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Study: RFID tags are virus vulnerable

March 15, 2006

PISA, Italy (UPI) -- Computer experts at computing conference in Italy claiming radio frequency identification technology is virus vulnerable.

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Radio frequency identification is a burgeoning microchip-based tracking technology that's replacing bar codes and also being used to identify pets and livestock, The New York Times reported Wednesday.

In a paper entitled "Is Your Cat Infected with a Computer Virus?," scientists from Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam, also described how the vulnerability could be used to undermine a variety of tracking systems. They presented the work Wednesday.

RFID tags are designed to contain much more information and be read more quickly by computers than can bar codes. The tags are being used for an increasing variety of purposes, including tracking luggage at airports. That use, say the researchers, might give terrorists and smugglers the technology to evade airport luggage scanning systems, the Times reported.

The computer scientists presented their paper during the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers Pervasive Computing and Communications Conference.

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