Alahomora

If you live in an apartment complex or work in a sleek corporate building, you're probably familiar with keycards and keyfobs. These plastic cards and tags use RFID technology to give access to specific rooms, buildings and gates.

For several years now, phones have been able to do something similar with NFC (which is a subset of RFID technology). Digital House Keys and Car Keys can be set up on phones, but they require specific locks and cars to work.

RFID. Phones. RFID. Phones. Do you see where I'm going with this? Can't our phones emulate the generic key fobs and key cards we use to get into places?

The question occurred to me as I was switching from my iPhone 12 to my Samsung S24+ last week. You see, of the many digital things I had to transfer, I also had to transfer the small physical key fob that was superglued to the back of my iPhone.

For context, I did this to avoid needing to carry keys at all. I use an August lock on the door of my actual apartment, but there are 2 other doors I have to get through before that and those doors need a keyfob. It would be great if I didn't have to pry this thing off the back of my phone.

The back of my phone is prime real-estate: there's a popsocket on there (a godsend for large phones), a square metallic plate (for my magnetic car mount), some small cute stickers and the keyfob for my apartment complex. It's a lot, but it's all necessary.

There's some great benefits from having generic RFID tags on our phones. It'll be convenient, secure and harder to lose. They could be added or removed from apps (like your gym) or by the enterprise policy of your workplace. Did I also mention the absolute win in terms of environmental impact? Most of these RFID tags are made out of plastic!

My intuition tells me that phones *should* be able to incorporate this technology, so long as they figure out all the safety, regulatory and technical details involved. You know … all the small stuff (/s).

To me, it seems like a solid win on all counts. I would love to have this feature on the next iPhone or Android device that comes out in 2025. I would probably buy that phone in a heartbeat!