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FOREWORD

SYMPOSIUM: DIGITAL SIGNATURE AND ELECTRONIC DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

by ROBERT GILBERT JOHNSTON†

On behalf of both The John Marshall Law School and *The John Marshall Journal of Computer and Information Law*, we proudly present this landmark symposium on Digital Signature and Electronic Document Verification. It is especially fitting that this symposium addressing cutting-edge developments in technology, business, and law should issue at this time in 1999. First, it is the eve of the new century, and the subjects addressed throughout this symposium will be of critical importance to communications in cyberspace for government and commerce in the online information age of the next millennium. Second, our home state of Illinois has recently enacted its comprehensive Electronic Commerce Security Act which became effective on January 1, 1999, which is expected to become a model statute of great consequence in the United States, and

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which is analyzed for the very first time in a law review publication in this symposium.

Third, 1999 marks the Centennial of The John Marshall Law School and as part of our year-long celebration of that legacy, we delight in laying the groundwork for the accomplishments The John Marshall Law School will record over our next 100 years. We are confident that this symposium will constitute one such achievement, for the quality of its authors and their manuscripts guarantee that this symposium will be influential far into the 21st Century. A significant feature of the hundred-year legacy of The John Marshall Law School has been its foresight and willingness to lead the way. *The John Marshall Journal of Computer & Information Law*, now in its 17th year, was one of the very first of the specialty law reviews devoted to examination of the intersection of technological developments and legal policy. Our school established the first-of-its-kind Center For Information Technology & Privacy Law, and recently expanded that center to create an LLM degree in Information Technology Law. We are pleased to be offering the first semester-long law school course in the country on the subject of Domestic and Transnational Digital Signature and Electronic Document Verification. It is particularly rewarding that several of our alumni and faculty have authored articles in the present symposium volume.

This volume represents one of the first symposium issues on electronic document verification in the legal literature. Moreover, we expect the symposium to be a significant volume for a number of other reasons. Our panel of academic authors are truly experts in the field, representing several states and several colleges and universities. To be counted among our other expert authors are practicing lawyers, including the country's leading authority on electronic commerce issues (Thomas Smedinghoff of McBride, Baker & Coles), and the country's leading authority on notarial practice (Charles Faerber of the National Notary Association). Each article focuses on a topic never before the subject of a full law review piece. As just one example, consider the groundbreaking article that proposes a 10-point code of professional responsibility for certification authorities. In addition to the extensive availability of this symposium to our subscribers and to others online, arrangements have been made to distribute complimentary copies of the volume to those attending the 1999 American Society of Notaries Annual Meeting in Annapolis and the 1999 National Notary Association Annual Convention in Denver.

Finally, we extend our most sincere thanks to the authors of the articles that comprise this historic volume. We are honored that they have chosen *The John Marshall Journal of Computer & Information Law* as the home for their outstanding works.