

CAcert, Inc.

President's Report for the Fiscal Year 2019-2020

This has been an interesting year in the history of the world.

About half way through our Fiscal Year, the COVID-19 Pandemic developed, disrupting people's lives all over the world. As with people worldwide, the members of CAcert, Inc., and, more generally, the members of the CAcert community, found their lives upset in various ways. As I write this, the UK is going back into a strict lockdown, and Italy and the rest of Europe are moving in a similar direction. Large parts of the USA seem to be in denial, and Australia seems to never be out of their lockdown.

However, this upheaval has also shown the world the need for efficient, secure communications, using the technologies that we have been developing and promoting for almost 20 years. The world has discovered the use of remote work, working and communicating in ways other than gathering in groups in offices, travelling great distances each day, and finding that it is possible to save time and energy in doing so.

Since this current situation shows no sign of abating any time soon, this can provide us with another opportunity to explore and expand our reach beyond the relatively few people who know and understand our message already. We still see so many people who just follow the herd, so finding, or developing, tools that can be used without thought is definitely worth pursuing to assist in expanding our range both in area and offerings to potential "customers."

So, enough preamble.

Early in the Fiscal Year just past, the Board prepared and mailed a letter to all of the members of the CAcert Community. This was delivered to over 300,000 e-mail addresses in early September, 2019. The response to this letter was very encouraging. We received many responses from volunteers offering assistance, as well as many donations of money. We even had some some new members join CAcert, Inc. The monetary donations have allowed us to pay all of our outstanding bills, even leaving money in the bank for future expenses. We had quite a few people volunteer to join the Development and Infrastructure Teams, and also offer help with Wiki editing, translation and other tasks.

Unfortunately, soon after this, Paypal in Australia decided that we needed to go through a process of re-identifying our organisation and representatives, and froze our account with them. This caused on-going subscriptions and donations to fail and any money already collected to be unavailable to us. This also meant that bills to be paid by CAcert, Inc. couldn't be.

Through the tireless efforts of our volunteer Finance Team, Treasurer and Secretary, we eventually managed to persuade Paypal that we were legitimate and that our Treasurer was who he said that he was, but that fight lasted until long after the end of the Fiscal Year.

After this chaos, the rest of the Fiscal Year seems almost anti-climactic, but it was actually filled with activity. As I said previously, after our mass mailing we were flooded with notes in reply, people volunteering to help CAcert in various ways. I want to thank the various Team Leaders and also particularly Board Member Frederic Dumas and our Secretary Etienne Ruedin for their tireless work in managing those volunteers and working to assign them to appropriate Teams within CAcert.

We are still in need for certain positions or teams, but CAcert has been refreshed over the past year, despite all of the challenges.

In other news, if anyone would like to assist the Arbitration Team, they are always willing to train and mentor new members.

Another notable item was the hard work that three Board Members, Frederic Dumas, Peter Nunn and I, accomplished in preparing a Grant Application for the RIPE NCC, to help support new product development at CAcert, working to expand the utility and capabilities of our software. We have not yet heard whether that effort was successful; that will be a note for next year.

There have also been some improvements in procedures and hardware affecting both the Critical Team and the Infrastructure Team with ageing and failing machines replaced.

After the financial disruption caused by Paypal, the Board began researching options to supplement and possibly replace our dependence on that company. One of our vendors has kindly offered to receive money directly from members which will be directed to our invoices with them. As well, we have established a second bank account, in Switzerland, to provide more streamlined access for Europeans, to supplement our existing bank in Australia.

For several years there has been discussion of making various changes to CAcert, Inc., not the least of which have been discussions of moving the organisation's home away from Australia. Finally, this year, we have performed various formal investigations to determine how practical such an idea might be, and have discovered that according to the rules of the Australian government, we might change the "home" of our location without many other changes to our structure or regulations. We have found that Switzerland has very liberal regulations for changing the domicile of an organisation such as ours, that is not a commercial entity, and have, therefore, proposed to the AGM, making the change to move CAcert, Inc. from Australia to Switzerland.

The Board and I look forward to another interesting year in the life of CAcert, Inc., building on the experiences and accomplishments of the past year.

Respectfully submitted,
Brian McCullough
President, CAcert, Inc. 2019-2020