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International RFID Experts Say Your Pets and Computers are Safe from RFID Viruses

Thursday, March 23, 2006 - AIM Global

Joint Release
Issued by members of the
International RFID Standards Community

Several articles, including one entitled, "Study Says Chips in ID Tags Are Vulnerable to Viruses" were published on 15 March 2006 and widely circulated by the world's press. The articles describe work done by a group that is affiliated with the computer science department at Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam highlighting the possible problem of virus propagation in RFID tag environments.

RFID scientists and experts from the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) met last week in Kyoto, Japan with the leadership of the AIM (Association for Automatic Identification and Mobility) RFID Experts Group as part of an ongoing effort to address issues involved with the fielding of RFID systems.

The RFID Experts applaud efforts to research the vulnerabilities of the RFID technology with a view towards improving the system security in the RFID world. The experts want to clarify the facts reported about the vulnerability of RFID.

There are two broad types of RFID tags, ones that have pre-encoded or fixed data and ones that have data that can be changed. ISO systems with fixed data such as those used to identify pets cannot be changed and therefore are immune to infection by a virus. So your ISO animal tags are safe for your pets and cannot spread data viruses.

Writable CDs, RFID tags, and all writable media have the possibility of being encoded with a virus or having the data manipulated, but experts know how to address and resolve these risks. Protection is a common process today in data transfer between computer systems and writable media. Global standards and commercial products are created to ensure that there is adequate data security, much the same way that running current virus software prevents virus attacks to your home computer. System designers are aware that they must install methods to authenticate RFID tags before entering any tag data into their software.

The RFID Experts Group and members of the international standards community applaud the work done by Professor Tanenbaum and his colleagues as a seminal piece of research sure to be read by many RFID technologists and users alike. As RFID continues to gain widespread adoption, it is important to continue

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the research exploring the vulnerability of the RFID technology to ensure the greatest productivity benefits with the least security risks.

Critical advancements in information and logistics are possible with RFID technology. Consumers will enjoy greater confidence when they select standardized RFID technology because the associated security issues have been addressed and resolved by the world's leading experts.

Experts from the following countries contributed to this release: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, France, Japan, Korea, Netherlands, Russian Federation, Singapore, South Africa, U.K., and U.S.A. Experts from each country represented in these global organizations can be reached for comment. Contact AIM Global for the contact information for the expert in your country or region: +1 724-934-4470 or info@aimglobal.org.

AIM's RFID Experts Group (REG) currently has two projects underway to address system security and middleware issues. These groups will shortly be developing a Best Practices guide to address any valid concerns about RFID system security. Those wishing to actively participate in these projects should contact Bert Moore at the AIM office (b.moore@aimglobal.org).

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