

Assignment 2 – Associated Press Article

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CIS150-01
2/21/2010

What is a Radio Frequency Identification tag? According to multichannelmerchant.com it is “A system that uses transponders to transmit significant amounts of data to a receiver; often used as part of a real-time locator system.” These can be used in things such as passport, drivers license, and many other identity documents. The question is, are these tags a good thing to have?

Fox News published the article [Chips in Official ID's Raise Privacy Fears](#), for the purpose of expressing the growing concern about using RFID chips. Chris Paget performed an experiment by driving down the streets of San Francisco with a signal reader and a laptop in the back of his car, to see if he could pick up the identification numbers from strangers on the street that are using RFIDs. Paget was successful in retrieving numerous codes from passports and drivers licenses with out even leaving his car. The reader he used could pick up the transmissions from RFIDs from about 30 feet away. He was able to find about four in a couple of hours. Critics say that it wont be long until the government could be able to track anyone in real time.

The key question of this article is; Are RFID transponders going to be helpful or are they a security hazard? Government officials believe that the tags will help with speed crossing borders, safeguard credentials against counterfeiters, and keep terrorists from sneaking into the country. I think they would be helpful but not right now because technology is growing rapidly and if Chris Paget could use two pieces of equipment to detect RFID serial numbers, then someone will soon find a way to hack a tag and steal an identity or produce a counterfeit. I do like the idea of keeping terrorists and possibly illegal immigrants out of the country, but I believe that using these can be dangerous because of the simple fact that they transmitting all the time and can be picked up from a relatively far distance of twenty or thirty feet.

Although, I can see the reason some people would have the need to use the ID tags, such as travelers, businessmen, federal agencies, and other high priority places. The FBI for instance, could use it for security access into restricted areas that card keys would usually work but the RFIDs could hold the person's information such as clearance level, access codes, name, department, and so on. But if the security issues are not solved and they use them for the FBI, they could be hacked and anyone could enter the restricted areas or find information.

Government officials claim that the RFID tags are going to make it easier and more efficient, they also warn it will actually make it easier for identity thieves, stalkers, and other criminals to commit "contactless" crimes. I believe this is the most important information and from this I assume that RFID tags are not safe for public use. The public should not use them until they are properly tested and developed against any attacks on personal privacy. This idea is a very good idea for in the future when everything is fully developed. It would be much easier to carry around one piece of plastic with your ID, passport, and any other information embedded in it, rather than everything individually. Maybe the companies will advance the RFID to only work with the one user by voice recognition or some kind of pass code, which will also determine when and where the tag will transmit the data.

So my conclusion is yes and no. These tags would be a good thing to have once they are fully developed, but right now they are a big risk and unnecessary. In a teleological point of view, I believe it would be best for the global community to wait a couple years until using a RFID, just until they have developed properly and all of the security issues can be figured out.

Works Cited

Multi channel Merchant

http://multichannelmerchant.com/opsandfulfillment/warehouse/warehouse_glossary/

Chips in Official ID's Raise privacy fears

<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,531720,00.html>