

COSC 3050

Northern Arizona University To Use RFID Tags to Monitor Student Attendance

This information retrieved from *Popular Science* at <http://www.popsci.com/gadgets/article/2010-05/arizona-university-use-rfid-monitor-attendance> Posted 17 May, 2010

Lazy college students are Arizona's latest target of identity-tracking. Students at Northern Arizona University are protesting a plan to monitor their attendance using radio-frequency ID chips embedded in their student IDs.

A university spokesman told *Government Technology* magazine that the intent is to encourage professors to incorporate attendance into grading systems. More frequent attendance leads to higher grades, the university says. The system, purchased with \$85,000 in federal stimulus funds, would start this fall.

The idea is to install card readers in all classrooms that seat 50 or more students – those in which it'd be difficult or time-consuming to take attendance every day. Professors who teach smaller classes would have to find another way to take attendance. Given that class sizes shrink as a student's education progresses, the policy would likely impact freshmen and sophomores.

Students wouldn't have to take their ID cards out, because the readers would be sensitive enough to pick up signals from anywhere in the room. Data from each class would be recorded, and instructors would get reports on who was in class, the *Arizona Republic* reports.

As of Monday, about 1,500 NAU students had joined a Facebook group protesting the cards' use, saying it violates their rights as students to choose whether or not to go to class. Privacy advocates are also voicing concern, *Government Technology* reports.

Although some students might try to subvert the system by having a friend carry his or her card, the cards are also used to pay for food and gain entry to the dorms, the *Republic* reports. So it's probably not worth trading with a friend.

It remains to be seen whether the chips would contribute to increased academic performance. After all, as every student knows, just showing up for class doesn't mean you're awake.

Follow-up

Retrieved from http://www2.nau.edu/d-elearn/faq/keywords_134

In 2010, the Office of the President awarded a one-time Innovation Fund Grant to the Office of Enrollment Management Services to have proximity card readers installed at the doors

to several classrooms, and the program has grown over time. Students who swipe their NAU ID card at the reader will have their attendance recorded automatically. Instructors can log into the Attendance Manager website to view attendance data online or print a report. (If you're trying to access this page from off-campus, be sure to use the NAU VPN.)

At present, card readers are installed in the rooms listed below, and new rooms can be added to the system by request if they meet certain technical criteria. If a card reader is installed by the door of your classroom, the system is ready to use. The system knows which classes are scheduled for these rooms, so you don't need to contact anyone before trying it out. Just have your students start swiping their cards at the door and log into the Attendance Manager site to get your attendance reports.

- Building 18 (Liberal Arts) all 20 classrooms
- Building 19 (Physical Sciences) Room 223
- Building 20 (Chemistry) Rooms 106 and 117
- Building 25 (Health and Learning Center) all 3rd and 4th floor rooms
- Building 26 (Adel Mathematics) Rooms 137, 223 and 224
- Building 65 (SBS) Room 110
- Building 70 (SBS-West) Room 200A
- Building 81 (W.A. Franke College of Business) Room 101 (Gardner Auditorium)
- Building 88 (Wettaw) Room 130 (Wettaw Auditorium)

For assistance with, or questions about, the Card Reader system, please contact daca-support@nau.edu or call 928-523-6579

Since card readers only gather attendance data, some instructors prefer clickers, which can also be used for in-class polling. Whether collecting attendance data with card readers or clickers, instructors can then use the GPS system to send attendance reminders to students.

Numerous studies show a strong correlation between attendance and student success. In 2012, student attendance (and attendance collection by instructors) became mandatory for all 100-level classes at NAU.

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Texas School District Drops RFID Chips, Will Track Kids With Surveillance Cameras Instead

This is from http://www.slate.com/blogs/future_tense/2013/07/17/texas_northside_school_district_drops_rfid_tracking_privacy_not_the_main.html Posted July 17, 2013.

By Will Oremus

RFID tracking chips in schools The battle over RFID chips in schools isn't over.

Photo by David McNew/Getty Images

A Texas school district drew national attention, a lawsuit, and even cyberattacks by Anonymous hackers with a pilot program requiring students to wear RFID tracking chips around campus. Now, after winning the lawsuit, surviving the denial-of-service attacks, and weathering the backlash, it has decided to drop the chips after all. But that doesn't mean the privacy advocates have won. Will Oremus Will Oremus

Will Oremus is Slate's senior technology writer. Email him at will.oremus@slate.com or follow him on Twitter.

Northside Independent School District spokesman Pascual Gonzalez told me that the microchip-ID program turned out not to be worth the trouble. Its main goal was to increase attendance by allowing staff to locate students who were on campus but didn't show up for roll call. That was supposed to lead to increased revenue. But attendance at the two schools in question a middle school and a high school barely budged in the year that the policy was in place. And school staff found themselves wasting a lot of time trying to physically track down the missing students based on their RFID locators.

Andrea Hernandez, the student whose family unsuccessfully sued the district on religious grounds and referred to the IDs as the mark of the beast, is reportedly thrilled by the decision. She had ended up transferring to another school to avoid the IDs.

But the backlash and the lawsuit weren't the deciding factors, Gonzalez told me. While [privacy groups] are extolling the fact that they won, the fact is that that was a very minor part of our conversation, because the federal court and the court of appeals both upheld Northside's position on that. We were on solid ground.

Indeed, the district never acknowledged that the chips posed legitimate privacy concerns, adhering all along to the reasoning that Gonzalez expressed to me when I first talked to him about this last fall: By virtue of the fact that you are a student at school, there is no privacy. No doubt other schools will echo that line when they adopt RFID or similar technologies in the years to come, and I wouldn't be surprised to see a high court rule on a similar case at some point in the future. Gonzalez is right that students on a campus have less expectation of privacy than adults, but no privacy seems a little extreme. The question of how much offline tracking is too much is also likely to arise in workplaces as employers

use RFID tags to bust workers for, say, spending too much time in the bathroom.

Meanwhile, Gonzalez told me Northside plans to capture the safety and security benefits of RFID chips through other technological means. Were very confident we can still maintain a safe and secure school because of the 200 cameras that are installed at John Jay High School and the 100 that are installed at Jones Middle School. Plus we are upgrading those surveillance systems to high-definition and more sophisticated cameras. So there will be a surveillance-camera umbrella around both schools.

Still, the Rutherford Institute, the civil liberties group that sued the district, is claiming a belated victory. Institute President John Whitehead said in a statement: As Andrea Hernandez and her family showed, the best way to ensure that your government officials hear you is by never giving up, never backing down, and never remaining silent even when things seem hopeless.