



Solidarity, Independence, Democracy

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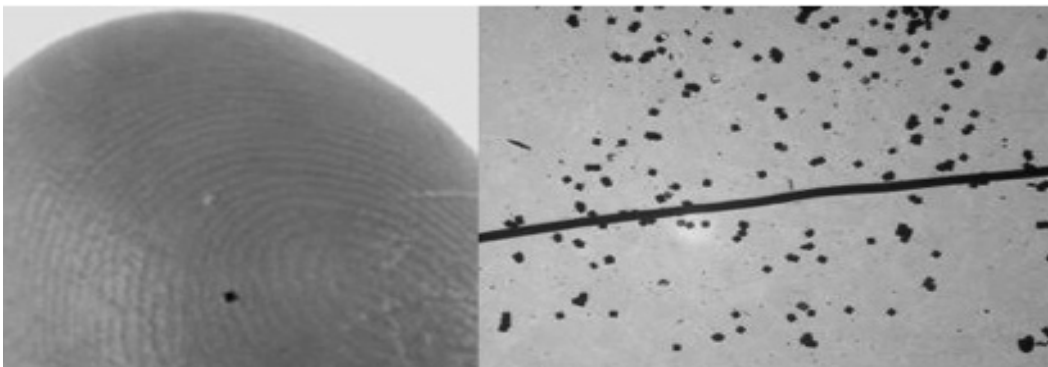
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Are we employees or have we become serfs?

«RFID in Commission issued personnel cards»

Technology boffins tell us: «in 5-10 years, whole new ways of doing things will emerge and gradually become commonplace. Expect big changes. »

The ultimate goal is for RFID to create a "physically linked world" in which every item and person on the planet is numbered, identified, catalogued, and tracked. And the technology exists to make this a reality. Described as "a political rather than a technological problem," creating a global system "would . . . involve negotiation between, and consensus among, different countries."



By relying on semiconductor miniaturization technology, tiny Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) chips have been developed. Little bigger than a grain of sand at 0.4 x 0.4 mm ([mu-chips](#)), the chips come with a 128-bit memory capable of storing identification information.

Ref: <http://www.hitachi.co.jp/Prod/mu-chip/>

The European Central Bank is reported to have been quietly working to embed RFID tags in the fibres of Euro banknotes. The tag allows money to carry its own history by recording information about where it has been, thus giving governments and law enforcement agencies a means to literally "follow the money" in every transaction. If and when RFID devices are embedded in banknotes, the anonymity that cash affords in consumer transactions will be eliminated.

Great idea! If used in money, any pickpocket with a tag reader can know how much cash you're carrying in your wallet.

In 2003, [CASPIAN](#), a consumer group opposed to loyalty cards and radio frequency identification in the USA, unveiled federal legislation calling for mandatory disclosures on consumer products containing RFID chips in the US. The [RFID Right to Know Act of 2003](#) (Ref: <http://www.nocards.org/rfid/rfidbill.shtml>) would require companies to label all products that contain RFID tags, and it would make it illegal for companies to link the chips with personally identifying information.

CASPIAN called for a moratorium on the use of RFID chips in consumer products "until the societal implications can be addressed."

Ref: <http://www.rfidjournal.com/article/articleview/466/1/1/>

All kinds of personal belongings, including clothes, could constantly broadcast messages about their whereabouts and their owners, it warned.

[CASPIAN said RFID chips could be used to secretly identify people and the things they are carrying or wearing.](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/4247275.stm) Ref: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/4247275.stm>

In 2006, an external security advisory committee reporting to the US Department of Homeland Security has produced a highlight critical report advising against the use of RFID technology in government documents. The Data Privacy and Integrity Advisory Committee of the DHS concludes that RFID chips are useful in inventory management but aren't suitable for human identification, where privacy issues remain a concern. "RFID appears to offer little benefit when compared to the consequences it brings for privacy and data integrity. Instead, it increases risks to personal privacy and security, with no commensurate benefit for performance or national security," the report states. The experts advise that "RFID be disfavoured for identifying and tracking human beings."

Ref: http://www.theregister.co.uk/2006/11/02/rfid_study_disavowed/

As a result of RFID technology, it is clear that there is going to be an increasing problem with the very concept of employee. The word seems to be in the process of becoming synonymous with serf or slave. The legal status of an individual who works for another should be reviewed completely. The possibilities of modern technology may make it impossible to continue with the very concept if we are to remain free.

We, the staff of European Commission, seem not to be spared from this abuse of RFID technology. Our employer is already implementing it in our next generation ID cards despite all possible problems it can cause to our personal privacy and liberty. Such problems are at least as old as the New Testament, (see Revelations 13:16-18 at <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Rev%2013:16-19&version=31>), which was written approximately 1800 years ago or more.

We understand that several DGs (INFSO included and others are following suit) have already started issuing RFID based personnel ID Cards (based partly on MIFARE, Nedap & Legic technologies) or are in the phase of implementing them.

SID invites all personnel and Trade Unions to join with it in condemning this abuse of our personal data privacy and liberty.

So, are we employees or have we become serfs?

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