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IT Management

Security

RFID tags could be exposed to viruses

by Antony Savvas

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European researchers are to demonstrate it is possible to insert software viruses into radio frequency identification ([RFID](#)) tracking tags.

At an academic computing conference today in Pisa, Italy, the researchers plan to demonstrate how it is possible to infect the tiny memory in the RFID chip.

It was previously...

... thought it was not possible to infect the memories of RFID chips because they were so small. They sometimes contain no more than 128 characters.

Already under suspicion as a result of privacy concerns among potential customers of retail outlets planning to use RFID tags in their [supply chain](#), use of RFID tracking tags will now face questions as to whether the data can be manipulated, as a result of the Pisa demo.

The researchers have also published a list of remedies to prevent such data manipulation taking place.

If such protection is not adopted, said the researchers, RFID tracking systems used in the security industry, including at airports for instance, risk being compromised.

The researchers are from the computer science department at Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam. They have posted their paper on the www.rfidvirus.org website.

The European Commission recently launched a major public consultation into the use of RFID technology, which will run until the end of the year.

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