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TECH NEWS

Viruses could infect RFID

By DIRECT

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Radio frequency identification tags could be as susceptible to viruses as personal computers, researchers have said.

Computer scientists at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam said that producers of the technology have overlooked security concerns. They argued that the tags could be used to stage buffer overflow attacks, code insertion or SQL database corruption.

Putting their theories into practice, the team produced a virus which gave them partial control over a RFID chip, allowing them access to commands stored on the chip. Once installed, the virus could self-replicate.

The report implied that advocates of the technology were somewhat complacent of, and may have even ignored, potential security risks.

'RFID malware is a Pandora's box that has been gathering dust in the corner of our 'smart' warehouses and homes. While the idea of RFID viruses has surely crossed people's minds, the desire to see RFID technology succeed has suppressed any serious consideration of the concept,' the report said.

The researchers stated that as RFIDs possess several characteristics which make them vulnerable to attacks, such as mounds of source code and back end databases.

'Furthermore, RFID exploits have not yet appeared 'in the wild' so people conveniently figure that the power constraints faced by RFID tags make RFID installations invulnerable to such attacks,' the team added.

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