

NEWS RELEASE

Consumer Electronic Payments Task Force

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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Consumer Electronic Payments Task Force  
Announces Action Plan and Mission Statement

The Consumer Electronic Payments Task Force has adopted a mission statement and work plan for how it will conduct its study of innovative consumer electronic money and payments.

"This is the first step in a coordinated effort by the federal government to take a close look at how these emerging technologies will affect consumers," said Comptroller of the Currency Eugene A. Ludwig, chairman of the task force.

Established by Treasury Secretary Robert E. Rubin last fall, the Consumer Electronic Payments Task Force will focus particular attention on consumer issues that are expected to arise from emerging electronic money and payments technology. Besides the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, the task force includes the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, Federal Reserve Board, Office of Thrift Supervision, Federal Trade Commission, Financial Management Service, and the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta.

Among the objectives outlined in the mission statement approved by task force members are the following:

- Identify consumer issues raised by electronic money;
- Evaluate the extent to which consumer issues concerning electronic money are addressed by state and federal laws and regulations and voluntary industry guidelines; and,
- Identify innovative, nonregulatory approaches that would best help the electronic money industry address consumer issues.

The task force will hold informal information exchanges during the second quarter of 1997 with representatives of firms involved in innovative electronic money and payment systems, financial services industry representatives, consumer, community, privacy and other public interest advocates.

In the second or third quarter of 1997, the task force will hold one or more public sessions on issues related to electronic money and payments.

Attachments

Summary of February 6, 1997  
Principals Meeting

## Consumer Electronic Payments Task Force

The following summarizes the meeting of the Consumer Electronic Payments Task Force Principals on February 6, 1997.

### Informal Informational Exchanges

The Principals agreed that the initial informal informational exchanges will be structured around participants of common interest including industry, privacy and consumer groups. The Principals also discussed, but did not decide, whether to hold a subsequent informal informational exchange with participants of differing perspectives. The Principals discussed holding informal informational exchanges outside of D.C. (Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York and Chicago) but referred the issue to staff to assess the need for such meetings. Several Principals expressed their desire to attend at least some of the informal informational exchanges.

The Principals also agreed to meet as needed, probably quarterly. These meetings will be scheduled to coincide with the informal information exchanges where possible.

The Principals agreed that a short memorandum should be prepared that summarizes each informational exchange. This summary will be made available to the public, including by posting on Treasury's Website.

### Public Meetings

The Principals agreed to conduct at least one or two public meetings. The exact structure and frequency of the meetings would depend upon the number and outcome of the earlier informal informational exchanges.

### Task Force Time-frame and Deliverables

The Principals discussed the time frame for project completion and whether the work could be completed by the end of 1997. The Principals deferred making specific decisions regarding the scope and nature of the Task Force's final report until after the Task Force completes all meetings and analyzes the information submitted.

### Press

The Principals decided to coordinate press inquiries, agreeing to share as much information as possible. A draft release, prepared by the OCC, will be circulated on Task Force letterhead. The Principals agreed to release the abridged mission statement, modified to reflect their decisions, with the press release.

## CONSUMER ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS TASK FORCE

The Consumer Electronic Payments Task Force is composed of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System (and the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta), the Federal Deposit Insurance

Corporation, the Federal Trade Commission, the Financial Management Service, the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, and the Office of Thrift Supervision.

#### MISSION

In partnership with the industry and the public, identify issues affecting consumers raised by emerging electronic money technologies and explore innovative responses that are consistent with the needs of a developing market.

#### OBJECTIVES

- Identify consumer issues raised by electronic money.
- Evaluate the extent to which consumer issues concerning electronic money are addressed by state and federal laws and regulations and voluntary industry guidelines.
- Identify innovative, nonregulatory approaches that would best help the electronic money industry address identified consumer issues, as well as the need for public education about electronic money.

#### WORK PLAN

- (1) The Task Force will conduct informal information exchanges with firms involved in innovative electronic money and payment systems, financial services industry representatives, consumer and other public interest advocates.
- (2) The Task Force will conduct one or more public meetings to further identify and explore issues.
- (3) To the extent necessary, the Task Force will supplement information gathered through information exchanges and public meetings with survey information about consumer attitudes.
- (4) The Task Force will prepare a report that identifies areas of consumer interests, summarizes existing laws and regulations and industry guidelines relevant to those interests, and, if appropriate, recommends areas to be addressed by voluntary industry action and public education.