

# Secure Communications

## Week 9

### Trust and Digital Certificates

#### Sections

##### A. Introduction

A.1 <http://asecuritysite.com/encryption/digitalcert>

#### Certificate 1

Digital Certificates

[Encryption Home][Home]

Digital certificates are used to carry the public/private key (which is kept secret). They are typically used to store the key pair, or, once the private key is stripped-off, they are used to authenticate an entity (by gaining access to the public key). The typical formats are IKE; - PKCS #; - PKCS #10; and X.509v3 certificates. To load the certificate press the button.

Load Example 1 Download Certificate      Load Example 2 Download Certificate  
Load Example 3 Download Certificate      Load Example 4 Download Certificate  
Load Example 5 Download Certificate      Load Example 6 Download Certificate

The results are then:

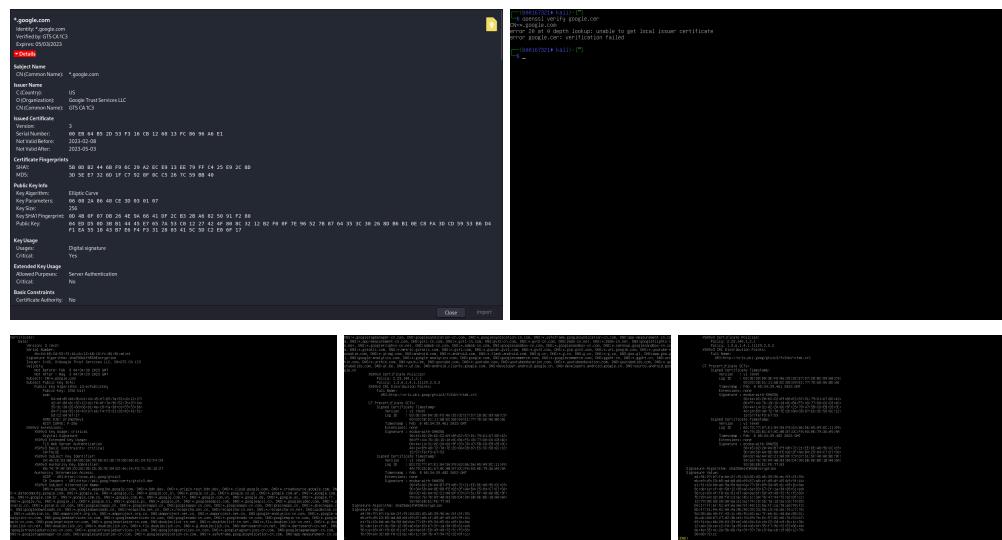
Message:	
Serial number:	702958
Effective date:	4/24/2008 8:18:42 PM
Name:	CN=Fred Smith, OU=None, E=fred@home, O=Nowhere, L=Edinburgh, S=Lothian, C=GB
Public key:	30818902818100CA62FB39A9A62A78DB144F6AF8E18C90BCA897F5742ECB279023F3F8805EE5A67352A4F859C10EE21854A2CDBD4D57998C0B77B6AB415E81748D23A56EA3D9ECF2352AA58877EBBADE65DC0226CC0CD16EC29BAC07E0B8BC94E6FE1E3077AAB7AF051CE64F94EA2CFAE65BE1CD76D718A72BD4D7E469A8F7AB014F5E5F1E10203010001
Public key algorithm:	1.2.840.113549.1.1.1
Issuer Name:	CN=Fred Smith, OU=None, E=fred@home, O=Nowhere, L=Edinburgh, S=Lothian, C=GB
Base-64 format:	-----BEGIN CERTIFICATE----- MIICpDCCAg2gAwIBAgIDcc1YMA0GCSqGSIb3DQEBBQUAMIGDMQswCQYDVQQGEwJH QjEQMA4GA1UECBMHTG90aGhbjESMBAGA1UEBxMJRWRpbnJ1cmdoMRAwDgYDVQQK EwdOb3doZXJ1MRgwFgYJKoZIhvcNAQkBFglmcmVkQGhvbwUxDTALBgNVBAsTBEBv

<b>Serial number:</b>	702958
<b>Effective date:</b>	4/24/2008 8:18:42 PM
<b>Name:</b>	CN=Fred Smith, OU=None, E=fred@home, O=Nowhere, L=Edinburgh, S=Lothian, C=GB
<b>Issuer:</b>	CN=Fred Smith, OU=None, E=fred@home, O=Nowhere, L=Edinburgh, S=Lothian, C=GB
<b>What is CN used</b>	The Common Name – the primary name of the certificate

<b>for:</b>	holder, typically the domain name or person's name
<b>What is ON used for:</b>	Organizational Unit – identifies the department or group within the organization
<b>What is O used for:</b>	Organization – the company or legal entity owning the certificate
<b>What is L used for:</b>	Locality – the city where the organization or certificate owner is located

```
A.2 openssl x509 -inform der -in [filename].der -noout -text  
openssl verify google.cer
```

Certificate 3



<b>What other information can you gain from the certificate:</b>	Signature Algorithm: sha256WithRSAEncryption Issuer: Google Trust Services LLC (GTS CA 1C3) Key Usage: Digital Signature Extended Key Usage: TLS Web Server Authentication
<b>What is the size of the public key:</b>	Public-Key: (256 bit)  <i>256-bit EC (elliptic curve), curve prime256v1 / NIST P-256</i>
<b>Which hashing method has been used:</b>	Signature Algorithm: sha256WithRSAEncryption  SHA-256
<b>Is the certificate trusted on your system:</b>	error google.cer: verification failed  No

```
A.3 openssl s_client -connect www.live.com:443
```

#### **Certificate Chain (from leaf → root):**

1. Leaf certificate (server certificate)
    - CN = outlook.live.com
    - O = Microsoft Corporation
    - Issued by DigiCert Cloud Services CA-1
  2. Intermediate CA
    - CN = DigiCert Cloud Services CA-1
    - Issued by DigiCert Global Root CA
  3. Root CA
    - CN = DigiCert Global Root CA
    - Self-signed (trusted root)

**Subject(Leaf Certificate):**

subject=C=US, ST=Washington, L=Redmond, O=Microsoft Corporation,  
CN=outlook.live.com

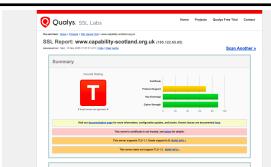
**Issuer(Leaf Certificate):**

issuer=C=US, O=DigiCert Inc, CN=DigiCert Cloud Services CA-1

A.4 A scan, at the time, on health and social care sites from the following page showed problems in digital certificates:

<https://bit.ly/2EkUvX0>

<a href="https://www.capability-scotland.org.uk">https://www.capability-scotland.org.uk</a>	Expired: Sunday 13 November 2022 at 23:59:59	
<a href="https://www.heartstroketayside.org.uk">https://www.heartstroketayside.org.uk</a>	localhost (is not trusted) Root certificate authority	
<a href="https://www.travax.scot.nhs.uk">https://www.travax.scot.nhs.uk</a>	Expired: Saturday 1 November 2025 at 14:57:22	

<a href="http://www.ssllabs.com">www.ssllabs.com</a>	<a href="https://www.capability-scotland.org.uk">https://www.capability-scotland.org.uk</a> <u>ssllabs this website</u>	Sun, 13 Nov 2022 23:59:59 UTC (expired 2 years and 11 months ago) <b>EXPIRED</b>	 <b>T Rating</b>
	<a href="https://www.heartstroketayside.org.uk">https://www.heartstroketayside.org.uk</a>	Alternative names - <b>INVALID</b>	 <b>T Rating</b>

## A.5 Example 2 to Example 6

Cert	Organisation (Issued to)	Date range when valid	Size of public key	Issuer	Root CA	Hash method	Is it trusted?
2	No One / Nowhere Ltd (CN=No One)	Oct 29 2011 – Oct 28 2013	1024-bit RSA	No One (self-signed)	None (self-signed)	sha1WithRSAEncryption	No
3	Google (CN=*.google.com)	Feb 08 2023 – May 03 2023	256-bit EC (P-256)	GTS CA 1C3	Google Trust Services Root	sha256WithRSAEncryption	No
4	Cisco Systems (CN=www.cisco.com)	Jul 10 2012 – Jul 11 2013	1024-bit RSA	VeriSign Class 3 Secure Server CA - G3	VeriSign Root	sha1WithRSAEncryption	No
5	Microsoft Corporation (CN=microsoft.com)	Jan 13 2023 – Jan 08 2024	2048-bit RSA	Microsoft Azure TLS Issuing CA 05	Microsoft Root CA	sha384WithRSAEncryption	No
6	Oracle Corporation (CN=oracle.com)	Feb 14 2023 – Feb 26 2024	2048-bit RSA	DigiCert TLS RSA SHA256 2020 CA1	DigiCert Root	sha256WithRSAEncryption	No

A.6 `openssl x509 -inform der -in [certname] -noout -text`  
<http://asecuritysite.com/der.zip>





## B. Creating certificates

B.1 `openssl genrsa -out ca.key 2048`

### Create a Private Key for CA using OpenSSL

- `genrsa` → generates an RSA private key
- `-out ca.key` → saves the key to a file named `ca.key`
- `2048` → key length in bits (can be 4096 for higher security)

```
[b00167321* kali) ~ [~]$ openssl genrsa -out ca.key 2048
[b00167321* kali) ~ [~]$
```

- A 2048-bit RSA private key stored in `ca.key`
- This key will be used to sign other certificates (it is the Root CA's private key)

This command generates a new RSA private key for the Certificate Authority (CA). `genrsa` creates an unencrypted key, and `-out ca.key` saves it as a file

B.2 `openssl req -new -x509 -days 1826 -key ca.key -out ca.crt`

### Generate the certificate using OpenSSL

- `req` → create a certificate request
- `-new -x509` → generate a self-signed X.509 certificate
- `-days 1826` → certificate validity (5 years)
- `-key ca.key` → use the private key created earlier
- `-out ca.crt` → output file (the new CA certificate)

```
(b00167321㉿kali):~$ openssl req -new -x509 -days 1826 -key ca.key -out ca.crt
You are about to be asked to enter information that will be incorporated
into your certificate request.
What you are about to enter is what is called a Distinguished Name or a DN.
There are certain fields that must be answered and others that are optional.
For some fields there will be a default value.
If you enter '.', the field will be left blank.
-----
Country Name (2 letter code) (AU):
State or Province Name (full name) [Some-State]:
Locality Name (eg, city) []:
Organization Name (eg, company) [Internet Widgits Pty Ltd]:
Organizational Unit Name (eg, section) []:
Common Name (e.g. server FQDN or YOUR name) []:
Email Address []:
(b00167321㉿kali):~$
```

- Generated a self-signed CA certificate valid for 1826 days
- Output file: ca.crt
- This certificate includes the public key + issuer information

This creates the Root Certificate.

Because no external CA signs it, `-x509` makes it self-signed, meaning it signs itself using `ca.key`.

### B.3 `openssl genrsa -out ia.key 2048`

#### Generate a private key using OpenSSL

- `genrsa` → generates an RSA private key
- `-out ia.key` → saves the key to a file named `ia.key`
- `2048` → key length in bits (can be 4096 for higher security)

```
(b00167321㉿kali):~$ openssl genrsa -out ia.key 2048
(b00167321㉿kali):~$
```

- Created a 2048-bit RSA private key for the intermediate authority
- File `ia.key` will be used to create a CSR next

This is the private key for the subordinate CA, also called “Intermediate CA.”

#### B.4 `openssl req -new -key ia.key -out ia.csr`

We now create a Certificate Signing Request (CSR) — a file containing identity details and the public key.

- `req -new` → creates a new certificate request
- `-key ia.key` → uses the subordinate CA’s private key
- `-out ia.csr` → saves the request in ia.csr

```
(b00167321* kali) [~]
$ openssl req -new -key ia.key -out ia.csr
You are about to be asked to enter information that will be incorporated
into your certificate request.
What you are about to enter is what is called a Distinguished Name or a DN.
There are quite a few fields but you can leave some blank.
For some fields there will be a default value.
If you enter '.', the field will be left blank.
-----
Country Name (2 letter code) (AU):
State or Province Name (full name) (Some-State):
Locality Name (eg, city) []:
Organization Name (eg, company) [Internet Widgets Pty Ltd]:
Organizational Unit Name (eg, section) []:
Common Name (e.g. server FQDN or YOUR name) []:
Email Address []:

Please enter the following 'extra' attributes
to be sent with your certificate request
A challenge password []:
An optional company name []:
(b00167321* kali) [~]
$
```

→ Output file: ia.csr

→ Contains:

- Intermediate CA’s public key
- Identity information
- Intended certificate fields

A CSR is like an "application form" sent to a CA to request a certificate. It contains the public key and subject (organisation) information, but not a signature yet.

#### B.5 `cat ia.csr | openssl req -in ia.csr -noout -text`

After generating the CSR, we can open it to view its encoded content

The CSR begins with

-----BEGIN CERTIFICATE REQUEST-----

and ends with

-----END CERTIFICATE REQUEST-----

```
(b00167321[kali]:~)
$ cat ia.csr
-----BEGIN CERTIFICATE REQUEST-----
MIICJjCAQAwDQIBAAQDTHBwMgQVUxExnRgnIVRgRMClNvhuUURhRbUx
LTArFmBzVbCgEPR0DQVhmkA1fDqkWzHr5TEo2DcS1L00VYXZlhwCN
NQBRR0N0yJEPRECD0QcgEBAlJ7pNDexSmhvJ02GwIF1uuvGBh0J6aJUSK8u
k41b019egyW1Tct64PfsmfiePkci03ExhUjpw+u+auR0JekqIKYtuhCSLY12LX
nEhoIekk6QsTyakIjbeJ+7Empueg408PctuEos+xA+Yxn01uHubukBmAte1eJ
/IX4LuLcV3StEPN7F5Y4L0qfc+k3F325gb61JifutnfBuwFr/87Hb19zF2m
+TIPuLb/731dqeCrmC7J0sD126m6L57Wea+mSnk6BnpysSGbCHLdz0oVEEdF1
I32H1TrCdkJhxpbypTJRMyRldjQ4s5mSDJxmnakCAtAAaAMa0GCS0G
S1b3D0QECUuA4IA0BkUrduWj6Qx1UuJhpD24Kzkt51fatHdagby3mfGzB9F
PCrvx10fezf47Wm93JuX1K56HrTXLR3HmVNaopFBsbdYsQ5283duvvn
sBynsGfKS11LztqIoHP+8zvGMjErjg2/kBM014wvupPatqu09127Cf70k1m2
c2XkEwvz2F210L0hC4yap21627KzFr21fPPnyQ1qN02z1ku0zycog
lma8tV/W1LVg3L0uow+ngn101zCB4W6H211N4/3uJ1KSHtQu92931V6d
0019/6Mu51sgnITNpoch2fFSx8+7z1MKhRpu
-----END CERTIFICATE REQUEST-----

```

**OpenSSL:** The OpenSSL command-line tool (used for cryptography, keys, and certificates)

- **Req:** This subcommand handles certificate requests (CSRs). It can both create and inspect them
- **-in ia.csr:** Tells OpenSSL to read input from the file ia.csr — our CSR file
- **-noout:** Means “don’t output the encoded base64 content again.” Without this, OpenSSL would print both the base64 data and the decoded info
- **-text:** Displays the decoded details of the CSR in a human-readable format

```
(b00167321[kali]:~)
$ openssl req -in ia.csr -noout -text | less
Certificate Request:
Data:
Version: 1 (0x0)
Subject: C=AU, ST=Some-State, O=Internet Widgets Pty Ltd
Subject Public Key Info:
    Public Key Algorithm: rsaEncryption
        Public-Key: (2048 bit)
            Modulus:
                00:91:7e:a4:d0:d5:e4:4b:27:84:1b:e3:49:61:95:
                c3:51:62:bb:0b:ea:04:7a:b3:e9:ac:6e:e4:a1:f3:
                2b:88:81:3a:5f:1e:c9:0f:56:d7:ba:2d:eb:80:df:
                b2:67:de:d0:f2:a0:d7:c1:04:c6:15:23:a7:eb:be:
                11:ab:91:13:8b:97:9a:a0:89:18:4e:8b:6e:09:28:98:
                05:92:1f:13:c4:40:08:89:89:24:e9:0e:ac:63:46:84:
                0a:5d:de:0f:ffff:bb:11:ea:09:b9:ab:08:00:rcd:c0:
                b6:13:06:03:00:00:00:00:00:00:00:00:00:00:00:00:
                06:50:01:40:78:01:00:00:00:00:00:00:00:00:00:00:00:
                b4:43:c0:c4:5a:58:ea:hd:10:7d:51:03:2b:c1:77:
                db:36:1b:1a:58:e2:7f:0b:5f:34:1c:20:16:bd:1c:1:
                ee:01:db:bd:7d:db:19:17:69:00:ad:38:cf:54:bb:ff:
                ef:7d:5d:09:ee:ab:78:bb:0b:0c:eb:03:97:61:86:
                e9:e2:f9:ed:61:1a:fa:64:a7:93:ab:44:3a:9c:ad:
                48:66:c2:1c:b7:73:a8:85:44:11:b1:65:23:7c:7:c7:
                95:3a:c2:76:49:c7:5e:96:08:3e:d2:s1:31:86:91:
                95:de:72:45:d2:c0:42:0e:2c:96:7b:03:0f:9c:66:
                a1:a9
            Exponent: 65537 (0x10001)
        Attributes:
            (none)
        Requested Extensions:
            Signature Algorithm: sha256WithRSAEncryption
Signature Value:
72:92:66:ba:3e:a5:f5:52:25:08:a0:0d:9e:0a:cf:32:
ad:f7:9d:5f:ea:d1:d0:d6:a0:e2:2d:67:c6:cc:1f:45:3c:28:
7f:73:19:74:7d:ea:33:17:84:d6:ee:65:bd:0f:0f:97:94:82:
b9:12:14:b1:5c:16:47:dc:70:d0:35:aa:08:a4:52:91:1a:bd:
64:92:c4:39:10:00:00:00:00:00:00:00:00:00:00:00:00:00:
40:04:ca:08:e1:6b:f0:a4:1a:ad:ab:93:bc:03:56:58:00:5e:
f4:93:59:bb:6b:0b:31:18:67:55:cf:b9:03:ce:19:f6:12:20:
5d:37:81:11:1d:0e:29:ad:92:35:d9:39:33:15:f9:33:89:ff:
c1:47:22:dd:6d:a0:6a:67:e5:cb:90:eb:99:cf:27:28:82:59:
da:0e:d5:ff:55:19:7e:57:72:2b:aaf:fc:ee:06:76:2e:3c:33:
a5:05:8c:cc:24:7:85:96:08:c1:cd:9:0a:23:38:ff:7b:09:88:ad:
07:05:05:9d:db:dd:c0:55:af:id:38:92:89:ff:a9:2e:e6:5c:
ac:00:09:53:36:93:c8:85:97:c5:df:1f:3e:ef:32:2d:31:92:
a1:f1:1a:00
(END)
```

→ Shows:

- Subject information (organisation, common name)

- **Public Key (2048-bit RSA)**
- **Signature (CSR signature)**
- **Algorithm used**
- **Proof the CSR was signed using ia.key**

`-text` makes the CSR human-readable.

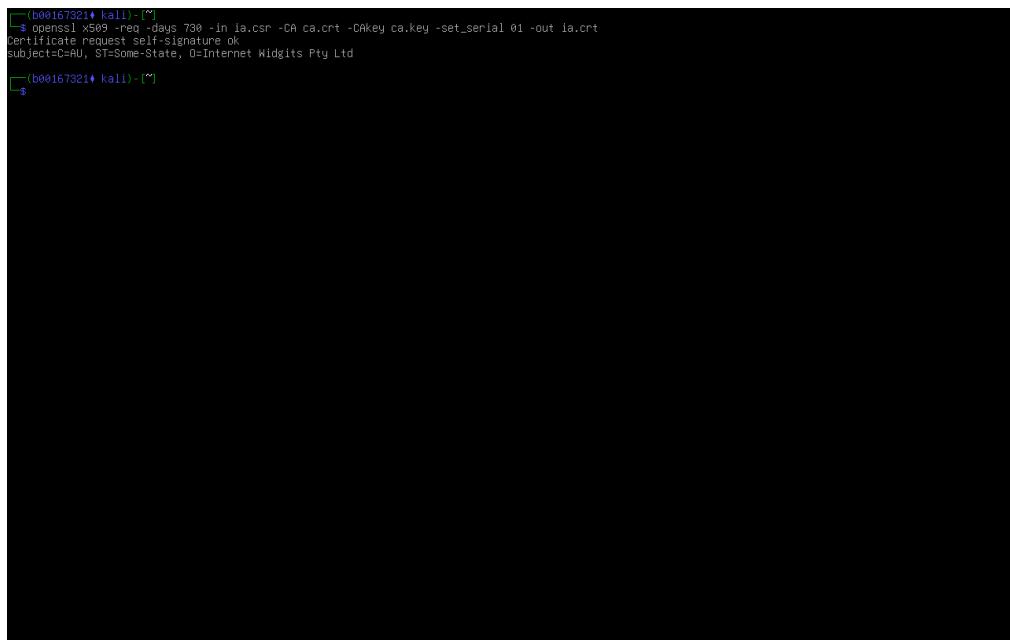
This confirms what information will appear in the issued certificate.

B.6 `openssl x509 -req -days 730 -in ia.csr -CA ca.crt -CAkey ca.key -set_serial 01 -out ia.crt`

#### **Use the Root CA to issue a certificate for the Intermediate CA**

- `-req` → process a certificate signing request
- `-days 730` → validity period (2 years)
- `-CA & -CAkey` → specify the Root CA's certificate and private key
- `-out ia.crt` → output subordinate certificate

```
(b001673214 kali) [~]
$ openssl x509 -req -days 730 -in ia.csr -CA ca.crt -CAkey ca.key -set_serial 01 -out ia.crt
certificate request self-signed ok
subject=C=AU, ST=Some-State, O=Internet Widgits Pty Ltd
(b001673214 kali) [~]
$
```



- **Output: ia.crt (Intermediate CA certificate)**
- **Valid for 730 days (2 years)**
- **Signed by the Root CA (ca.crt + ca.key)**
- **The certificate now has:**
  - **Issuer: Root CA**
  - **Subject: Intermediate CA**

This step turns the CSR into a real certificate.

It is signed by the Root CA, establishing a trust chain.

B.7 `openssl pkcs12 -export -out ia.p12 -inkey ia.key -in ia.crt -chain -CAfile ca.crt`

#### **To combine the key, certificate, and chain into a single file**

- Used for digital signing and verification (e.g., code signing)
  - `ca.key`
  - `ca.crt`
  - `ia.key`
  - `ia.crt`

```
(b00167321㉿kali):~$ openssl pkcs12 -export -out ia.p12 -inkey ia.key -in ia.crt -chain -CAfile ca.crt  
Enter Export Password:  
Verifying - Enter Export Password:  
(b00167321㉿kali):~$
```

→ **Created a file: ia.p12**

→ **Contains:**

- **Intermediate CA private key**
- **Intermediate CA certificate**
- **Root CA certificate (the chain)**

PKCS#12 files (.p12 or .pfx) are used for:

- Importing keys into browsers or servers
- Code signing
- TLS authentication

This bundles everything into one password-protected file.

B.8 

```
openssl x509 -inform pem -outform pem -in ca.crt - out ca.cer  
openssl x509 -inform pem -outform pem -in ia.crt - out ia.cer  
Convert binary .crt to Base64 .cer for email or web use
```

```
(b00167321㉿kali):~$ openssl x509 -inform pem -outform pem -in ca.crt -out ca.cer  
(b00167321㉿kali):~$ openssl x509 -inform pem -outform pem -in ia.crt -out ia.cer  
(b00167321㉿kali):~$
```

- **ca.cer and ia.cer created in Base64 (PEM) format**
- **These are easier to distribute or email**
- **Same certificate data, different encoding**

PEM format (.cer) is Base64 encoded and includes the header lines:

-----BEGIN CERTIFICATE-----

-----END CERTIFICATE-----

This makes the certificate readable and portable.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- -CA &amp; -Key --&gt; specify the Root CA's certificate and private key</li> <li>-out ia.crt --&gt; output subordinate certificate</li> </ul>	
B.7	To combine the key, certificate, and chain into a single file: <code>openssl pkcs12 -export -out ia.p12 -inkey ia.key -in ia.cer -chain -CAfile ca.cer</code> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Used for <b>digital signing and verification</b> (e.g., code signing).</li> <li>-a.key</li> <li>-a.cert</li> <li>-ia.key</li> <li>-ia.crt</li> </ul>	<pre>openssl pkcs12 -in ia.p12 -out ia.pem -nodes -nokeys openssl pkcs12 -in ia.p12 -out ia.pem -nodes -nokeys -clcerts</pre> <p>PKCS#12 File (ia.p12 or .pfx) are used for certificate and key storage. The certificate chain is automatically included in the output file.</p>
B.8	Convert binary crt to Base64 .cer for email or web use: <code>openssl x509 -inform pem -outform pem -in ca.cer -out ca.cer</code> <code>openssl x509 -inform pem -outform pem -in ia.crt -out ia.cer</code>	<p>ca.cer and ia.cer created by openssl. PEM format is standard for certificate and key exchange.</p> <p>PKCS#12 (.p12) is standard and includes certificate, key, and CAs.</p> <p>-----BEGIN CERTIFICATE----- -----END CERTIFICATE-----</p> <p>-----BEGIN PRIVATE KEY----- -----END PRIVATE KEY-----</p> <p>-----BEGIN PUBLIC KEY----- -----END PUBLIC KEY-----</p>

### **What I should have learnt from this lab?**

#### The key things learnt:

- Understand how digital certificates are generated and ported onto systems.
  - Identifying problems with digital certificates on sites.