

MOCK HEARING – SIMULATION ONLY

HEARING SYNTHESIS NOTE

Record, Arguments, Decision and Evidentiary Lessons

Southbridge Technologies, Inc. v. ApexGrid Infrastructure, Inc

THE CORE QUESTION

When materially conflicting electronic records are presented, what evidentiary weight should be assigned to the disputed records when they are tested against fixed certified references, a stipulated automatic-certification rule, independently reproducible verification, and a complete stipulated user certification history?

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This mock hearing is an adversarial evidentiary exercise, not a product demonstration. Two companies dispute whether ApexGrid later added Options C and D to an Order Form after an earlier, certified A+B election. The hearing tests authenticity, integrity, provenance and evidentiary weight by forcing each side to argue from the same stipulated technical record. **(Hearing Protocol; Ex. 12.)**

The exercise assigns no formal judicial burden of proof; the Neutral evaluates the relative persuasiveness of the complete evidentiary record without treating the parties' advocacy assignments as legal burdens. **(Hearing Protocol § XVI.)**

THE RECORD IN ONE MINUTE

- Exhibits 01-03: contract and valid September 24 extension of the Election Period through 5:00 p.m. CDT.
- Exhibits 04-05: certified reference email and Order Form showing Service A + Option B, with Options C/D unselected.
- Exhibits 06-07: disputed later email and Order Form purporting to add Options C/D.
- Exhibits 16 and 18: independent technical verification of the certified reference records; Exhibit 18 also protects the attachment SHA-256 linking Exhibit 04 to Exhibit 05.
- Exhibit 12: foundational stipulation governing the valid extension, automatic outbound-email certification rule, certified-content and attachment-hash relationships, negative-record evidence, and the scope and limitations of Exhibits 13-21.
- Exhibit 21: adds a separate system-record layer: the complete stipulated September 24 user history contains no Exhibit 06 record.

NEUTRAL'S BOTTOM LINE

The Neutral gives substantial weight to Exhibits 04 and 05 and finds that Exhibits 06 and 07 are not sufficiently reliable to establish a later B+C+D election. The Neutral expressly makes no finding that either disputed record was fabricated, identifies no author or alterer, and makes no finding of fraud, knowledge or intent. **(Neutral Decision, §§ I, XVII-XVIII.)**

EVIDENTIARY ARCHITECTURE

The record is strongest when viewed as layered evidence rather than as a single “certified versus uncertified” comparison.

Layer	Key record(s)	What it contributes
Contractual foundation	Exs. 01-03	A later September 24 election was contractually possible; this does not establish that one occurred.
Certified reference election	Exs. 04-05	A+B is fixed in two mutually consistent certified records. Exhibit 05 is stipulated byte-for-byte identical to the PDF attachment whose SHA-256 was recorded with Exhibit 04.
Disputed later election	Exs. 06-07	Exhibit 06 purports to add C/D at 12:44:43 p.m.; Exhibit 07 reflects the same B+C+D position.
Automatic email certification	Ex. 12 ¶ 5	Every outbound email sent from Laura Bennett’s ApexGrid corporate mailbox generated its own separate Certidox record and QR code without separate action by Laura.
Independent technical verification	Exs. 16, 18	Certified content can be reconstructed; payload and manifest hashes can be checked; exact manifest hashes can be tested against DigiStamp RFC 3161 message imprints.
Negative record evidence	Exs. 06, 12, 21	Exhibit 06 has no corresponding certification record or QR of its own; the complete stipulated September 24 user history contains no corresponding Exhibit 06 record.
System-record layer	Ex. 21	Service-side certification-history evidence; not an independent cryptographic bundle, but complete by stipulation for the relevant user/date.
Later conduct	Exs. 08-11	Invoice and subsequent correspondence show reliance and dispute context, not independent authentication of the earlier disputed event.

Why the Certified Reference Is Strong

Exhibit 05 is not merely a PDF bearing a QR code. Exhibit 16 reconstructs the exact certified PDF as document.pdf. Exhibit 18 reconstructs the certified email-content representation associated with Exhibit 04 and records protected attachment metadata. The matching attachment SHA-256 is stipulated to establish byte-for-byte identity between Exhibit 05 and the PDF attachment identified with Exhibit 04. The independent verification path separates the evidentiary proposition from reliance on a Certidox-generated display.

(Ex. 12 ¶¶ 6, 8-9, 14; Exs. 16, 18.)

Important Technical Limits

- DigiStamp timestamps the exact manifest hash, not the reconstructed payload directly.
- DigiStamp does not independently attest to the Certidox certification-event time.
- Exhibit 18 reconstructs `document.json`, not the native `.eml` byte-for-byte; the email bundle does not contain attachment bytes as separate payloads.
- Current Certidox status is a separate live service-side value

THE ADVERSARIAL POSITIONS

APEXGRID - Challenge to Exhibits 06 and 07	SOUTHBRIDGE - Defense of Exhibits 06 and 07
• The extension made a later election possible, but possibility is not proof that it occurred. • Exhibits 04 and 05 create a cryptographically linked, independently testable A+B reference state. • Exhibit 06 purports to be another outbound Laura Bennett email, yet lacks the record and QR the stipulated workflow would generate. • Exhibit 21 adds a separate system-record layer: the complete stipulated September 24 user history contains no Exhibit 06 record. • Exhibit 07 is different from Exhibit 05 and lacks the independently verifiable reference chain supporting Exhibit 05. • No finding of fraud or authorship is necessary to conclude that 06/07 are insufficient proof of a later election.	• Exhibits 04 and 05 prove an earlier A+B state, not the impossibility of a later state before 5:00 p.m. • Exhibit 06 is a native .eml with conventional email structure; the record does not stipulate that its headers or DKIM signature are invalid. • Exhibit 21 is adverse evidence, but it is a service-side system record, not an independent cryptographic bundle, and does not by itself establish falsity. • A different SHA-256 proves nonidentity, not falsification; the cause and authorship of the difference remain unresolved. • No rule required every Order Form version to receive separate document certification, so Exhibit 07 cannot be rejected merely because it lacks one. • Authentication and evidentiary weight remain for the Neutral on the complete record.

Where the Arguments Meet

The strongest feature of the hearing is that neither party needs caricature. ApexGrid accepts the real limits of the technical evidence. Southbridge accepts the complete Exhibit 21 history and the absence of an Exhibit 06 certification trace. The dispute is therefore concentrated on inference and evidentiary weight, not on contested descriptions of the system. **(ApexGrid Br. §§ VII, XII-XV; Southbridge Br. §§ III, X-XII.)**

The Critical Evidentiary Distinction

“Standing alone” is not the same as “without probative force.”

The stipulation prevents a categorical rule that uncertified = false. It does not prevent the Neutral from giving substantial weight to the absence when combined with the automatic-certification rule and a complete stipulated certification history.

THE NEUTRAL'S REASONING AND DECISION

1. **Certified reference records:** Substantial weight. Exhibits 04 and 05 are mutually consistent, cryptographically linked, and supported by separate reproducible verification paths.
2. **Byte-for-byte attachment linkage:** Substantial corroborative significance. The matching SHA-256 establishes, by stipulation, that Exhibit 05 is the exact PDF identified by the protected attachment hash associated with Exhibit 04.
3. **Automatic email certification rule:** Substantial significance. It establishes the expected certification trace for an outbound email actually sent from Laura Bennett's ApexGrid mailbox.
4. **Exhibit 06 + Exhibit 21:** Substantial adverse significance. The absence is not considered alone: Exhibit 06 lacks its expected trace, and the complete stipulated September 24 user history contains no corresponding record.
5. **Independent verification / DigiStamp:** Substantial additional weight as to integrity and historical verifiability of the certified references, subject to the stated limits of manifest timestamping and email reconstruction.
6. **Exhibit 07:** Different SHA-256 = nonidentity, not falsification. Lack of separate document certification receives limited negative weight because no rule required every Order Form to be separately certified.
7. **Later conduct:** Contextual and corroborative only. Exhibit 10 is Laura's later certified position; Exhibit 11 shows Southbridge's reliance on 06/07, not their authenticity.
8. **Ultimate weight of 06/07:** Insufficient to establish that Laura Bennett made a subsequent election of Options C and D.

Decision

ApexGrid's challenge is sustained to the extent Exhibits 06 and 07 are offered as proof that Laura Bennett subsequently elected Options C and D.

Exhibits 06 and 07 remain in the evidentiary record, but they are not accorded sufficient weight to establish that later election. The Neutral makes no finding of fabrication, authorship, fraud, knowledge or intent.

Why the Result Is Persuasive

The decision does not say "Certidox wins." It gives Southbridge several points: later election was possible; DKIM is not proven invalid; different hashes do not prove falsification; Exhibit 21 is not a cryptographic bundle; Exhibit 10 does not independently reconstruct 12:44:43 p.m. The result nevertheless turns because those concessions do not bridge the provenance gap in Exhibit 06 when the negative-record evidence is evaluated cumulatively. **(Neutral Decision, §§ VI-XV.)**

WHAT THE HEARING DEMONSTRATES

The hearing's value is evidentiary, not promotional. It illustrates how a dispute changes when one set of electronic records can be compared with fixed reference evidence whose historical content and integrity can later be tested independently.

1. **Appearance is not provenance.** A native .eml can contain familiar headers, threading, MIME structure and DKIM fields while still presenting an unresolved provenance question. The relevant inquiry is not whether the artifact looks authentic, but what its provenance-bearing fields actually establish.
2. **In this record, the certified reference evidence derives substantial probative value from its independent testability.** The strongest feature of that evidence is reproducibility: reconstruct the certified payload, verify the payload-to-manifest linkage, hash the exact manifest, and compare that hash with the RFC 3161 message imprint.
3. **Here, the negative-record evidence derives probative force from its stipulated foundation.** A missing QR or certification record, standing alone, proves little. Its significance increases because the parties stipulate that every qualifying outbound email generated its own certification record and QR code and that the relevant September 24 user certification history is complete.
4. **Different evidence layers answer different questions.** Independent bundles test content integrity and historical verification. Exhibit 21 addresses certification history. User-facing displays show what Certidox presents. None should be conflated with another.
5. **The hearing separates authenticity from fraud.** A record can be insufficiently reliable to prove a transaction without the Neutral identifying a fabricator or finding fraudulent intent. That distinction is central to professional evidentiary analysis.
6. **The result comes from cumulative reasoning.** No single QR code, hash, timestamp, system record, header field or later email decides the case. The persuasive force comes from how the layers fit together.

Five Documents That Orient the Reader

- HEARING PROTOCOL AND ORDER OF PROCEEDINGS - defines scope, advocacy responsibilities and the Neutral's task.
- ISSUES PRESENTED AND PARTY POSITIONS - frames the eight principal evidentiary questions and both sides' strongest arguments.
- EVIDENTIARY CHRONOLOGY - separates message dates, certification-event times and DigiStamp `genTimes` and places the key events in sequence.
- APEXGRID and SOUTHBRIDGE EVIDENTIARY BRIEFS - present genuinely adverse interpretations of the same stipulated record.
- NEUTRAL'S EVIDENTIARY DECISION AND REASONS - resolves evidentiary weight while expressly leaving fabrication, authorship, knowledge and intent undecided.

THE HEARING IN ONE SENTENCE

The dispute is no longer reduced to competing recollections or competing electronic appearances: the contested records can be tested against fixed certified references, reproducible technical evidence and a stipulated certification history, while the ultimate evidentiary inference remains for the Neutral.

MOCK HEARING – SIMULATION ONLY – DEMONSTRATIVE EXHIBIT COMPARISON AGAINST THE CERTIDOX-CERTIFIED REFERENCE RECORD EXHIBITS 05 AND 07

	CERTIDOX-CERTIFIED REFERENCE	DISPUTED VERSION
Source Exhibit	Exhibit 05	Exhibit 07
SHA-256	e90e117a...3c59cd9e	fca4672d...acb6cb07
Service A	Selected	Selected
Option B	Selected	Selected
Option C	Not selected	Selected
Option D	Not selected	Selected
Independent reconstruction	Exact certified PDF independently reconstructible through Exhibit 16	No corresponding Certidox document-certification record from which a Certidox-certified reference could be independently reconstructed
Link to contemporaneous certified email	SHA-256 matches the PDF attachment hash recorded in certified Exhibit 04, as stipulated in Exhibit 12	SHA-256 differs from Exhibit 05 and from the attachment hash recorded with Exhibit 04
Temporal position	Certified reference predates the 12:44:43 PM message date borne by Exhibit 06	Later produced by Southbridge as the disputed B+C+D Order Form. Exhibit 12 does not stipulate whether its creation occurred before or after 12:44:43 PM
Independent timestamp evidence	Exhibit 16 cryptographically links the exact certified PDF through its manifest to DigiStamp RFC 3161 timestamp evidence with a genTime of 9:58:26.26 AM CDT	No corresponding Certidox document-certification record. Absence alone does not establish falsity

Important limitation: Exhibit 12 does not stipulate that every Order Form created, modified or transmitted in connection with the transaction would necessarily have generated a separate Certidox document-certification record. The absence of such a record for Exhibit 07, standing alone, does not establish falsity.

Exhibit 05 serves as the certified reference Order Form for this comparison.

It is the certified reference document independently reconstructible through Exhibit 16 and, under Exhibit 12, byte-for-byte identical to the PDF attachment whose SHA-256 was recorded with the certified Exhibit 04 email. Exhibit 07 has a different SHA-256 and different Option C and D selections.

CERTIDOX-CERTIFIED VERSION
Exhibit 05

DocuSign Envelope ID: B2448BAD-E913-8AE0-9214-E3BF16F7E7190

perGrid Infrastructure, Inc.



SOUTHBRIDGE TECHNOLOGIES, INC.
ENTERPRISE SERVICES ORDER FORM

Order No. ST-AG-2026-0914 Effective Date September 14, 2026

1. PARTIES

PROVIDER Southbridge Technologies, Inc., a Delaware corporation 200 West Madison Street, Suite 1800 Chicago, Illinois 60606 Attn: Sarah Mitchell, Vice President, Enterprise Accounts Email: smitchell@southbridge-tech.com	CUSTOMER ApexGrid Infrastructure, Inc., an Illinois corporation 401 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 1500 Chicago, Illinois 60611 Attn: Laura Bennett, Vice President, Procurement Email: lbennett@apexgrid-infra.com
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Laura Bennett is Customer's Authorized Representative for purposes of this Order Form and any Optional Service election under Section 4.

2. SERVICES AND PRICING
Customer orders the Services marked below. Optional Services may be added only during the Election Period under Section 4.

Selection	Service	Description	Annual Fee
☐	SERVICE A - U.S. Core Infrastructure Platform	Hosted infrastructure operations platform for Customer's U.S. business, including configuration, implementation, onboarding and production access	\$66,000
☒	OPTION B - Predictive Grid Analytics	Activation and configuration of predictive analytics and operational forecasting functionality within Service A, including standard dashboards and model configuration	\$20,000
☐	OPTION C - Canadian Operations Deployment	Extension of Service A to Customer's Canadian operations, including environment configuration, onboarding and production support	\$45,000
☐	OPTION D - 24/7 Managed Response & Resilience	24/7 monitoring, alert triage, incident coordination and resilience support for environments covered by Service A	\$55,000

Initial Annual Fee: \$80,000. All fees are stated in U.S. dollars and exclude applicable sales and use taxes.

3. TERM AND SERVICE COMMENCEMENT
The initial service term begins on September 21, 2026 and continues for twelve (12) months. Service A will be scheduled for production commencement on September 21, 2026. Any Optional Service timely elected under Section 4 will be scheduled to commence on September 21, 2026 and will run concurrently with the initial service term unless the Parties agree otherwise in writing.

4. OPTIONAL SERVICES - ELECTION PERIOD
Provider will reserve the pricing and implementation capacity shown in Section 2 for Options B, C and D through 12:00 p.m. Central Time on September 18, 2026 (the "Election Period") so that any timely elected Optional Service may be included in the September 21 deployment.
During the Election Period, Customer may add one or more Optional Services by delivering a written election from Customer's Authorized Representative that clearly identifies the Optional Service or Services elected. A written election may be made by email or by transmitting a copy of this Order Form with the applicable additional selection box or boxes marked.
An election delivered by email, whether contained in the email body or transmitted as an attachment, must bear the Authorized Representative's typed name or customer email signature block, intended to authenticate the election. Provider may begin provisioning an Optional Service upon receipt of the applicable written election.

5. IMPLEMENTATION
Following execution of this Order Form, Provider will begin implementation planning for Service A. Provider and Customer will coordinate access, technical prerequisites and deployment activities through their designated project teams.

 

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DISPUTED VERSION
Exhibit 07

DocuSign Envelope ID: B2448BAD-E913-8AE0-9214-E3BF16F7E7190

perGrid Infrastructure, Inc.

SOUTHBRIDGE TECHNOLOGIES, INC.
ENTERPRISE SERVICES ORDER FORM

Order No. ST-AG-2026-0914 Effective Date September 14, 2026

1. PARTIES

PROVIDER Southbridge Technologies, Inc., a Delaware corporation 200 West Madison Street, Suite 1800 Chicago, Illinois 60606 Attn: Sarah Mitchell, Vice President, Enterprise Accounts Email: smitchell@southbridge-tech.com	CUSTOMER ApexGrid Infrastructure, Inc., an Illinois corporation 401 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 1500 Chicago, Illinois 60611 Attn: Laura Bennett, Vice President, Procurement Email: lbennett@apexgrid-infra.com
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Laura Bennett is Customer's Authorized Representative for purposes of this Order Form and any Optional Service election under Section 4.

2. SERVICES AND PRICING
Customer orders the Services marked below. Optional Services may be added only during the Election Period under Section 4.

Selection	Service	Description	Annual Fee
☐	SERVICE A - U.S. Core Infrastructure Platform	Hosted infrastructure operations platform for Customer's U.S. business, including configuration, implementation, onboarding and production access	\$66,000
☒	OPTION B - Predictive Grid Analytics	Activation and configuration of predictive analytics and operational forecasting functionality within Service A, including standard dashboards and model configuration	\$20,000
☒	OPTION C - Canadian Operations Deployment	Extension of Service A to Customer's Canadian operations, including environment configuration, onboarding and production support	\$45,000
☒	OPTION D - 24/7 Managed Response & Resilience	24/7 monitoring, alert triage, incident coordination and resilience support for environments covered by Service A	\$55,000

Initial Annual Fee: \$80,000. All fees are stated in U.S. dollars and exclude applicable sales and use taxes.

3. TERM AND SERVICE COMMENCEMENT
The initial service term begins on September 21, 2026 and continues for twelve (12) months. Service A will be scheduled for production commencement on September 21, 2026. Any Optional Service timely elected under Section 4 will be scheduled to commence on September 21, 2026 and will run concurrently with the initial service term unless the Parties agree otherwise in writing.

4. OPTIONAL SERVICES - ELECTION PERIOD
Provider will reserve the pricing and implementation capacity shown in Section 2 for Options B, C and D through 12:00 p.m. Central Time on September 18, 2026 (the "Election Period") so that any timely elected Optional Service may be included in the September 21 deployment.
During the Election Period, Customer may add one or more Optional Services by delivering a written election from Customer's Authorized Representative that clearly identifies the Optional Service or Services elected. A written election may be made by email or by transmitting a copy of this Order Form with the applicable additional selection box or boxes marked.
An election delivered by email, whether contained in the email body or transmitted as an attachment, must bear the Authorized Representative's typed name or customer email signature block, intended to authenticate the election. Provider may begin provisioning an Optional Service upon receipt of the applicable written election.

5. IMPLEMENTATION
Following execution of this Order Form, Provider will begin implementation planning for Service A. Provider and Customer will coordinate access, technical prerequisites and deployment activities through their designated project teams.

 

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WHY EXHIBIT 05 IS THE REFERENCE

Exhibit 16 independently reconstructs the exact certified PDF associated with Exhibit 05.

Exhibit 18 independently reconstructs the certified email-content representation associated with Exhibit 04, including the recorded SHA-256 of its PDF attachment.

Exhibit 12 stipulates that the matching SHA-256 establishes that Exhibit 05 is byte-for-byte identical to that attachment.

WHY THE CERTIFIED REFERENCE IS PROBATIVE

Independent reconstruction of Exhibit 05

Exhibit 16 independently reconstructs the exact certified PDF associated with Exhibit 05. The SHA-256 of that reconstructed PDF matches the payload hash recorded in its manifest.

Independent timestamp evidence

The SHA-256 of the exact manifest associated with Exhibit 05 matches the message imprint contained in the DigiStamp RFC 3161 timestamp response, which records a genTime of **9:58:26.26 AM CDT**. This predates the 12:44:43 PM message date borne by Exhibit 06.

Independent linkage to the certified email

Exhibit 18 independently reconstructs the certified email-content representation associated with Exhibit 04. That representation records the SHA-256 of its PDF attachment. Under Exhibit 12, the matching SHA-256 establishes that Exhibit 05 is byte-for-byte identical to that attachment.

Second independent timestamp

The DigiStamp RFC 3161 timestamp associated with Exhibit 04 records a genTime of **10:18:34.82 AM CDT**, also before the 12:44:43 PM message date borne by Exhibit 06.

Reproducible verification

The reconstruction and timestamp verification can be reproduced using independently available technical tools and DigiStamp trust material obtained independently of Certidox. Except for current certification status, the technical verification does not depend on the Certidox user-facing verification display.

These facts do not, by themselves, establish that Exhibit 07 is false, determine who personally created or altered it, or establish fraudulent intent.

MOCK HEARING - SIMULATION ONLY - DEMONSTRATIVE EXHIBIT

EXHIBIT 20 - COMPARISON OF EXHIBIT 04 CERTIFIED REFERENCE EMAIL AND EXHIBIT 06 DISPUTED EMAIL

The comparison below distinguishes the certified reference communication from the disputed message bearing the later 12:44:43 PM message date and identifies the evidentiary limits of each.

	CERTIDOX-CERTIFIED REFERENCE EMAIL	DISPUTED EMAIL
Source exhibit	Exhibit 04	Exhibit 06
Status in record	CERTIDOX-CERTIFIED REFERENCE	DISPUTED MESSAGE
Message date / reference time	Certified representation records message date 10:18:30 AM CDT; Certidox certification-event time 10:18:32 AM CDT; DigiStamp genTime 10:18:34.82 AM CDT	Bears a message date of 12:44:43 PM CDT
Core message content	ApexGrid elects Option B - Predictive Grid Analytics. "Options C and D remain unselected."	Purports to state: "we've decided to add Options C and D as well" and "Please proceed with Options B, C and D."
QR code for this message	Own Certidox QR code generated through the stipulated automatic outbound-email certification workflow	No Certidox QR code belonging to the purported 12:44:43 PM message. The QR visible in the quoted earlier thread resolves to the certification record associated with Exhibit 02.
Separate Certidox certification record	Yes. The stipulated automatic workflow generated a separate record for Exhibit 04.	No corresponding Certidox certification record exists for the purported 12:44:43 PM message. Exhibit 21, which by stipulation accurately displays all Certidox document and email certification records associated with Laura Bennett's user account dated September 24, 2026, contains no corresponding record for Exhibit 06.
Automatic workflow consequence	Exhibit 12 stipulates that every outbound email sent from Laura Bennett's ApexGrid corporate mailbox was automatically certified through Certidox and generated its own separate Certidox certification record and QR code. The certification process required no separate action by Laura Bennett.	Exhibit 06 purports to be an outbound email from that mailbox, but has no corresponding Certidox certification record and no Certidox QR code of its own.
Independent verification	Exhibit 18 independently reconstructs the certified email-content representation and verifies its payload-to-manifest and RFC 3161 timestamp relationships.	No corresponding Certidox certification record exists for the purported message.
Associated Order Form	Protected attachment metadata records the SHA-256 of the PDF attachment. Exhibit 12 stipulates that the matching SHA-256 establishes that Exhibit 05 is byte-for-byte identical to that attachment. Exhibit 05 shows A+B selected, with C and D unselected.	Associated with disputed Exhibit 07, which shows A+B+C+D selected and has a different SHA-256 from Exhibit 05 and from the PDF-attachment SHA-256 recorded with Exhibit 04.
Headers / DKIM	Not the basis of the certified reference chain described here.	Headers and a DKIM-Signature header appear on Exhibit 06, but Exhibit 12 does not stipulate their authenticity, provenance, cryptographic validity or evidentiary effect.
Key limitation	Does not, by itself, establish personal authorship, authority, factual truth or legal effect.	The absence of a Certidox QR code or certification record, standing alone, does not establish falsity.

Key point: Exhibit 04 is supported by its own Certidox certification record and an independently reconstructible technical verification path. Exhibit 06 bears a later message date but has no corresponding Certidox certification record or QR code of its own; Exhibit 21's stipulated September 24 user certification history contains no corresponding record for Exhibit 06.

EXHIBIT 04 - CERTIFIED REFERENCE	EXHIBIT 06 - DISPUTED MESSAGE
Certified message content: “Option B - Predictive Grid Analytics” “Options C and D remain unselected.” Attachment: updated Enterprise Services Order Form. Own Certidox QR code and separate certification record under the stipulated automatic workflow	Purported message content: “Following up on my earlier message, we’ve decided to add Options C and D as well.” “Please proceed with Options B, C and D.” Associated with disputed Exhibit 07. No QR code belonging to the purported 12:44:43 PM message and no corresponding Certidox certification record.

WHY THE CONTRAST IS PROBATIVE

- **Automatic certification.** Exhibit 12 stipulates that every outbound email sent from Laura Bennett’s ApexGrid corporate mailbox was automatically certified through Certidox and generated its own separate Certidox certification record and QR code. The certification process required no separate action by Laura Bennett.
- **Exhibit 06 has no certification trace of its own.** The purported 12:44:43 PM message has no corresponding Certidox certification record and no Certidox QR code of its own. The QR code visible in the quoted earlier thread resolves to the certification record associated with Exhibit 02.
- **User certification history.** Exhibit 21 accurately displays, by stipulation, all Certidox document and email certification records associated with Laura Bennett’s user account dated September 24, 2026. It displays the records associated with Exhibits 02, 05, 04 and 10, but no corresponding record for Exhibit 06.
- **Evidentiary limitation.** Exhibit 21 is a Certidox service-side system record, not an independent cryptographic verification bundle. Neither Exhibit 21 nor the absence of a corresponding certification record, standing alone, establishes that Exhibit 06 is false, determines authorship, or establishes fraud or intent.

THE QR CODE VISIBLE IN EXHIBIT 06

The QR code visible in Exhibit 06 appears only within the quoted earlier thread. Independent verification resolves that QR code to the certification record associated with Exhibit 02. It is not a QR code for the purported 12:44:43 PM message.

1. INDEPENDENT RECONSTRUCTION OF EXHIBIT 04

Exhibit 18 independently reconstructs the certified email-content representation associated with Exhibit 04 as `document.json`. The reconstructed representation records the certified message content electing Option B and expressly stating that Options C and D remain unselected, together with protected attachment metadata.

2. INDEPENDENT TIMESTAMP EVIDENCE

The DigiStamp RFC 3161 timestamp associated with Exhibit 04 records a `genTime` of 10:18:34.82 AM CDT. This precedes the 12:44:43 PM message date borne by Exhibit 06. The timestamp verification can be reproduced using independently available technical tools and DigiStamp trust material obtained independently of Certidox.

3. LINKAGE TO THE CERTIFIED ORDER FORM

The reconstructed Exhibit 04 certified email-content representation records the SHA-256 of its PDF attachment. Under Exhibit 12, the matching SHA-256 establishes that Exhibit 05 is byte-for-byte identical to that attachment for purposes of this mock hearing. Exhibit 05 shows Service A and Option B selected, with Options C and D unselected.

4. REPRODUCIBLE VERIFICATION

Except for current certification status, the reconstruction and timestamp verification described in Exhibit 18 do not require access to the original mailbox, the original mail server, the Certidox live verification interface or reliance on a Certidox-generated verification display.

5. LIMITS OF THIS DEMONSTRATIVE

- This demonstrative does not, by itself, establish that Exhibit 06 is false.
- It does not determine who authored, created or altered Exhibit 06.
- It does not establish knowledge, fraudulent intent, admissibility or ultimate evidentiary weight.
- The presence of header fields and a DKIM-Signature header in Exhibit 06 is stipulated only as to presence; their authenticity, provenance and cryptographic validity are not stipulated.

The absence of a Certidox QR code or certification record, standing alone, does not establish falsity. Its significance here must be evaluated together with the automatic outbound-email certification rule stipulated in Exhibit 12 and the September 24 user certification history reflected in Exhibit 21.

MOCK HEARING – SIMULATION ONLY – SYSTEM RECORD EXHIBIT

EXHIBIT 21 – CERTIDOX USER CERTIFICATION HISTORY

LAURA BENNETT – SEPTEMBER 24, 2026

This exhibit reproduces the Certidox “My documents” certification history displayed in Laura Bennett’s authenticated user account for ApexGrid Infrastructure, Inc.

For purposes of this mock hearing, Exhibit 12 stipulates that Exhibit 21 accurately displays all Certidox document and email certification records associated with Laura Bennett’s user account dated September 24, 2026.

The underlying certification data are stored in encrypted form. Access to the “My documents” certification history requires authentication to Laura Bennett’s account, and Laura Bennett was the only authorized user of that account.

The displayed history shows four Certidox certification records dated September 24, 2026:

- **9:48 AM CDT** – Email – *Order ST-AG-2026-0914 – Election Period*
- **9:58 AM CDT** – Services order form – *Order ST-AG-2026-0914 – Option B Election*
- **10:18 AM CDT** – Email – *Re: Order ST-AG-2026-0914 – Election Period*
- **6:04 PM CDT** – Email – *Re: Invoice ST-2026-0924-01 – Order ST-AG-2026-09...*

No certification record corresponding to the purported 12:44:43 p.m. email identified as Exhibit 06 appears in the displayed certification history.

Exhibit 21 is a Certidox service-side system record, not an independent cryptographic verification bundle.

The absence of a corresponding certification record for Exhibit 06, standing alone, does not establish that Exhibit 06 is false.

Exhibit 21 does not determine authorship of any disputed record or establish fraud, intent or ultimate evidentiary weight.

MOCK HEARING – SIMULATION ONLY – SYSTEM RECORD EXHIBIT
EXHIBIT 21 – CERTIDOX USER CERTIFICATION HISTORY
LAURA BENNETT – SEPTEMBER 24, 2026

Certidox

My documents

Certify

Settings

Change password

2FA

Certidox API

Laura Bennett

Sign out

Documents of ApexGrid Infrastructure, Inc.

+ Certify

Date	Title	Type	Status	Actions
🕒 09/24/2026, 06:04 PM CDT	Re: Invoice ST-2026-0924-01 – Order ST-AG-2026-09	Email	🔵 Active	  
🕒 09/24/2026, 10:18 AM CDT	Re: Order ST-AG-2026-0914 – Election Period	Email	🔵 Active	  
🕒 09/24/2026, 09:58 AM CDT	Order ST-AG-2026-0914 – Option B Election	Services order form	🔵 Active	   
🕒 09/24/2026, 09:48 AM CDT	Order ST-AG-2026-0914 – Election Period	Email	🔵 Active	  

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MOCK HEARING – SIMULATION ONLY

NEUTRAL’S EVIDENTIARY DECISION AND REASONS

Southbridge Technologies, Inc. v. ApexGrid Infrastructure, Inc.
Concerning the Authenticity and Evidentiary Weight of Exhibits 06 and 07

I. THE QUESTION PRESENTED

This hearing does not ask whether Certidox proves fraud.

It does not ask whether an uncertified electronic record is necessarily false.

It does not ask the Neutral to determine who created or altered the disputed records, whether any person knew a record to be false, or whether any person acted with fraudulent intent.

And it does not ask the Neutral to endorse Certidox as a product.

The question is narrower: **What evidentiary weight should be assigned to Exhibits 06 and 07 when those disputed records are tested against contemporaneous certified reference records, independently reproducible technical verification, the stipulated automatic-certification rule applicable to Laura Bennett’s outbound email, and the stipulated September 24 certification history reflected in Exhibit 21?**

The Hearing Protocol requires the Neutral to distinguish a stipulated fact from an evidentiary inference and from an ultimate conclusion. It expressly does not assign or purport to replicate a formal judicial burden of proof.

Having considered the complete record and the competing positions advanced by ApexGrid and Southbridge, the Neutral concludes:

Exhibits 04 and 05 are entitled to substantial evidentiary weight as the last reliably established contemporaneous record of ApexGrid’s election.

Exhibits 06 and 07 are not sufficiently reliable to establish that Laura Bennett subsequently elected Options C and D.

The Neutral does **not** determine that Exhibits 06 or 07 were fabricated.

The Neutral does **not** determine who created or altered either disputed record.

The Neutral makes **no finding of fraud, knowledge or intent.**

Those are different questions.

II. THE PARTIES AGREE ON MORE THAN THEY DISAGREE ABOUT

The parties' briefs reveal substantial common ground.

ApexGrid accepts that a later election was contractually possible, that lack of Certidox certification does not automatically make a record false, that differing SHA-256 values establish difference rather than falsification, and that Exhibit 21 is a service-side system record rather than an independent cryptographic verification bundle.

Southbridge, in turn, accepts the strength of the certified A+B reference evidence, the automatic outbound-email certification rule, the stipulated completeness of the September 24 certification history reflected in Exhibit 21, and the fact that no corresponding Exhibit 06 record appears in that history.

The dispute therefore is not principally about the underlying technical facts.

It is about the **inference those facts support**.

That distinction is important.

III. A LATER ELECTION WAS CONTRACTUALLY POSSIBLE

The original Enterprise Services Order Form identified Laura Bennett as ApexGrid's Authorized Representative for Optional Service elections. As originally executed, Service A was selected and Options B, C and D were unselected. The original Election Period expired at noon Central Time on September 18, 2026. **(Ex. 01; Ex. 12 ¶ 2.)**

On September 24, Laura Bennett requested an extension through 5:00 p.m. CDT. Sarah Mitchell agreed on behalf of Southbridge. The parties stipulate that the extension was valid and that the relevant representatives possessed authority to make and accept it. **(Exs. 02–03; Ex. 12 ¶¶ 3–4.)**

The chronology therefore establishes a proposition favorable to Southbridge:

ApexGrid could have changed its election after Exhibits 04 and 05 and before 5:00 p.m. CDT.

Southbridge is correct that an earlier certified A+B election does not, merely by existing, freeze the parties' later contractual choices.

ApexGrid does not materially dispute that proposition. Its position is that contractual possibility is not evidence that the later election actually occurred.

The Neutral agrees with both propositions.

A later election was possible.

The issue is whether the evidence reliably establishes that one occurred.

IV. EXHIBITS 04 AND 05 FORM A STRONG CONTEMPORANEOUS REFERENCE RECORD

Exhibit 05 is the Certidox-certified Order Form showing Service A and Option B selected, with Options C and D unselected. Its certification record reflects a Certidox certification-event time of **9:58:22 a.m. CDT**, and the associated DigiStamp RFC 3161 response records a genTime of **9:58:26.26 a.m. CDT**. (Ex. 05; Ex. 12 ¶ 8; Ex. 16.)

Exhibit 04 is the certified email stating that ApexGrid elects Option B and that Options C and D remain unselected. Its reconstructed certified email-content representation records a message date of **10:18:30 a.m. CDT**; its manifest records a Certidox certification-event time of **10:18:32 a.m. CDT**; and the associated DigiStamp RFC 3161 response records a genTime of **10:18:34.82 a.m. CDT**. (Ex. 04; Ex. 12 ¶ 9; Ex. 18.)

The Neutral does not conflate those time values.

A message-date field, a Certidox certification-event time and a DigiStamp genTime are different evidentiary facts. The chronology expressly preserves that distinction.

The more important point is the relationship between Exhibits 04 and 05.

Exhibit 18 records protected attachment metadata containing the SHA-256 of the PDF associated with Exhibit 04. The SHA-256 of Exhibit 05 matches that value, and Exhibit 12 stipulates that the match establishes byte-for-byte identity between Exhibit 05 and the PDF attachment whose hash was recorded with Exhibit 04. (Ex. 12 ¶ 9; Exs. 16, 18.)

The certified email and certified Order Form are therefore not merely consistent narratives.

They are **technically linked records of the same A+B election**.

The Neutral assigns substantial evidentiary weight to that relationship.

V. THE CERTIFIED REFERENCE EVIDENCE CAN BE TESTED INDEPENDENTLY

ApexGrid places significant weight on the fact that Exhibits 04 and 05 do not depend exclusively upon a Certidox-generated verification screen.

That argument is persuasive.

Exhibit 16 permits independent reconstruction of the exact certified PDF associated with Exhibit 05. Its reconstructed payload hash can be checked against payload_sha256 in the exact manifest, and the SHA-256 of that manifest can be compared with the message imprint contained in the DigiStamp RFC 3161 response. **(Ex. 16; Ex. 12 ¶¶ 6, 8, 14.)**

Exhibit 18 permits the corresponding reconstruction and testing of the certified email-content representation associated with Exhibit 04, including the protected attachment metadata used to establish the linkage to Exhibit 05. **(Ex. 18; Ex. 12 ¶¶ 6, 9, 14.)**

Except for current certification status, those reconstruction and timestamp-verification procedures can be performed without reliance upon the Certidox live verification display. The email-bundle procedures likewise do not require access to the original mailbox or original mail server.

The Neutral nevertheless accepts Southbridge's technical limitations.

DigiStamp does not directly timestamp document.pdf or document.json. It timestamps the SHA-256 message imprint corresponding to the exact manifest.

DigiStamp also does not independently attest to the accuracy of Certidox's recorded certification-event time.

And Exhibit 18 reconstructs document.json, not the native .eml file byte-for-byte.

Those limitations matter.

But they do not erase the evidentiary value of the verification chain.

They define it.

The Neutral therefore finds that Exhibits 16 and 18 materially strengthen the integrity and historical-verifiability foundation of Exhibits 05 and 04.

They establish a strong **earlier reference state**.

They do not, by themselves, establish that nothing happened later.

VI. SOUTHBRIDGE'S EARLIER-STATE / LATER-STATE ARGUMENT IS LOGICALLY CORRECT

Southbridge's principal conceptual argument is sound:

Exhibits 04 and 05 establish an earlier A+B state.

Because the Election Period remained open until 5:00 p.m., the existence of that earlier state does not logically exclude a subsequent B+C+D state.

The Neutral accepts that argument.

But acceptance of that proposition does not answer the next question:

What reliable evidence establishes the alleged later election?

Southbridge relies primarily on Exhibit 06 and the associated Exhibit 07.

The evidentiary sufficiency of those records must therefore be examined on their own foundation.

VII. EXHIBIT 06 HAS FACIAL INDICIA OF AN EMAIL, BUT FACIAL INDICIA ARE NOT THE SAME AS PROVEN PROVENANCE

Exhibit 06 is produced as a native .eml file.

On its face, it contains a Return-Path identifying Laura Bennett's ApexGrid address, Delivered-To and Received fields, a DKIM-Signature header specifying the ApexGrid domain, an ApexGrid-domain Message-ID, In-Reply-To and References fields, MIME structure, an attached PDF and the earlier September 24 email thread. **(Ex. 06; Ex. 12 ¶ 10.)**

Those attributes are relevant.

The Neutral does not disregard them.

But the stipulation is deliberately limited.

The parties stipulate that those fields and data **appear** in Exhibit 06. They do not stipulate their authenticity or provenance. They do not stipulate that the DKIM signature is cryptographically valid. They do not stipulate that the header establishes authenticity, origin or authorship.

Southbridge correctly argues that the converse is also true.

The record does not establish that the DKIM signature is invalid.

It does not establish that the displayed header fields are fabricated merely because they have not been independently validated.

And native .eml form is more probative than a screenshot stripped of underlying structure.

The Neutral therefore rejects both extremes.

The conventional email attributes of Exhibit 06 receive **some weight**.

They do not, however, supply independently established provenance sufficient to overcome the contrary evidence discussed below.

A native file format establishes the form in which the artifact is presented.

It does not, without more, establish that every provenance-bearing field within that artifact is authentic.

VIII. THE ABSENCE OF AN EXHIBIT 06 CERTIFICATION RECORD IS NOT BEING CONSIDERED IN ISOLATION

Exhibit 06 bears a message date of **12:44:43 p.m. CDT** and purports to be a later outbound email from Laura Bennett adding Options C and D. (Ex. 06; Ex. 12 ¶ 10.)

The purported message itself has no corresponding Certidox certification record.

It has no Certidox QR code of its own.

The Certidox QR code visible within the quoted earlier thread resolves instead to the certification record associated with Exhibit 02. (Ex. 06; Ex. 12 ¶ 10; Ex. 20.)

Those facts alone would not determine authenticity.

Indeed, Exhibit 12 expressly provides that the absence of a corresponding certification record, standing alone, does not establish falsity.

The words “**standing alone**” matter.

They prevent the Neutral from applying a categorical rule:

uncertified = false.

The Neutral applies no such rule.

But the same words also mean that the absence may acquire evidentiary significance when combined with other stipulated facts.

That is what occurs here.

IX. THE AUTOMATIC-CERTIFICATION RULE GIVES THE ABSENCE EVIDENTIARY MEANING

The parties stipulate that **every outbound email sent from Laura Bennett's ApexGrid corporate mailbox was automatically certified through Certidox and generated its own separate certification record and QR code.** The certification process required no separate action by Laura Bennett. **(Ex. 12 ¶ 5.)**

That stipulation changes the character of the absence.

The Neutral is not reasoning: *"Exhibit 06 has no Certidox QR, therefore it is false."*

The relevant reasoning is: *"Exhibit 06 purports to be a kind of communication for which the parties stipulate that a particular certification trace was automatically generated, yet no such trace corresponds to Exhibit 06."*

That is a materially different proposition.

It does not establish falsity by itself.

It does create substantial negative-record evidence.

X. EXHIBIT 21 MATERIALLY STRENGTHENS THAT NEGATIVE-RECORD EVIDENCE

Exhibit 21 is central to the Decision.

For purposes of this hearing, the parties stipulate that Exhibit 21 accurately displays **all Certidox document and email certification records associated with Laura Bennett's user account dated September 24, 2026.**

The history displays four relevant certification records, associated with:

- Exhibit 02;
- Exhibit 05;
- Exhibit 04; and
- Exhibit 10.

No corresponding certification record for Exhibit 06 appears.

The underlying certification data are stored in encrypted form. Access to the “My documents” history requires authentication to Laura Bennett’s account, and Laura Bennett was the only authorized user of that account. **(Ex. 21; Ex. 12 ¶ 14.)**

Southbridge correctly emphasizes that Exhibit 21 is a **service-side system record**, not an independent cryptographic verification bundle.

The Neutral accepts that distinction completely.

But it does not follow that Exhibit 21 has little evidentiary significance.

The proposition Exhibit 21 is used to establish is not the independent cryptographic integrity of Exhibit 06.

Its function is different.

It establishes the **certification history associated with the relevant user account for the relevant date**.

And, critically, completeness of that history is not an inference drawn by the Neutral from Certidox’s design.

It is stipulated for purposes of this hearing.

That distinction substantially answers Southbridge’s limitation argument.

Southbridge cannot dispute the stipulated completeness of the history, and its final brief expressly does not attempt to do so.

The Neutral therefore assigns substantial weight to the following combined propositions:

1. every outbound Laura Bennett email generated its own certification record and QR code;
2. the September 24 certification history associated with Laura Bennett’s user account is stipulated to be complete for purposes of this hearing; and
3. that history contains no corresponding Exhibit 06 record.

The Neutral does **not** hold that those propositions mechanically establish fabrication.

The Neutral does hold that, cumulatively, they substantially undermine the reliability of Exhibit 06 as proof that Laura Bennett sent the alleged later B+C+D election.

XI. THE SERVICE-SIDE NATURE OF EXHIBIT 21 DOES NOT NEGATE ITS STIPULATED FUNCTION

Southbridge argues that Exhibit 21 should not be conflated with the independent verification bundles.

That argument is correct.

Exhibits 16 and 18 permit independent technical reconstruction and integrity testing.

Exhibit 21 does not.

But the comparison does not weaken Exhibit 21; it distinguishes the propositions established by different evidence.

Exhibits 16 and 18 answer:

What certified content can be independently reconstructed and technically tested?

Exhibit 21 answers:

What certification records appear in the complete stipulated September 24 history associated with Laura Bennett's user account?

Those are distinct evidentiary questions.

The record itself treats them as separate evidentiary layers.

The Neutral therefore declines to treat the phrase "service-side system record" as synonymous with "insubstantial evidence."

Its weight arises here from the stipulation governing its scope.

XII. THE STRONGEST SOUTHBRIDGE ARGUMENT DOES NOT BRIDGE THE EVIDENTIARY GAP

Southbridge does not offer an alternative technical explanation for the missing Exhibit 06 certification record.

Nor is it required to prove such an explanation merely for Exhibit 06 to remain in the record.

Southbridge instead argues that the Neutral must distinguish the stipulated facts from the ultimate conclusion of inauthenticity.

Again, the Neutral agrees.

But this distinction does not compel the Neutral to remain agnostic.

The parties have left evidentiary weight to the Neutral precisely so that inferences may be drawn from the stipulated facts.

A stipulation that an absence does not **standing alone** establish falsity is not a stipulation that the absence has no probative force.

Nor is a statement that Exhibit 21 does not **by itself** determine authenticity a direction that the Neutral disregard Exhibit 21 when it is combined with the automatic-certification rule, Exhibits 04 and 05, the independent verification evidence, and the rest of the record.

The Neutral therefore accepts Southbridge's legal and logical limitations while rejecting the conclusion Southbridge seeks to draw from them.

XIII. EXHIBIT 07 DOES NOT INDEPENDENTLY SOLVE EXHIBIT 06'S PROVENANCE PROBLEM

Exhibit 07 shows Service A and Options B, C and D selected.

Its SHA-256 differs from Exhibit 05 and from the PDF-attachment SHA-256 recorded with Exhibit 04. (Ex. 07; Ex. 12 ¶ 11.)

The Neutral agrees with Southbridge that a different SHA-256 establishes **nonidentity**, not falsification.

A hash establishes whether files are identical.

It does not explain why they differ.

It does not identify who caused the difference.

It does not determine which file reflects the final contractual state.

The Neutral also agrees that the absence of a separate Certidox document-certification record for Exhibit 07 has a fundamentally different significance from the negative-record evidence concerning Exhibit 06.

Exhibit 12 does not stipulate that every Order Form was required to be separately certified.

Accordingly, Exhibit 07 is **not discounted simply because it lacks separate Certidox document certification.**

Its difficulty lies elsewhere.

Exhibit 07 is consistent with the later B+C+D position stated in Exhibit 06.

But consistency between two disputed records is not equivalent to independent corroboration of provenance.

Exhibit 07 does not independently authenticate Exhibit 06.

Nor does it possess an independent evidentiary chain comparable to the chain supporting Exhibit 05.

The Neutral therefore assigns Exhibit 07 limited additional weight on the central question whether Laura Bennett actually made the alleged later election.

XIV. EXHIBIT 10 AND THE SUBSEQUENT CORRESPONDENCE PROVIDE CONTEXT, NOT INDEPENDENT PROOF OF THE EARLIER EVENT

At 5:54:11 p.m., Southbridge transmitted an invoice based on Service A plus Options B, C and D. (Exs. 08–09.)

At **6:04:02 p.m. CDT**, Laura Bennett sent Exhibit 10, a Certidox-certified response stating that ApexGrid elected Option B only and that Options C and D were not selected and remained unselected. Southbridge's receipt is stipulated. (Ex. 10; Ex. 12 ¶ 12.)

At **6:15:52 p.m.**, Sarah Mitchell responded by relying upon and producing Exhibits 06 and 07 as Southbridge records supporting the B+C+D position. (Ex. 11.)

Southbridge is correct that Exhibit 10 does not independently reconstruct what happened at 12:44:43 p.m.

Likewise, Sarah Mitchell's reliance upon Exhibits 06 and 07 does not authenticate them and does not establish that she personally created or altered them.

The Neutral assigns the later correspondence corroborative and contextual weight only.

Laura's later certified position is consistent with the earlier certified reference state.

Southbridge's later contrary position relies upon Exhibits 06 and 07.

That sequence does not itself decide authenticity.

It also does not cure the provenance problem affecting the disputed records.

XV. THE CUMULATIVE EVIDENTIARY STRUCTURE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN ANY SINGLE FACT

The Neutral does not base this Decision on any single feature.

The result follows from the cumulative structure of the record.

1. Exhibits 04 and 05 are contemporaneous certified records reflecting the same A+B election. **(Exs. 04–05; Ex. 12 ¶¶ 8–9.)**
2. Exhibit 05 is stipulated to be byte-for-byte identical to the PDF attachment whose SHA-256 was recorded with Exhibit 04. **(Ex. 12 ¶ 9; Ex. 18.)**
3. Exhibits 16 and 18 permit independent reconstruction and verification of the relevant certified evidence and its manifest-to-RFC-3161 timestamp relationships. **(Exs. 16, 18; Ex. 12 ¶¶ 6, 14.)**
4. Exhibit 06 purports to be a later outbound Laura Bennett email but has no corresponding Certidox certification record and no QR code of its own. **(Ex. 06; Ex. 12 ¶ 10.)**
5. every outbound email sent from Laura Bennett's ApexGrid corporate mailbox was stipulated to generate precisely such a separate certification record and QR code. **(Ex. 12 ¶ 5.)**
6. Exhibit 21 accurately displays all certification records associated with Laura Bennett's user account dated September 24, yet contains no corresponding Exhibit 06 record. **(Ex. 21; Ex. 12 ¶ 14.)**
7. Exhibit 07 is consistent with Exhibit 06 but does not independently authenticate it and lacks the independently reconstructible evidentiary foundation supporting Exhibit 05. **(Ex. 07; Exs. 16, 19.)**
8. the subsequent correspondence is consistent with a genuine dispute between the parties but does not independently authenticate the disputed B+C+D records. **(Exs. 08–11.)**

That is the combined record the Hearing Protocol requires the Neutral to evaluate.

XVI. ANSWERS TO THE PRINCIPAL QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. What evidentiary weight should be given to Exhibits 04 and 05?

Substantial evidentiary weight.

They constitute contemporaneous certified reference records supported by separate, reproducible verification paths and a stipulated cross-record attachment-hash linkage. (Exs. 04–05; Ex. 12 ¶¶ 8–9; Exs. 16, 18.)

2. What significance should be attached to the stipulated byte-for-byte linkage?

Substantial corroborative significance.

The matching SHA-256 does more than establish substantive consistency. For purposes of this hearing, it establishes that Exhibit 05 is the exact PDF file identified by the protected attachment hash associated with Exhibit 04.

(Ex. 05; Ex. 12 ¶ 9; Ex. 18.)

3. What significance should be attached to the automatic outbound-email certification rule?

Substantial significance.

It establishes the expected certification trace for an outbound email actually sent from Laura Bennett’s ApexGrid corporate mailbox.

(Ex. 12 ¶ 5.)

4. What significance should be attached to the absence of an Exhibit 06 certification record and QR code when considered with Exhibit 21?

Substantial adverse evidentiary significance.

The absence does not, standing alone, establish falsity.

But it is not considered standing alone.

It is considered together with the automatic-certification rule and a user certification history stipulated to contain all certification records associated with the relevant account on the relevant date.

(Ex. 06; Ex. 21; Ex. 12 ¶¶ 5, 10, 13–14.)

5. What additional evidentiary weight results from the independent technical verification and DigiStamp evidence?

Substantial additional weight as to integrity and historical verifiability of the certified reference records.

The Neutral does not treat DigiStamp as directly timestamping the reconstructed payload or independently validating Certidox's certification-event time.

The significance lies in independent verification of the exact manifest hash and its protected relationship to the reconstructed certified payload.

(Exs. 16, 18; Ex. 12 ¶¶ 6, 8–9, 14.)

6. What significance should be attached to the differences between Exhibits 05 and 07 and the absence of separate document certification for Exhibit 07?

The differing SHA-256 values establish **nonidentity, not falsification**.

The lack of a separate Exhibit 07 document-certification record receives **limited negative weight**, because the parties do not stipulate that every Order Form was required to be separately certified.

The more significant distinction is comparative evidentiary foundation: Exhibit 05 possesses an independently reconstructible certified chain; Exhibit 07 does not.

(Exs. 05, 07; Ex. 12 ¶¶ 8–9, 11, 13; Ex. 16.)

7. What significance should be attached to subsequent conduct and reliance?

Corroborative and contextual weight only.

Exhibit 10 establishes Laura Bennett's later certified rejection of the B+C+D position but does not independently reconstruct what occurred at 12:44:43 p.m.

Exhibit 11 establishes Southbridge's subsequent reliance upon Exhibits 06 and 07 but does not authenticate them or establish Sarah Mitchell's authorship.

(Exs. 08–11; Ex. 12 ¶ 12.)

8. What evidentiary weight should ultimately be assigned to Exhibits 06 and 07?

Insufficient evidentiary weight to establish that Laura Bennett made a subsequent election of Options C and D.

XVII. DECISION

For the reasons stated above, the Neutral determines:

1. Exhibits 04 and 05

Exhibits 04 and 05 are accorded **substantial evidentiary weight** as the contemporaneous, certified and independently verifiable reference record of ApexGrid's election of Service A and Option B, with Options C and D unselected.

(Exs. 04–05; Ex. 12 ¶¶ 8–9; Exs. 16, 18.)

2. Contractual possibility of a later election

The record establishes that ApexGrid **could** have made a later election before 5:00 p.m. CDT.

The certified A+B reference records therefore are not treated as legally or logically freezing the transaction.

(Exs. 02–03; Ex. 12 ¶¶ 3–4.)

3. Exhibit 06

Exhibit 06 is **not credited as sufficient proof** that Laura Bennett subsequently elected Options C and D.

That determination does not rest merely on the absence of Certidox certification.

It rests on the cumulative force of:

- the automatic-certification rule;
- Exhibit 06's absence of its expected certification record and QR code;
- the stipulated September 24 certification history reflected in Exhibit 21;
- the absence of a corresponding Exhibit 06 record in that history; and
- the lack of independent authentication sufficient to overcome that contrary evidence.

(Ex. 06; Ex. 21; Ex. 12 ¶¶ 5, 10, 13–14.)

4. Exhibit 07

Exhibit 07 likewise is **not credited as sufficient proof** of an additional election of Options C and D by Laura Bennett.

The Neutral does not infer falsification from its differing SHA-256 and does not treat its lack of separate Certidox document certification as independently dispositive.

But Exhibit 07 does not provide an independent evidentiary foundation sufficient to establish the alleged later election where Exhibit 06 itself is not sufficiently reliable. (Exs. 05, 07; Ex. 12 ¶¶ 8–11, 13; Exs. 16, 19.)

5. Ultimate election established by the record

The complete evidentiary record reliably establishes ApexGrid’s election of Service A and Option B.

It does **not** reliably establish a subsequent election of Options C or D by Laura Bennett.

6. Matters not decided

The Neutral makes no finding that Exhibit 06 or Exhibit 07 was fabricated.

The Neutral makes no finding identifying who created or altered either disputed record.

The Neutral makes no finding that Sarah Mitchell, Laura Bennett or any other person possessed knowledge of falsity or acted with fraudulent intent.

The Neutral makes no determination of civil fraud, criminal misconduct or separate liability.

Those conclusions are neither necessary to this Decision nor established by this evidentiary record.

XVIII. FINAL OBSERVATION

The decisive feature of this record is not that one side possesses documents labeled “certified” and the other does not.

It is that the competing records can be tested against **fixed reference evidence created before the dispute became explicit**.

The certified Order Form can be reconstructed.

The certified email-content representation can be reconstructed.

The relationship between the two can be tested through their hashes.

The exact manifests can be tested against independently issued RFC 3161 timestamp evidence.

The certification history associated with the relevant account can be evaluated under a stipulation defining its completeness.

And the disputed 12:44:43 p.m. email can be confronted with a specific evidentiary question: **If Exhibit 06 is an outbound email from the Laura Bennett corporate mailbox from which it purports to originate, where is the certification trace that the parties stipulate every such outbound email generated?**

The record supplies no such trace.

Southbridge is correct that this does not mechanically prove fabrication.

But evidentiary adjudication does not require a mechanical rule.

It requires an assessment of what the complete record reliably establishes.

On this record, the earlier A+B election is reliably established.

The alleged later B+C+D election is not.

ApexGrid's challenge to Exhibits 06 and 07 is therefore sustained to the extent those exhibits are offered as proof that Laura Bennett subsequently elected Options C and D.

Exhibits 06 and 07 remain part of the evidentiary record, but they are not accorded sufficient evidentiary weight to establish that subsequent election.

SO DETERMINED.

Neutral: _____

Date: _____