

METHOD FOR THE CERTIFICATION OF ELECTRONIC MAIL CONTAINING A RECOGNISED ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE ON THE PART OF A TELECOMMUNICATIONS OPERATOR

5 OBJECT OF THE INVENTION

The object of the invention is a method for a telecommunications operator to be able to receive, redirect, deliver and certify electronic mails signed with a recognised electronic signature of any transmitting user client of the operator to one or several receivers non-clients of the operator non-intrusively, respecting the electronic signatures of the original mails to avoid breaking the chain of custody, resending it intact with the original signatures and adapted to the DMARC standard, generating proof of all operation transactions so as to, finally, sign it digitally as the telecommunications operator and deliver to transmitting user clients a certificate as a trusted third party with the transmitter's details, date of transmission, the full text sent, the original mail signed electronically by the user respecting the original signature, date and time of delivery and the final circumstances in the event of non-delivery or delay in the delivery to the non-client receiver.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

It is known that currently electronic communications have become an essential and indispensable tool for any operation, both legal and illegal. Communications are used for all types of movements, generation of calls, messages, etcetera, from an origin to a destination.

Telecommunications operators are the parties that provide the infrastructures that manage, direct and store a great part of this traffic. These telecommunications operators are subject to regulation, among others, for the use of the radio spectrum which is limited, or for the use of telephone numbering resources which are also finite.

Telecommunications operators moreover register the operations made by users with the objective, among others, of charging, registering numbers associated thereto, as billing references, and to record any other transactional detail used for billing the user. These registers are preserved for later verifications of charges and/or monitoring of traffic on the part of the user.

Occasionally, the judicial authorities request telecommunications operators to provide registered details of electronic transactions made, as they consider them to be trusted third parties for the purpose of providing these details, along with any other detail that could help to determine the private individuals or legal entities that have carried out

the action of interest.

Once the details requested by the judicial authorities have been located, the operator issues a certificate which explicitly declares the requested transactional details, frequency, destinations, and any other information requested by the pertinent judicial authority.

This methodology, when requested by any of the parties to a telecommunications operator and presented as evidence, has even been recently accepted as evidence by our supreme court (ATS 2501/2013, Supreme Court of Spain, Civil Chamber).

The state of the art is familiar with diverse methods and systems for the sending of certified electronic mail, some based on the sending on the part of the client of a link to a web environment controlled by a trusted third party where the certified content is downloaded, having the basic drawback of requiring the will of the notified party to download said content in order to generate the certificate, and others wherein digital verifications are added to the content and which simulate to be the transmitter, resending it to the destination. This last one suffers from three serious drawbacks:

a) On resending on behalf of the user, the recognised electronic signature is broken as the conditions of origin change totally, breaking the chain of custody and generating mistrust.

b) Adding verifications inside for subsequent checking of the certification of the electronic mail again breaks the originally recognised electronic signature and the chain of custody anew.

c) On resending on behalf of the user as if the user, the certified electronic mail clashes with the DMARC standard which is being imposed as a the standard on a worldwide scale, preventing the effective delivery of the certified electronic mail.

The invention that is the object of this application provides a solution to the disadvantages mentioned above, not requiring a subsequent download of the content to be certified, respecting both the user's original recognised electronic signature to maintain the chain of custody, and the full functionality of the service under the DMARC standard; with the process resulting in a certificate issued by a telecommunications operator containing the original message without breaking the original recognised signatures which accredits that the operator sent that electronic mail content to a destination, on a determined date and time and that it was finally delivered or not to its official electronic representative, including also the transmission details, transmitted details, attachments, a single registration number and any transactional detail used.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

According to that mentioned above, the object of the invention is a method for the sending of an electronic mail with a recognised electronic signature to be certified by a communications operator in such a way that the destination receives two copies, the original one from the client and the one from the telecommunications operator without
5 simulating to be the original client, respecting the recognised electronic signatures and the chain of custody. The client of the operator or transmitter, receives a certificate according to who sent the original electronic mail, including the original mail, the viewable content, date, time and traceability of same, a single transaction number; and finally the date, time and circumstances of the delivery if such were possible.

10 The method for creating the electronic mail certified by a telecommunications operator that is the object of the invention is characterised in that it comprises the following steps and in that it incorporates at least one external mail server of the operator's client, a destination server of the certified mail, an incoming mail server of the operator, a database server of copies and fragmented elements, an outgoing mail server
15 of the operator, a TSA timestamp server, a database server of elements sent and a data processing unit as the certification server all interconnected with each other.

- Transmission by the client of the telecommunications operator of an electronic mail to a determined destination using any platform through their internet provider, copying a mail address of the server of the telecommunications operator, for example
20 correo@certificado.lleida.net

- Receipt of the classic electronic mail at the destination by means of its authorised digital representative.

- Receipt of the copy in the operator's incoming mail server of the message transmitted by the user client of the telecommunications operator.

25 - Check that the user is authorised, has credit to certify mails and move on to insertion and registration in the database of the text and components received.

- Creation in the data processing unit of the telecommunications operator of an electronic mail that will be transmitted from an address of the server of the telecommunications operator noreply@mailcert.lleida.net encapsulating the content sent
30 by the operator's client to respect the recognised original digital signatures, inserting specifically in the subject of the electronic mail CERTIFIED ELECTRONIC MAIL.

- Sending of the encapsulated mail on the part of the outgoing electronic mail server.

- Acceptance or not by the authorised digital representative of the non-client
35 destination of the encapsulated electronic mail,

- Final generation of the certificate of the telecommunications operator, including the original mail respecting the recognised digital signatures, the details sent, received, dates and times of transmission and reception and application of the recognised digital signature and the timestamp on the part of the telecommunications operator.

- 5 - Sending of the certificate to the transmitting user through the mail server.

According to the above, the method that is the object of the invention likewise offers the advantage of not manipulating the original mail, maintaining the chain of custody and allowing the use of digital forms recognised by the user, likewise being compatible with the DMARC standard, as the encapsulated copy of the mail is not resent
10 in the name of the user but rather in the name of the telecommunications operator. Finally, evidence is generated of transmission, reception, and acceptance of the content on the part of a telecommunications operator.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

To complement the description being made and for the purpose of contributing to
15 a better understanding of the invention, according to a preferred example of a practical embodiment thereof, a set of drawings is attached as an integral part of said description, wherein by way of illustration and not limitation, the following has been represented:

Figure 1.- Shows a flow chart of an example of embodiment of the method that is the object of the invention of the start of creation of the certified electronic mail and the
20 delivery or not of the encapsulated copy.

Figure 2.- Shows a flow chart of an example of embodiment of the method that is the object of the invention of the composition and sending of the final certificate in the cases of delivery or non-delivery of the encapsulated electronic mail.

PREFERRED EMBODIMENT OF THE INVENTION

25 In the light of figures 1 and 2 wherein a series of diagrams are represented referring to a method that is the object of the invention, method intended to certify electronic mails containing a recognised electronic signature on the part of a telecommunications operator comprising from sending an electronic mail from a transmitter (1,2,3), user of the telecommunications operator, through to reception of the
30 certificate confirming the sending was effected, it was delivered, with the content and transmission details used, all of the above signed with a recognised electronic signature of the operator and timestamp of a third party.

The transmitting user client of the telecommunications operator, when wishing to send a certified electronic mail send the mail through any platform, PC, Tablet or mobile
35 phone copying a mail address of an incoming mail server of the telecommunications

operator such as for example correo@certificado.lleida.net. To do this, on the part of a the transmitter (1,2,3), which is a user of the telecommunications operator, at least one electronic mail is generated, to make the electronic mail arrive at a client mail server of the telecommunications operator (4,15) for example the electronic mail is sent to the client
5 mail server of Lleida.net, the latter belonging to any internet provider, and it is delivered to a destination server which for legal purposes is the authorised electronic representative, in other words it is made to arrive at a mail destination server (7, 24) via the internet (5) to make it arrive at a certified mail destination (8,25), since it is at internet level where messages can be delivered to a determined destination, likewise a copy of this message
10 is delivered to an incoming mail server of the operator (9), the incoming mail server of Lleida.net in this example.

The operator's incoming mail server (9) sends the electronic mail to a certification data processing server (Mailcert) which forms part of the telecommunications operator and will check whether the user is on the white list, in other words, is registered with the
15 system to be able to send certified electronic mails. If not registered, the mail is ignored, if registered it moves on to verifying that the user has credit, this implies checking (10) that the user (1,2,3) has certification privileges by means of comparison with a list of users/privileges, check which is carried out by means of sending the electronic mail to a certification data processing server.

20 If the user in question does not have any credit, an electronic mail is generated indicating the lack of same, sending it to an outgoing mail server of the operator (23,26,38,50) which will deliver it finally to the user (1,2,3) which is the user client of the communications operator.

If the user does have credit then it proceeds to certify (17) the electronic mail
25 wherein said certification in turn comprises generating a copy (18) of the electronic mail and decomposing the electronic mail into its parts wherein said parts comprise: transmission details, reception details and content of the mail for processing of same, said details being preferably saved in a first database (19,32,43) together with the copy (18).

Subsequently the copy (18) of the electronic mail is encapsulated (20) in a
30 container and a certified mail (21) is generated which comprises the encapsulated copy (18) of the electronic mail then made to arrive at an outgoing mail server of the operator (23,26), to make the certified mail (21) arrive at the mail destination server (7, 24) from the operator's outgoing mail server (23,26,38,50) and to make the certified mail (21) arrive from the mail destination server (7, 24) to: the certified mail destination (8,25), and to the
35 operator's outgoing mail server (23,26,38,50).

A certified mail (21) is generated from an electronic mail address with origin in the certification data processing server that forms part of the telecommunications operator as can be: service@correo electrónicocert.lleida.net with the subject of the message being CERTIFIED ELECTRONIC MAIL, adding the text of the original subject, and as many control texts as may be considered necessary. The fact of being sent as certification server service@correo electrónicocert.lleida.net from the telecommunications operator and not placing as origin the original electronic mail address of the client allows the service to be DMARC-compliant as it does not supplant the client, in spite of giving us authorisation to deliver an electronic mail on the client's behalf.

Within the text of the certified mail (21) a banner is included and indications confirming that it is a certified message and finally it is encapsulated (20), in other words, the entire original message is included for the purpose of respecting the original recognised electronic signatures to avoid any manipulation of the inside breaking the recognised signature and generating mistrust as to the veracity of the message. The encapsulated copy (18) of the electronic mail is saved in a second database (22,33,46) and is made to arrive at the operator's outgoing mail server (23,26,38,50) for sending of same.

The operator's outgoing mail server (23,26,38,50) will deliver the encapsulated copy (18) of the electronic mail, for its delivery, but even so will wait for a subsequent time of between 10 minutes and one hour for a subsequent rejection response, in other words, initially the electronic mail server at the destination will accept everything in the first instance and subsequently it will reject it, this being a behaviour that the system self-adjusts to automatically.

If the certified electronic mail was finally able to be delivered, the method moves on to the OK process of figure 2 and if the certified electronic mail could not be delivered then it moves on to the NOOK process also present in figure 2.

The operator's outgoing mail server (23,26,38,50), will deliver the encapsulated electronic mail to its authorised digital representative, for its delivery, but even so will wait for a subsequent time of between 10 minutes and one hour for a subsequent rejection response, in other words, initially a mail destination server (7, 24) accepts everything in the first instance and subsequently rejects it, this being a behaviour that the method described herein self-adjusts to automatically.

There is a check of delivery (27) of the certified mail (21) at the certified mail destination (8,25). If the certified mail (21) was finally able to be delivered, the method moves on to the OK process of figure 2 and if the certified electronic mail was not able to

be delivered the method moves on to the NOOK process also present in figure 2.

With the certified mail (21) delivered the method moves on to the process of generating a certificate (37,49) of the operator itself, in other words the certified mail (21) is made to arrive from the mail destination server (7, 24) to the certified mail destination (8,25), and to the operator's outgoing mail server (23,26,38,50) given that on carrying out the delivery check (27) of the certified mail (21) at the certified mail destination (8,25) an OK was obtained. Next, a certificate (37,49) is generated by means of a certification server (30,41) of the telecommunications operator wherein said certificate (37,49) comprises a first part (31,42) which in turn comprises transmission details, reception details and content of the mail, and a second part (34,45) which in turn comprises details of the arrival of the certificate (21) at the operator's outgoing mail server (23,26), and a digital signature and a timestamp (35,48) of the telecommunications operator.

To do this, the content and original electronic mails are recovered from the first database (19,32,43) of initial copy composing the first part of the certificate (37,49). Once this is done, it is verified whether the mail destination server (7, 24) is on the bouncing/blacklisting list, by means of a verification (44) subsequent to the generation of the first part (31,42) wherein said verification (44) comprises checking whether the destination server of the certified electronic mail (8,25) is on a list of bouncing/blacklisting servers which by default accept all messages and subsequently reject them when the addressee of the corresponding certified mail (8,25) does not exist. In other words, it is verified (44) whether it is or not on the list of servers which by default accept all messages and later reject them when the user does not exist, checking whether a subsequent message of rejection has arrived from the mail destination server (7, 24). If a subsequent message of rejection has arrived then the method moves on to the NOOK process.

If the verification (44) gives as a result that the certified mail destination server (8,25) is on the list of bouncing/blacklisting servers, it is proceeded to add to the certificate (37,49) details referring to the non-existence of the addressee at the certified mail destination server (8,25). If the verification (44) gives as a result that the mail destination server (7, 24) is not on the blacklist or bouncing list the second part of the certificate is composed with all of the transactional details, adding the timestamp (35,48) of a third party and signing the certificate (37,49) with the recognised electronic signature of the telecommunications operator as indicated previously in describing the content of the second part (34,45) of the certificate (37,49).

Having finalised the certificate (37,49), an electronic mail is generated to which this generated certificate (37,49) is attached, which is sent to the telecommunications

operator's outgoing mail server (23,26), which will deliver it finally to the electronic representative authorised to deliver it to the client.

The NOOK process is the process that is used when for any circumstance it has not been possible to deliver the certified mail (21) to the certified mail destination (8,25),
5 emphasising that in the process of sending reliable notifications, both delivery and non-delivery are just as important, given that the aim is to demonstrate a publicly explicit and express will to send a content even if there may be circumstances that prevent it, transforming the reliable notification into a diligent one; in other words, everything technically possible has been done to effect the delivery.

10 Once it is determined that the certified mail (21) moves onto the NOOK process the certificate (37,49) is recomposed again identifying the addressee and including the latter's details in the certificate (37,49) along with all vicissitudes that have prevented effective delivery of the message to its authorised electronic representative, for example it is possible to add to the certificate (37,49) details referring to the non-delivery such as the
15 time of attempted delivery, delivery address, identification of the addressee, etc. Once the certificate (37,49) is completed, it is electronically signed with the recognised digital signature of the telecommunications operator and the timestamp of a third party is added to it.

Once the document is signed, an electronic mail is generated to which this pdf
20 document is attached and it is sent by electronic mail to the transmitter (1,2,3), which is a user of the telecommunications operator.

With the finally generated certificates (37,49), the transmitter (1,2,3), which is a user of the telecommunications operator, can demonstrate reliably that it sent a certified mail (21) to a determined certified mail destination (8,25), using its own recognised
25 electronic signature without modifying the electronic mail in any of its transactions or preventing its delivery due to the new standards implemented on the internet.

CLAIMS

1. Method of certification of digitally signed electronic mail which is carried out by means of a telecommunications operator, the method comprising:

i. generation by a transmitter (1 ,2,3), which is a user of the telecommunications operator, of at least one electronic mail,

ii. making the electronic mail arrive at a client mail server of the telecommunications operator (4,15),

iii. sending the electronic mail to:

- a mail destination server (7, 24) through the internet (5) to make it arrive at a certified mail destination (8,25), and

- an incoming mail server of the telecommunications operator (9), and sending the electronic mail from the incoming mail server of the telecommunications operator (9) to a certification data processing server which forms a part of the telecommunications operator,

iv. certifying (17), by the certification data processing server, the electronic mail wherein said certification in turn comprises generating a copy (18) of the electronic mail and decomposing the electronic mail into its parts wherein said parts comprise: transmission details, reception details and content of the mail,

the method of certification of the digitally signed electronic mail further comprises:

v. encapsulating (20), by the certification data processing server, the copy (18) of the electronic mail in a container,

vi. generating a certified mail (21), by the certification data processing server, which comprises the encapsulated copy (18) of the electronic mail and making it arrive at a telecommunications operator's outgoing mail server (23,26) from the certification data processing server,

vii. making the certified mail (21) arrive at the mail destination server (7, 24) from the telecommunications operator's outgoing mail server (23,26,38,50),

viii. making the certified mail (21) arrive from the mail destination server (7, 24) to:

- the certified mail destination (8,25), and

- the telecommunications operator's outgoing mail server (23,26,38,50),

ix. the telecommunications operator's outgoing mail server (23,26,38,50) delivering the encapsulated copy (18) of the electronic mail, for its delivery, waiting for a subsequent time of between 10 minutes and one hour for a subsequent rejection response to avoid the mail destination server accepting everything in the first instance and subsequently rejecting,

x. carrying out a delivery check (27) of the certified mail (21) at the certified mail destination (8,25),

xi. if the certified mail was able to be delivered, generating a certificate (37,49) by means of a certification server (30,41) of the telecommunications operator wherein said certificate comprises:

a. a first part (31 ,42) which in turn comprises: transmission details, reception details and content of the mail, and

b. a second part (34,45) which in turn comprises details of the arrival of the certificate (21) at the telecommunications operator's outgoing mail server (23,26),

wherein a verification (44) subsequent to the generation of the first part (31,42) is carried out said verification (44) comprising checking whether the mail destination server of the certified electronic mail (8,25) is on a list of bouncing/blacklisting servers which by default accept all messages and subsequently reject them when the addressee of the corresponding certified mail (8,25) does not exist; in such a way that the method further comprises:

- adding to the certificate (37,49) details referring to the non-existence of the addressee at the certified mail destination server (8,25), when the verification (44) gives as a result that the certified mail destination server (8,25) is on the list of bouncing/blacklisting servers, or
- composing the second part (34,45) of the certificate (37,49) with all of the transactional details, adding a timestamp (35,48) of a third party and signing the certificate (37,49) with the electronic signature of the telecommunications operator, when the mail destination server (7, 24) is not on the blacklist or bouncing list,

and

xii. making the certificate (37,49) arrive at the transmitter (1,2,3).

2. Method according to claim 1 further comprising checking (10) that the transmitter (1,2,3) has certification privileges by means of comparison with a list of users/privileges, check that is carried out by means of sending the electronic mail to a certification data processing server.

3. Method according to claim 1 further comprising carrying out a dumping of the copy (18) of the electronic mail and its parts, once the copy (18) has been decomposed, in a first database (19,32,43).

4. Method according to claim 1 further comprising carrying out a dumping of the certified mail (21) in a second database (22,33,46) which comprises elements that have been made to arrive at the telecommunications operator's outgoing mail server (23,26,38,50).

5. Method according to any of the preceding claims wherein the delivery check (27) of step x gives as a result a non-delivery of the certified mail (21) at the certified mail destination (8,25), the method further comprising adding to the certificate (37,49) details referring to the non-delivery wherein said details comprise: time of attempted delivery and delivery address.