

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who is Xetex Inc?

Xetex (www.xetex.com) is a professional services firm that provides technology solutions to clients that wish to enable or engage in secure electronic commerce.

2. Where is Xetex?

Xetex, Inc. maintains offices in San Francisco, California (Technology) and Austin, Texas (Corporate).

3. How can I contact Xetex?

Xetex can be contacted at one of the following addresses:

Xetex, Inc.
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Xetex, Inc.
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Austin, TX 78736
Tel: +1 512 288 6158
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4. How long has Xetex been around?

Xetex has been around since 1994, when Ed Posnak formed it as an independent consultancy. Xetex was incorporated in as a Texas C Corporation in 1998.

5. Is Xetex a public company?

No, Xetex is privately held, and 100% employee owned. No outside funding, no outside agendas!

6. Is Xetex profitable?

Yes, as an hourly consultancy with minimal overhead, Xetex has been profitable since day 1.

7. What technology areas does Xetex specialize in?

Xetex has years of experience designing, implementing, and deploying LDAP directory and public key infrastructure (PKI) solutions. Augmenting these areas of specialization is a wealth of experience in object-oriented design and programming, Java development, XML, and HTTP-based applications.

8. What services does Xetex provide?

Xetex provides its clients with a full range of professional services including software development, design, integration, project management, strategy, and education.

- *Design* – We have designed, from the ground up, large-scale distributed systems and enterprise-level certificate management systems that are in production today. Our experience developing and integrating real-world systems with evolving requirements feeds valuable information into our design process, resulting in simple, scalable, robust, and extensible architectures that meet the current and future business needs of our clients.
- *Development* – Xetex employs a structured, iterative development process, implemented by a close-knit team of highly skilled developers to quickly produce high-quality custom solutions, which can evolve as fast as project requirements. Over the years we have developed a collection of reusable toolkits, frameworks, and technologies that allow us to produce well-tested code on unusually short release cycles.
- *Integration* – We have experience customizing and integrating a variety of open-source and commercial software products and hardware cryptographic tokens. This experience allows us to efficiently integrate products with which we are already familiar, and to quickly come up to speed on new ones.
- *Direction* – Our experience designing, developing, and deploying successful custom solutions has given us valuable strategic insight that can be leveraged to help steer your project towards business viability.
- *Training* – Our ability to provide all of the above services is rooted in our deep understanding of technology areas and years of experience designing, building, and delivering viable systems. The most powerful service we provide is the transfer of this knowledge into your organization. The method of delivery and subject matter is always customized and completely driven by your learning objectives.

9. Does Xetex offer any products?

Yes. Having worked on several PKI projects has allowed Xetex to develop a family of core products that can be leveraged to provide competitively priced, custom PKI solutions. The *PKIT*[™] family of products is field tested, currently supporting several customer certificate management systems in production and in various stages of development/deployment.

10. What is a ‘custom solution’?

Xetex provides custom solutions that consist of core product, which is licensed, and client-specific customization, which is implemented using our professional services. The benefits of this hybrid solution are as follows:

- The client gets exactly what it wants (even if it doesn’t know up front exactly what that is). The end product is tailored to specific customer requirements, which are free to change throughout the project.
- Time to market and risk is reduced, since the core PKI components already exist. Often it is possible to deploy a custom solution faster than integrate an off-the-shelf product.
- A flexible custom solution delivered quickly results in greater business value for lower cost.

Xetex — *customer driven technology*

11. What is PKIT™?

PKIT is the family of products that Xetex leverages to provide timely, cost-effective, high-quality custom solutions. PKIT currently consists of the following components:

- *PKIT: framework* - is the core underlying all of our certificate management systems.
- *PKIT: tools* - is a suite of PKI and LDAP tools.
- *PKIT: codegen* - is used to generate Java code and directory schema files from a common XML specification so that the two are always in sync.
- *PKIT: XSigner* – is an activeX control that implements digital signing using keys and certificates stored in an Internet Explorer browser.
- *PKIT: TCTest* – is an application used to test Identrus infrastructures for compliance to PKIX and Identrus standards
- *PKIT: ca* – is an implementation of openssl that uses PKCS#11 compliant hardware security modules to sign certificates and CRLs.
- *PKIT: jce* – is an exportable implementation of the Java Cryptography Architecture (JCA) and Java Cryptography Extension (JCE) that interfaces to PKCS#11 compliant hardware security modules

12. How does Xetex produce timely, cost-effective, high-quality custom solutions?

All custom solutions are implemented using a repeatable software engineering process that includes the following phases:

- *Goal and Budget Establishment* - Establishing the business case for the project, what the customers' goals and general system requirements are, and sizing the project budget.
- *Project Scope Estimation* - Defining the scope of the project based on the requirements and budget.
- *Requirements Definition and Analysis* - The first step in translating the requirements to an implementation. Determining the system components and their interaction, typically by using Object Oriented Analysis methods.
- *Preliminary Design and Investigation* - A refinement of the analysis that consists of breaking down the interactions into flows and use cases. May involve the development of an information model based on requirements and evaluating commercially/freely available solutions.
- *Prototyping* - Developing a functioning user interface in order to obtain customer feedback and/or writing code that proves the concept of some fundamental design component.
- *Detailed Design* - A refinement of the high-level design that results in a software architecture (objects and interfaces) that can be coded.
- *Coding* - Translating the design into extensible, maintainable, well encapsulated source code.
- *Unit/Regression Testing* - Writing and running code that tests that all coded classes work as they are supposed to. Regression tests are automated to provide developers with immediate feedback regarding the effect on the system of changes recently made.
- *Release Building* - Packaging up the class files, configuration files, documentation, graphics, certificates, etc. into a distributable installation file (i.e. a release).
- *Quality Assurance Testing* - Installing the release and running a series of functional and stress tests on it for the purpose of finding bugs.
- *Deployment* - Installing the release at the customer site and getting it running.
- *Bug Tracking* - Keeping track of bugs that are reported and which releases they are fixed in.

The phases are ordered somewhat temporally, but are not strictly sequential; there is some overlap and some groups of phases are done in iterative cycles. The process involves continuous unit test and integration and frequent small releases that facilitate early customer feedback. This approach makes Xetex particularly well positioned to handle projects where requirements are initially vague and/or evolve rapidly throughout the development cycle.

Project progress is formally tracked and reported to the customer weekly. This provides the customer with continuously updated decision making information and allows Xetex to quickly adjust to changing priorities. The process is highly structured but also lightweight, and flexible enough to be customized to meet specific project requirements.

13. What sort of customer support does Xetex provide?

Xetex is seriously devoted to providing the highest level of technical support to its customers. To this end technical support questions submitted via email are distributed to most developers at Xetex in addition to the dedicated support staff. In addition to dedicating developer resources to providing technical support for configuration issues, this also takes the form of providing extremely timely fixes to customers.

Xetex products have always been designed to be customer installable. This is not any different today, but in response to customer requests Xetex will send engineers on-site to perform basic installation, configuration and training. This allows even the most complex PKI environments to be integrated and deployed in a professional and robust manner.

Customer support is provided via email and telephone between the hours of 9:00am and 5:00pm (Pacific) Monday through Friday.

14. What is Xetex's involvement with Bank of America and Identrus?

As a founding member and major technology contributor to Identrus, Bank of America's goal was to establish the viability of its public key infrastructure by becoming the first financial institution to receive Identrus certification. Having worked successfully with Xetex on a previous PKI pilot project, Bank of America retained Xetex to help design, develop, and integrate its Identrus infrastructure. Specifically, Bank of America used Xetex to accomplish the following:

- Xetex developed designed and implemented an X500 directory schema, which supports the integration of all PKI components.
- Xetex assisted the directory product vendor in designing, developing, and integrating their directory-based online certificate status protocol (OCSP) responder product. This OCSP responder product can obtain certificate status using the attributes from the directory, without waiting for the publication of a certificate revocation list (CRL).
- To enable certificate management functions to be used remotely by customers, Xetex developed a set of web-based certificate management applications such as issuance status inquiry, certificate suspension, certificate revocation, and CRL reconciliation. Integration with the directory allows these applications to share a consistent view with the OCSP responder and allows the responder to provide online status in real time.
- To enable business customers to register for, obtain, and activate their smart cards remotely and in an automated fashion, Xetex developed an integrated suite of directory-based certificate issuance applications such as customer enrollment, administrative approval, smart card distribution, and smart card activation.
- Xetex developed a Java library for integrating directory applications that was used to develop all of the certificate issuance and management applications described above and to integrate the selected smart card personalization product. The library addresses many of the traditional syntactic and semantic issues related to directory application integration and hides the details of LDAP schema and Secure Sockets from applications programmers, allowing them to work with application level abstractions.
- Xetex supported the deployment of the infrastructure and supported Bank of America and Identrus throughout the Day 3 interoperability and pre-production testing.

Xetex — customer driven technology

By providing a common directory infrastructure and software to support public key issuance, management, and operations, Xetex established a framework that facilitates interoperability and automation of the vendor products chosen by Bank of America. This framework was instrumental in Bank of America becoming the first Identrus certified bank.

15. What products does Xetex have experience with?

- LDAP Directories (iPlanet, Computer Associates eTrust, OpenLDAP)
- OCSP Responder (Computer Associates OCSPPro, Valicert VA, custom-developed OCSP Responder)
- DSMS (Kyberpass, custom-developed OCSP Requester)
- Certification Authorities (Verisign CA via CRS, OpenSSL, Baltimore UniCERT CA)
- Web Authentication/Authorization (Netegrity SiteMinder)
- Java Servlet Engines (JRun, Jakarta Tomcat, Apache JServ)
- Smart Cards (Litronic JCryptos, ISIL)
- Soft certificate signing and management via web browser certificate stores (Netscape Communicator and MS Internet Explorer)
- Hardware Security Modules (nCipher, Rainbow)

Xetex is adding interfaces to *PKIT*[™] and testing interoperability with new vendor products on a regular basis. Please check with us to determine if an interface to a specific product has already been integrated into *PKIT*[™].

16. Does Xetex accept fixed-price contracts?

Generally no, since we have yet to see a *fixed scope* project. However, we understand the business drivers behind fixed-pricing, and believe that we can always come up with a value proposition that is compelling.