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## Scientists issue warning on virus spreading via RFID systems

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Mar 16, 2006  
Telecom Asia Daily

Cheap radio chips that are replacing the ubiquitous barcode are a threat to privacy and susceptible to computer viruses, a Reuters report said.

The Reuters report said researchers at the Amsterdam's Free University created an RFID chip infected with a virus to prove that RFID systems are vulnerable despite the extremely low memory capacity on the cheap chips.

The problem is that an infected RFID tag, which is read wirelessly when it passes through a scanning gate, can upset the database that processes the information on the chip, the study said.

"Everyone working on RFID technology has tacitly assumed that the mere act of scanning an RFID tag cannot modify back-end software and certainly not in a malicious way. Unfortunately, they are wrong," the scientists, quoted in the report, said. "An RFID tag can be infected with a virus and this virus can infect the back-end database used by the RFID software. From there it can be easily spread to other RFID tags."

As a result, it is possible that criminals or militants could use an infected RFID tag to upset airline baggage handling systems with potentially devastating consequences, they said.

The same technology could also be used to wreak havoc with the databases used by supermarkets.



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