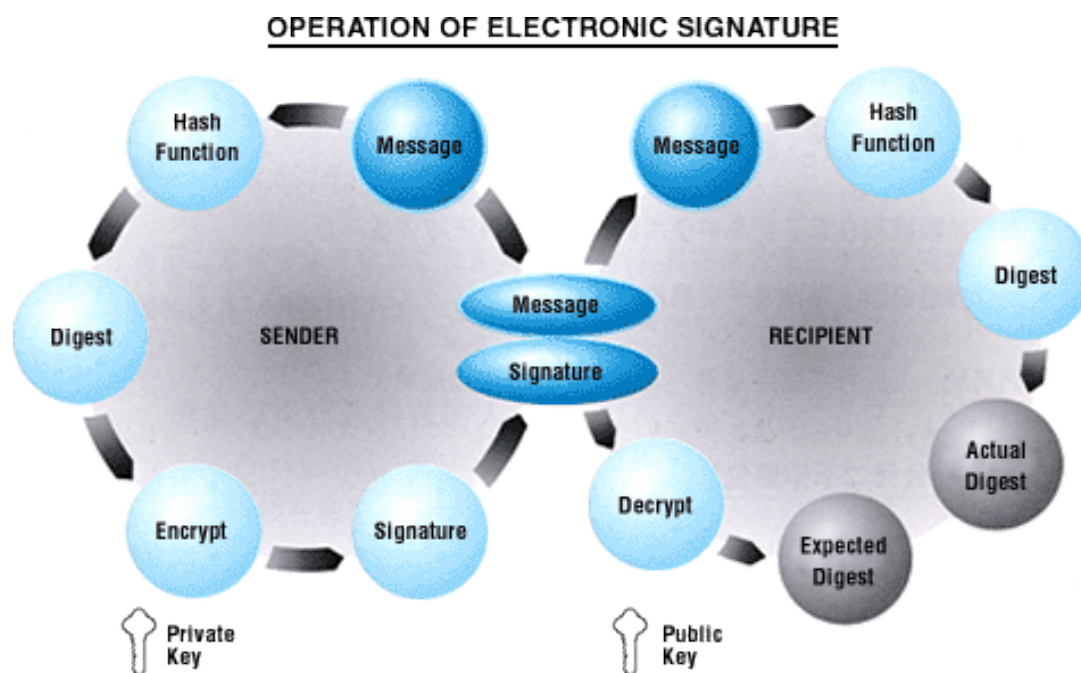


PUBLIC KEY INFRASTRUCTURE

OBJECTIVE

To enable safe and secure electronic transactions by providing a framework for ensuring the integrity of information exchanged and for authenticating the identity of participants in such transactions.

DESCRIPTION



To facilitate the development of electronic commerce, it is important to instil trust in the security and integrity of transactions performed electronically. This is especially the case when cross-border transactions are involved. With a locally established public key infrastructure, and collaboration with other governments and institutions, we can promote electronic commerce in this digitally connected world.

The Government is working towards the development of a public key infrastructure to promote the competitiveness and economic growth of Hong Kong. We will develop-

- A framework for authenticating the identity of participants in electronic commerce by establishing Certification Authorities that issue digital certificates, and

- A definitive and supportive legal environment that creates certainty and builds business confidence, for example, by clarifying the legal status of electronic signatures.

The infrastructure will begin with the setting up a "root Certification Authority" which will be the defining source of all other Certification Authorities in Hong Kong. The Hongkong Post has agreed in principle to set up such a root Certification Authority and is planning for its establishment in 1999.