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FROM THE ARCHIVES: September 17, 2003

VeriSign Effort Faces Opposition

By NICK WINGFIELD
 Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

MOUNTAIN VIEW, Calif. -- Internet service providers and software developers are moving swiftly to stop a controversial new effort by VeriSign Inc. to capitalize on the errors Web users make when typing Web addresses.

The technical blocks are meant to thwart **Site Finder**, a service introduced Monday by VeriSign of that guides users who attempt to reach nonexistent Web addresses to a site operated by VeriSign. Mountain View, Calif.-based VeriSign is able to take control of this traffic because it operates the master list, or "registry," for all Internet addresses ending in ".com" and ".net." The company said **Site Finder** is intended as a navigational aid for Web users; the company also gets revenues from Internet search engines that help it steer off-course users to Web sites.

But the new VeriSign service has outraged many network operators and others who say that, in some cases, it disrupts the functioning of e-mail and other applications. Among the complaints about the VeriSign service is that it hurts the ability of Internet service providers to block spam, or junk e-mail, sent from Internet addresses that don't exist. In response to such complaints, the Internet Software Consortium -- a nonprofit group that makes a common software program that Internet service providers and corporations use to help direct Internet traffic on their networks -- said it would release a software patch by the end of Tuesday that would let users block the VeriSign service, said Internet Software Consortium Chairman Paul Vixie.

The VeriSign service is "utterly ridiculous," said Chris Candreva, owner of WestNet Internet Services Inc., an Internet service provider in Westchester County, N.Y., and nearby areas, that blocked the VeriSign service on its network.

VeriSign didn't immediately respond with a comment.

Write to Nick Wingfield at nick.wingfield@wsj.com

Updated September 17, 2003

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COMPANIES

Dow Jones, Reuters

VeriSign Inc. (VRSN)	
PRICE	15.82
CHANGE	0.12
U.S. dollars	1:40 p.m.

* At Market Close

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