latest fiscal year;

(b) the Registrant's Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q for the fiscal quarters ending March 31, 2003, June 30, 2003 and September 30, 2003, the Registrant's reports on Form 8-K, dated October 17, 2003, and December 10, 2003, all of which are filed pursuant to Section 13(a) or 15(d) of the Securities Act of 1934, as amended (the "Exchange Act");

(c) the description of the Registrant's Common Stock contained in the Registrant's registration statement on Form 8-A filed with the Commission under Section 12 of the Exchange Act.

All documents subsequently filed by the Registrant pursuant to Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 and 15(d) of the Exchange Act, prior to the filing of a post-effective amendment which indicates that all securities registered hereby have been sold or which deregisters all securities then remaining unsold, shall be deemed to be incorporated by reference in this registration statement and to be a part hereof from the date of the filing of such documents.

Item 4. Description of Securities.

Not applicable.

Item 5. Interests of Named Experts and Counsel.

Not applicable.

Item 6. Indemnification of Directors and Officers and Limitation of Liability.

Section 145 of the Delaware General Corporation Law (the "DGCL") authorizes a court to award, or a corporation's board of directors to grant, indemnity to directors and officers in terms sufficiently broad to permit such indemnification under certain circumstances for liabilities (including reimbursement for expenses incurred) arising under the Securities Act.

As permitted by the DGCL, the Registrant's Certificate of Incorporation, as amended, provides that its directors shall not be liable to the Registrant or its stockholders for monetary damages for breach of fiduciary duty as a director, except for liability (i) for any breach of the director's duty of loyalty to the corporation or its stockholders, (ii) for acts or omissions not in good faith or which involve intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of law, (iii) under Section 174 of the DGCL (regarding unlawful payments of dividends and unlawful stock purchases or redemptions) or (iv) for any transaction from which the director derived an improper personal benefit.

In addition, as permitted by Section 145 of the DGCL, the Bylaws of the Registrant, as amended, provide that:

(i) the Registrant is required to indemnify to the fullest extent authorized by law, subject to certain very limited exceptions, any person who was or is made a party or is threatened to be made a party to or is otherwise involved in any action, suit or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative, by reason of the fact that she or he is or was a director or officer of the Registrant or is or was serving at the request of the Registrant as a director, officer, employee or agent of another corporation or of a partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise, including service with respect to an employee benefit plan (an "indemnitee"), against all expense, liability and loss (including attorneys' fees, judgments, fines, ERISA excise taxes or penalties and amounts paid in settlement) reasonably incurred or suffered by such person in connection therewith;

(ii) the Registrant is required to advance expenses, as incurred, to its indemnitees in connection with defending a legal proceeding; provided, however, that, if the DGCL so requires, an advancement of expenses to a director or officer will be made only if an undertaking is delivered to the corporation to repay all amounts advanced if it is ultimately determined that indemnification is unavailable;

(iii) an indemnitee may bring suit against the Registrant to recover the unpaid amount of any claim within 60 days after a written claim has been received by the Registrant;

(iv) the rights conferred in the Bylaws, as amended, are not exclusive. The Registrant's obligation to indemnify an indemnitee must be reduced by any amounts such indemnitee receives (1) from insurance policies purchased by the Registrant, (2) from another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise for whom the indemnitee was serving at the request of the Registrant, or (3) under any other applicable indemnification provision;

(v) the Registrant may indemnify and advance expenses to employees and agents of the Registrant to the same extent as it provides indemnification and advancement of expenses to its directors and officers, except as otherwise directed by law, its Certificate of Incorporation, the bylaws, agreement or vote.

The Registrant has entered into Indemnification Agreements with each of its current directors and executive officers to give such directors and executive officers additional contractual assurances regarding the scope of the indemnification set forth in Registrant's Certificate of Incorporation and to provide additional procedural protections. At present, there is no pending litigation or proceeding involving a director, officer or employee of the Registrant regarding which indemnification is sought, nor is the Registrant aware of any threatened litigation that may result in claims for indemnification.

The Registrant, with approval by the Registrant's Board of Directors, has obtained directors' and officers' liability insurance.

See also the undertakings set out in response to Item 9.

Item 7. Exemption From Registration Claimed.

Not applicable.

Item 8. Exhibits

<u>Exhibit No.</u>	<u>Description</u>
4.01*	Third Amended and Restated Certificate of Incorporation of the Registrant (incorporated herein by reference to Exhibit 3.03 to the Registrant's Registration Statement on Form S-1 (File No. 333-40789) filed with the Commission and declared effective January 29, 1998).
4.02*	Amended And Restated Bylaws of the Registrant (incorporated herein by reference to Exhibit 3.1 to the Registrant's Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended March 31, 2003).
4.03*	Amendment to Third Amended and Restated Certificate of Incorporation of the Registrant dated May 27, 1999 (incorporated herein by reference to Exhibit 4.03 to the Registrant's Registration Statement on Form S-8 (File No. 333-82941) filed with the Commission and declared effective July 15, 1999).
4.04*	Amendment to Third Amended and Restated Certificate of Incorporation of the Registrant dated June 8, 2000 (incorporated herein by reference to Exhibit 4.03 to the Registrant's Registration Statement on Form S-8 (File No. 333-39212) filed with the Commission and declared effective June 14, 2000).
4.05	Guardent, Inc., 2000 Stock Option and Incentive Plan
5.01	Opinion of Piper Rudnick LLP.
23.01	Consent of Piper Rudnick LLP (included in Exhibit 5.01).
23.02	Consent of KPMG LLP.
24.01	Power of Attorney (see page 5).

* These exhibits were previously filed with the Commission as indicated and are incorporated herein by reference.

Item 9. Undertakings.

The undersigned Registrant hereby undertakes:

(1) To file, during any period in which offers or sales are being made, a post-effective amendment to this Registration Statement:

(i) To include any prospectus required by Section 10(a)(3) of the Securities Act of 1933;

(ii) To reflect in the prospectus any facts or events arising after the effective date of the Registration Statement (or the most recent post-effective amendment thereof) which, individually or in the aggregate, represent a fundamental change in the information set forth in the Registration Statement;

(iii) To include any material information with respect to the plan of distribution not previously disclosed in the Registration Statement or any material change to such information in the Registration Statement;

Provided, however, that paragraphs (1)(i) and (1)(ii) above do not apply if the Registration Statement is on Form S-3, Form S-8 or Form F-3, and the information required to be included in a post-effective amendment by those paragraphs is contained in periodic reports filed with or furnished to the Commission by the Registrant pursuant to Section 13 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act that are incorporated by reference in the Registration Statement.

(2) That, for the purpose of determining any liability under the Securities Act, each such post-effective amendment shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities offered therein, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial bona fide offering thereof.

**Principal Financial and
Principal Accounting Officer:**

/s/ DANA L. EVAN

Dana L. Evan

Executive Vice President of Finance and Administration
and Chief Financial Officer (Principal Financial
Officer and Principal Accounting Officer)

March 9, 2004

Additional Directors:

/s/ D. JAMES BIDZOS

D. James Bidzos

Vice Chairman of the Board

March 9, 2004

/s/ WILLIAM L. CHENEVICH

William L. Chenevich

Director

March 9, 2004

/s/ KEVIN R. COMPTON

Kevin R. Compton

Lead Independent Director

March 9, 2004

/s/ SCOTT G. KRIENS

Scott G. Kriens

Director

March 9, 2004

/s/ LEN J. LAUER

Len J. Lauer

Director

March 9, 2004

/s/ ROGER H. MOORE

Roger H. Moore

Director

March 9, 2004

/s/ GREGORY L. REYES

Gregory L. Reyes

Director

March 9, 2004

/s/ WILLIAM A. ROPER, JR.

William A. Roper, Jr.

Director

March 9, 2004

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* These exhibits were previously filed with the Commission as indicated and are incorporated herein by reference.

GUARDENT, INC.

2000 STOCK OPTION AND INCENTIVE PLAN

The purpose of this 2000 Stock Option and Incentive Plan (the “Plan”) of Guardent, Inc. (the “Company”) is to provide stock options and other equity interests in the Company (each an “Award”) to employees, officers, directors, consultants and advisors of the Company and its Subsidiaries, all of whom are eligible to receive Awards under the Plan. Any person to whom an Award has been granted under the Plan is called a “Participant”. Additional definitions are contained in Section 8.

2. Administration

a. Administration by Board of Directors. The Plan will be administered by the Board of Directors of the Company (the “Board”). The Board, in its sole discretion, shall have the authority to grant and amend Awards, to adopt, amend and repeal rules relating to the Plan and to interpret and correct the provisions of the Plan and any Award. All decisions by the Board shall be final and binding on all interested persons. Neither the Company nor any member of the Board shall be liable for any action or determination relating to the Plan.

b. Appointment of Committees. To the extent permitted by applicable law, the Board may delegate any or all of its powers under the Plan to one or more committees or subcommittees of the Board (a “Committee”). All references in the Plan to the “Board” shall mean such Committee or the Board.

c. Delegation to Executive Officers. To the extent permitted by applicable law, the Board may delegate to one or more executive officers of the Company the power to grant Awards and exercise such other powers under the Plan as the Board may determine, *provided that* the Board shall fix the maximum number of Awards to be granted and the maximum number of shares issuable to any one Participant pursuant to Awards granted by such executive officers.

3. Stock Available for Awards

a. Number of Shares. Subject to adjustment under Section 3(c), the aggregate number of shares of Common Stock of the Company (the “Common Stock”) that may be issued pursuant to the Plan is 10,000,000 shares. If any Award expires, or is terminated, surrendered or forfeited, in whole or in part, the unissued Common Stock covered by such Award shall again be available for the grant of Awards under the Plan. If shares of Common Stock issued pursuant to the Plan are repurchased by, or are surrendered or forfeited to, the Company at no more than cost, such shares of Common Stock shall again be available for the grant of Awards under the Plan; *provided, however*, that the cumulative number of such shares that may be so reissued under the Plan will not exceed 10,000,000 shares. Shares issued under the Plan may consist in whole or in part of authorized but unissued shares or treasury shares.

b. Per-Participant Limit. Subject to adjustment under Section 3(c), no Participant may be granted Awards during any one fiscal year to purchase more than 1,500,000 shares of Common Stock.

c. Adjustment to Common Stock. In the event of any stock split, stock dividend, extraordinary cash dividend, recapitalization, reorganization, merger, consolidation, combination, exchange of shares, liquidation, spin-off, split-up, or other similar change in capitalization or event, (i) the number and class of securities available for Awards under the Plan and the per participant share limit, (ii) the number and class of securities, vesting schedule and exercise price per share subject to each outstanding Option, (iii) the repurchase price per security subject to repurchase, and (iv) the terms of each other outstanding stock-based Award shall be adjusted by the Company (or substituted Awards may be made) to the extent the Board shall determine, in good faith, that such an adjustment (or substitution) is appropriate. If Section 7(e)(i) applies for any event, this Section 3(c) shall not be applicable.

4. Stock Options

a. General. The Board may grant options to purchase Common Stock (each, an "Option") and determine the number of shares of Common Stock to be covered by each Option, the exercise price of each Option and the conditions and limitations applicable to the exercise of each Option and the Common Stock issued upon the exercise of each Option, including vesting provisions, repurchase provisions and restrictions relating to applicable federal or state securities laws, as it considers advisable.

b. Incentive Stock Options. An Option that the Board intends to be an "incentive stock option" as defined in Section 422 of the Code (an "Incentive Stock Option") shall be granted only to employees of the Company and shall be subject to and shall be construed consistently with the requirements of Section 422 of the Code. The Board and the Company shall have no liability if an Option or any part thereof that is intended to be an Incentive Stock Option does not qualify as such. An Option or any part thereof that does not qualify as an Incentive Stock Option is referred to herein as a "Nonstatutory Stock Option".

c. Exercise Price. The Board shall establish the exercise price (or determine the method by which the exercise price shall be determined) at the time each Option is granted and specify it in the applicable option agreement.

d. Duration of Options. Each Option shall be exercisable at such times and subject to such terms and conditions as the Board may specify in the applicable option agreement.

e. Exercise of Option. Options may be exercised only by delivery to the Company of a written notice of exercise signed by the proper person together with payment in full as specified in Section 4(f) for the number of shares for which the Option is exercised.

f. Payment Upon Exercise. Common Stock purchased upon the exercise of an Option shall be paid for by one or any combination of the following forms of payment:

- (i) by check payable to the order of the Company;

(ii) except as otherwise explicitly provided in the applicable option agreement, and only if the Common Stock is then publicly traded, delivery of an irrevocable and unconditional undertaking by a creditworthy broker to deliver promptly to the Company sufficient funds to pay the exercise price, or delivery by the Participant to the Company of a copy of irrevocable and unconditional instructions to a creditworthy broker to deliver promptly to the Company cash or a check sufficient to pay the exercise price; or

(iii) to the extent explicitly provided in the applicable option agreement, by (x) delivery of shares of Common Stock owned by the Participant valued at fair market value (as determined by the Board or as determined pursuant to the applicable option agreement), (y) delivery of a promissory note of the Participant to the Company (and delivery to the Company by the Participant of a check in an amount equal to the par value of the shares purchased), or (z) payment of such other lawful consideration as the Board may determine.

5. Restricted Stock

a. Grants. The Board may grant Awards entitling recipients to acquire shares of Common Stock, subject to (i) delivery to the Company by the Participant of a check in an amount at least equal to the par value of the shares purchased, and (ii) the right of the Company to repurchase all or part of such shares at their issue price or other stated or formula price from the Participant in the event that conditions specified by the Board in the applicable Award are not satisfied prior to the end of the applicable restriction period or periods established by the Board for such Award (each, a "Restricted Stock Award").

b. Terms and Conditions. The Board shall determine the terms and conditions of any such Restricted Stock Award. Any stock certificates issued in respect of a Restricted Stock Award shall be registered in the name of the Participant and, unless otherwise determined by the Board, deposited by the Participant, together with a stock power endorsed in blank, with the Company (or its designee). After the expiration of the applicable restriction periods, the Company (or such designee) shall deliver the certificates no longer subject to such restrictions to the Participant or, if the Participant has died, to the beneficiary designated by a Participant, in a manner determined by the Board, to receive amounts due or exercise rights of the Participant in the event of the Participant's death (the "Designated Beneficiary"). In the absence of an effective designation by a Participant, Designated Beneficiary shall mean the Participant's estate.

6. Other Stock-Based Awards

The Board shall have the right to grant other Awards based upon the Common Stock having such terms and conditions as the Board may determine, including, without limitation, the grant of shares based upon certain conditions, the grant of securities convertible into Common Stock and the grant of stock appreciation rights, phantom stock awards or stock units.

7. General Provisions Applicable to Awards

a. Transferability of Awards. Except as the Board may otherwise determine or provide in an Award, Awards shall not be sold, assigned, transferred, pledged or otherwise encumbered by the person to whom they are granted, either voluntarily or by operation of law,

except by will or the laws of descent and distribution, and, during the life of the Participant, shall be exercisable only by the Participant. References to a Participant, to the extent relevant in the context, shall include references to authorized transferees.

b. Documentation. Each Award under the Plan shall be evidenced by a written instrument in such form as the Board shall determine or as executed by an officer of the Company pursuant to authority delegated by the Board. Each Award may contain terms and conditions in addition to those set forth in the Plan *provided that* such terms and conditions do not contravene the provisions of the Plan.

c. Board Discretion. The terms of each type of Award need not be identical, and the Board need not treat Participants uniformly.

d. Termination of Status. The Board shall determine the effect on an Award of the disability, death, retirement, authorized leave of absence or other change in the employment or other status of a Participant and the extent to which, and the period during which, the Participant, or the Participant's legal representative, conservator, guardian or Designated Beneficiary, may exercise rights under the Award.

e. Acquisition of the Company.

(i) Consequences of an Acquisition. Upon the consummation of an Acquisition, the Board or the board of directors of the surviving or acquiring entity (as used in this Section 7(e)(i), also the "Board"), shall, as to outstanding Awards (on the same basis or on different bases, as the Board shall specify), make appropriate provision for the continuation of such Awards by the Company or the assumption of such Awards by the surviving or acquiring entity and by substituting on an equitable basis for the shares then subject to such Awards either (a) the consideration payable with respect to the outstanding shares of Common Stock in connection with the Acquisition, (b) shares of stock of the surviving or acquiring corporation or (c) such other securities as the Board deems appropriate, the fair market value of which (as determined by the Board in its sole discretion) shall not materially differ from the fair market value of the shares of Common Stock subject to such Awards immediately preceding the Acquisition. In addition to or in lieu of the foregoing, with respect to outstanding Options, the Board may, upon written notice to the affected optionees, provide that one or more Options then outstanding shall become immediately exercisable in full and that such Options must be exercised within a specified number of days of the date of such notice, at the end of which period such Options shall terminate; or provide that one or more Options then outstanding shall become immediately exercisable in full and shall be terminated in exchange for a cash payment equal to the excess of the fair market value (as determined by the Board in its sole discretion) for the shares subject to such Options over the exercise price thereof.

(ii) Acquisition Defined. An "Acquisition" shall mean: (x) the sale of the Company by merger in which the shareholders of the Company in their capacity as such no longer own a majority of the outstanding equity securities of the Company (or its successor); or (y) any sale of all or substantially all of the assets or capital stock of the Company (other than in a spin-off or similar transaction) or (z) any other acquisition of the business of the Company, as determined by the Board.

(iii) Assumption of Options Upon Certain Events. In connection with a merger or consolidation of an entity with the Company or the acquisition by the Company of property or stock of an entity, the Board may grant Awards under the Plan in substitution for stock and stock-based awards issued by such entity or an affiliate thereof. The substitute Awards shall be granted on such terms and conditions as the Board considers appropriate in the circumstances.

(iv) Pooling-of Interests-Accounting. If the Company proposes to engage in an Acquisition intended to be accounted for as a pooling-of-interests, and in the event that the provisions of this Plan or of any Award hereunder, or any actions of the Board taken in connection with such Acquisition, are determined by the Company's or the acquiring company's independent public accountants to cause such Acquisition to fail to be accounted for as a pooling-of-interests, then such provisions or actions shall be amended or rescinded by the Board, without the consent of any Participant, to be consistent with pooling-of-interests accounting treatment for such Acquisition.

(v) Parachute Awards. Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 7(e)(i)(A), if, in connection with an Acquisition described therein, a tax under Section 4999 of the Code would be imposed on the Participant (after taking into account the exceptions set forth in Sections 280G(b)(4) and 280G(b)(5) of the Code), then the number of Awards which shall become exercisable, realizable or vested as provided in such section shall be reduced (or delayed), to the minimum extent necessary, so that no such tax would be imposed on the Participant (the Awards not becoming so accelerated, realizable or vested, the "Parachute Awards"); *provided, however*, that if the "aggregate present value" of the Parachute Awards would exceed the tax that, but for this sentence, would be imposed on the Participant under Section 4999 of the Code in connection with the Acquisition, then the Awards shall become immediately exercisable, realizable and vested without regard to the provisions of this sentence. For purposes of the preceding sentence, the "aggregate present value" of an Award shall be calculated on an after-tax basis (other than taxes imposed by Section 4999 of the Code) and shall be based on economic principles rather than the principles set forth under Section 280G of the Code and the regulations promulgated thereunder. All determinations required to be made under this Section 7(e)(iv) shall be made by the Company.

f. Withholding. Each Participant shall pay to the Company, or make provisions satisfactory to the Company for payment of, any taxes required by law to be withheld in connection with Awards to such Participant no later than the date of the event creating the tax liability. The Board may allow Participants to satisfy such tax obligations in whole or in part by transferring shares of Common Stock, including shares retained from the Award creating the tax obligation, valued at their fair market value (as determined by the Board or as determined pursuant to the applicable option agreement). The Company may, to the extent permitted by law, deduct any such tax obligations from any payment of any kind otherwise due to a Participant.

g. Amendment of Awards. The Board may amend, modify or terminate any outstanding Award including, but not limited to, substituting therefor another Award of the same or a different type, changing the date of exercise or realization, and converting an Incentive Stock Option to a Nonstatutory Stock Option, *provided that*, except as otherwise provided in Section 7(e)(iv), the Participant's consent to such action shall be required unless the Board determines that the action, taking into account any related action, would not materially and adversely affect the Participant.

h. Conditions on Delivery of Stock. The Company will not be obligated to deliver any shares of Common Stock pursuant to the Plan or to remove restrictions from shares previously delivered under the Plan until (i) all conditions of the Award have been met or removed to the satisfaction of the Company, (ii) in the opinion of the Company's counsel, all other legal matters in connection with the issuance and delivery of such shares have been satisfied, including any applicable securities laws and any applicable stock exchange or stock market rules and regulations, and (iii) the Participant has executed and delivered to the Company such representations or agreements as the Company may consider appropriate to satisfy the requirements of any applicable laws, rules or regulations.

i. Acceleration. The Board may at any time provide that any Options shall become immediately exercisable in full or in part, that any Restricted Stock Awards shall be free of some or all restrictions, or that any other stock-based Awards may become exercisable in full or in part or free of some or all restrictions or conditions, or otherwise realizable in full or in part, as the case may be, despite the fact that the foregoing actions may (i) cause the application of Sections 280G and 4999 of the Code if a change in control of the Company occurs, or (ii) disqualify all or part of the Option as an Incentive Stock Option.

8. Miscellaneous

a. Definitions.

(i) "Company," for purposes of eligibility under the Plan, shall include any present or future subsidiary corporations of Guardent, Inc., as defined in Section 424(f) of the Code (a "Subsidiary"), and any present or future parent corporation of Guardent, Inc., as defined in Section 424(e) of the Code. For purposes of Awards other than Incentive Stock Options, the term "Company" shall include any other business venture in which the Company has a direct or indirect significant interest, as determined by the Board in its sole discretion.

(ii) "Code" means the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, and any regulations promulgated thereunder.

(iii) "employee" for purposes of eligibility under the Plan (but not for purposes of Section 4(b)) shall include a person to whom an offer of employment has been extended by the Company.

b. No Right To Employment or Other Status. No person shall have any claim or right to be granted an Award, and the grant of an Award shall not be construed as giving a Participant the right to continued employment or any other relationship with the Company. The Company expressly reserves the right at any time to dismiss or otherwise terminate its relationship with a Participant free from any liability or claim under the Plan.

c. No Rights As Stockholder. Subject to the provisions of the applicable Award, no Participant or Designated Beneficiary shall have any rights as a stockholder with respect to any shares of Common Stock to be distributed with respect to an Award until becoming the record holder thereof.

d. Effective Date and Term of Plan. The Plan shall become effective on the date on which it is adopted by the Board. No Awards shall be granted under the Plan after the completion of ten years from the date on which the Plan was adopted by the Board, but Awards previously granted may extend beyond that date.

e. Amendment of Plan. The Board may amend, suspend or terminate the Plan or any portion thereof at any time.

f. Governing Law. The provisions of the Plan and all Awards made hereunder shall be governed by and interpreted in accordance with the laws of Delaware, without regard to any applicable conflicts of law.

Adopted by the Board of Directors on

March 21, 2000

Approved by the stockholders on

March 21, 2000

March 9, 2004

VeriSign, Inc.
487 East Middlefield Road
Mountain View, California 94043-1331

Gentlemen/Ladies:

At your request, we have examined the Registration Statement on Form S-8 (the "**Registration Statement**") to be filed by VeriSign, Inc., a Delaware corporation (the "**Company**"), with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "**Commission**") on or about March 9, 2004 in connection with the registration under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, of a total of 687,659 shares of the Company's Common Stock (the "**Stock**"), all of which are subject to issuance by the Company upon the exercise of options to be granted under the Guardent, Inc., 2000 Stock Option and Incentive Plan (the "**Plan**"). In rendering this opinion, we have examined the following:

- (1) the Company's Third Amended and Restated Certificate of Incorporation, certified by the Delaware Secretary of State on October 19, 2000;
- (2) the Certificate of Amendment to the Company's Third Amended and Restated Certificate of Incorporation, certified by the Delaware Secretary of State on June 8, 2000;
- (3) the Company's Amended and Restated Bylaws, certified by the Company's Secretary on March 9, 2004;
- (4) the Registration Statement, together with the exhibits filed as a part thereof or incorporated therein by reference, including the Plan and related forms;
- (5) the Prospectuses prepared in connection with the Registration Statement;
- (6) a Management Certificate addressed to us and dated of even date herewith executed by the Company containing certain factual representations.

In our examination of documents for purposes of this opinion, we have assumed, and express no opinion as to, the genuineness of all signatures on original documents, the authenticity and completeness of all documents submitted to us as originals, the conformity to originals and completeness of all documents submitted to us as copies, the legal capacity of all persons or entities executing the same, the lack of any undisclosed termination, modification, waiver or amendment to any document reviewed by us. We have also assumed that the certificates representing the Stock will be, when issued, properly signed by authorized officers of the Company or their agents.

As to matters of fact relevant to this opinion, we have relied solely upon our examination of the documents referred to above and the representations and warranties made by you to us, including, but not limited to, those set forth in the Management Certificate and have assumed the current accuracy and completeness of the information obtained from the documents referred to above. We have made no independent investigation or other attempt to verify the accuracy of any of such information or to determine the existence or non-existence of any other factual matters; however, we are not aware of any facts that would cause us to believe that the opinion expressed herein is not accurate.

We are admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and we render this opinion only with respect to, and express no opinion herein concerning the application or effect of the laws of any jurisdiction other than, the existing laws of the United States of America, of the State of California and of the Delaware General Corporation Law, the Delaware Constitution and reported judicial decisions relating thereto.

Based upon the foregoing, it is our opinion that the 687,659 shares of Stock that may be issued, have been duly authorized, and upon the issuance and delivery of such shares of Common Stock in the manner contemplated by the Plan, and assuming the Company completes all actions and proceedings required on its part to be taken prior to the issuance and delivery of the shares pursuant to the terms of the Plan, including, without limitation, collection of required payment for the shares, the shares of Common Stock will be validly issued, fully paid and nonassessable.

We consent to the use of this opinion as an exhibit to the Registration Statement and further consent to all references to us, if any, in the Registration Statement, the Prospectuses constituting a part thereof and any amendments thereto. We assume no obligation to advise you of any fact, circumstance, event or change in the law or the facts that may hereafter be brought to our attention whether or not such occurrence would affect or modify the opinions expressed herein. This opinion is intended solely for use in connection with issuance and sale of shares subject to the Registration Statement and is not to be relied upon for any other purpose.

Very truly yours,

/s/ **PIPER RUDNICK LLP**

CONSENT OF KPMG LLP

The Board of Directors

VeriSign, Inc.:

We consent to the incorporation by reference in this registration statement on Form S-8 of VeriSign, Inc. (the Company) of our report dated January 21, 2003, relating to the consolidated balance sheets of VeriSign, Inc. and subsidiaries as of December 31, 2002 and 2001, and the related consolidated statements of operations, stockholders' equity, comprehensive income (loss) and cash flows for each of the years in the three-year period ended December 31, 2002, which report appears in the December 31, 2002 annual report on Form 10-K of VeriSign, Inc. Our report refers to the adoption by the Company of certain provisions of Statement of Financial Accounting Standards (SFAS) No. 141 "Business Combinations" and certain provisions of SFAS No. 142, "Goodwill and Intangible Assets".

/s/ KPMG LLP

Mountain View, California

March 9, 2004