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[Microsoft's InfoCard, The Future of Online Security?](#)

VeriSign signs up to be a part of Microsoft's dream

Bill Gates introduced us to the idea of a more technologically secure future with his [RSA Keynote speech](#). His idea of a secure future also rests with the idea of a way that users can securely and uniformly log onto a Web site and conduct transactions while proving their identities online. Code-named 'InfoCard', it plans on doing what Microsoft's 'Passport' couldn't, that never reached the ultimate goal of global adoption. InfoCard is meant to work with a variety of online identity providers instead of just one like its predecessor. In the hopes of mass adoption, Microsoft is trying to persuade governmental agencies, banks, online services and others to issue digital cards. This is one of the company's biggest moves in the field since Passport's launch five years ago. Passport's still around, but mainly for MS sites. Richard Turner, program manager for Microsoft's Web services strategy explained that "no one has sufficient trust of any one organization to put all their eggs in that one basket... There will be multiple issuers of identity out there on the Internet. Passport is just one of those." Picture InfoCard like a virtual online wallet that lets you choose who to disclose, store and distribute various forms of online identification, represented on-screen as cards. The company says users would log in to a site by clicking on one of the cards, reducing the need to type in a user name and password. The InfoCard program would securely retrieve the necessary digital credentials from an identity provider, then forward them to the site to authenticate the user's identity. A recent competitor of Microsoft in the same field introduced their own method of online security. VeriSign said Monday that eBay and Yahoo! had signed on as supporters of its new online authentication system, the VeriSign Identity Protection Network, which will include keychain-based tokens that generate passwords to be entered as part of the online authentication process. Yet, as a surprise to a lot of consumers, they have also been the first supporters of the InfoCard idea. VeriSign Chief Executive Stratton Sclavos showed how the company's VIP (VeriSign Identity Protection) will work in conjunction with Microsoft's InfoCard software. Analyst Rob Helm, research director at Kirkland-based research firm Directions on Microsoft said that for the idea of InfoCard to work, "there has to be a few widely accepted cards -- kind of the Visa and MasterCard of the identity world -- and it's not clear that anyone wants that job." Yet, that won't stop Microsoft from packaging the software for InfoCard with the upcoming release of [Windows Vista](#). It's also going to be accessible through Internet Explorer 7.