RFID, user identity and the public interest

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ANEC General Assembly
1 June 2007, Brussels

note: the views expressed in this presentation are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the ITU or its membership. Lara Srivastava can be contacted at lara.srivastava@itu.int
the new digital world

uniqueness of RFID

RFID today

RFID tomorrow

implications for consumers

moving forward
the new digital world

- fast
- ubiquitous
- pervasive
- ambient
- responsive

Image: Irina/Riri
global consumption of digital media

source: ITU Internet Report 2006: digital.life, adapted from Financial Times
the rise of social networking

source: ITU Internet Report 2006: digital.life, adapted from Financial Times
uniqueness of RFID
towards an internet of things

• taking anytime and anywhere anyone connectivity a step further
  - anywhere, anytime, anyone
  AND “anything”…

• this is the vision underlying the concept of a “network of things/objects”
  – each thing would have its own “identity” in cyberspace

• the internet now connects computers to one another, but imagine if it could also connect computers to things, and things to things?
the uniqueness of RFID

- it is more than an electronic or bar code
- it can provide a unique identifier
- its uniqueness can be ‘networked’
- it’s at the core of a new “internet of things”
RFID and the new internet

• RFID systems allow us to identify individual “things” in the environment
  – they can wirelessly (without contact) monitor objects in real-time

• they can identify a single object amidst a large quantity of objects w/out line of sight

• as such, RFID systems can provide a sort of “map” of the real world in the virtual world, as though each real-world item had an internet homepage/ID
a big idea in a small package

Tag/Transponder
(within this dark dot)

Reader/Interrogator
RFID today
more and more RFID

RFID (EPC) shipments, worldwide, 2005-2011, USD millions

Source: GII (Japan)
multiple tagging and mapping

item-based tagging

meta-tagging

data collection

database mgmt

data storage

profiling

real-time analysis

data dissemination

...
boom in applications
RFID tomorrow
(1) Mainframe

(2) PCs

(3) Mobiles / Smart Cards

(4) Smart Things

implications for consumers
who am i? what am i?
...and where have I been?
implications of RFID raises some concerns

- who controls information on the tags?
- who has access to it, and when?
- RFID deployments have been delayed as a result of such concerns
  - e.g. Benetton
- public sector has now begun addressing this issue
  - e.g. EU RFID Consultation, Japan’s RFID Guidelines
defining privacy today

• privacy is a dynamic concept, culturally & historically bounded
  – from the ID document, to surveillance cameras, to cookies…

• privacy revolves around distinction between public & private spheres of human existence

• with new technologies, boundary increasingly blurring
  – internet, mobiles, GPS, digital storage capacity

• today, debate hinges on individual’s ability to control the increasing “permeability” between private life and public life
a complex issue

- two facets to the right to privacy:
  - right to protect access to information about oneself
  - right to be free from interference
- user of today’s internet already fill in forms with false information, to preserve their “anonymity”
  - ubiquitous/ambient networking likely to exacerbate this climate of distrust
- thus, balance between privacy & convenience needs to be struck early in the design of technology, across several domains:
  - technical, regulatory, industrial
    - but also socio-ethical
- should not risk a “privacy divide”
WE WANT TO IMPLANT THIS RFID TAG IN YOU.

THAT VIOLATES MY RIGHTS!

WE WANT TO IMPLANT THIS RFID TAG IN YOU AND IT'S ALSO A CELLPHONE, DIGITAL CAMERA, AND MP3 PLAYER.

WRONG

RIGHT

COOL!
digital identity
from i to me

HUMAN IDENTITY

“"I”"

Traditional Attributes:
name
address
date of birth
place of birth
phone numbers
bank account
credit card details
credit rating
income
tax status
marital status
education
...

Other Attributes:
service provider
encryption level
operating system
online purchasing
favourite websites
language
...

Filtering for context and choice

digital representation of attributes

“Me”

DIGITAL IDENTITY

Who am I?

How do others relate to me? What is the perception of me?

ITU Internet Reports 2006: digital.life
www.itu.int/digitalife/
context is king

Source: ITU Internet Report 2006: digital.life, adapted from J. de Clercq and J. Rouault (Hewlett-Packard)
moving forward
Related ITU activities

• JCA (Joint Coordination Activity) on the Networked Aspects of Identification Systems (including RFID)

• Focus Group on Identity Management

• Global Cybersecurity Agenda GCA released 17 May 2007 includes work areas on digital identity
  – [http://www.itu.int/cybersecurity/gca/](http://www.itu.int/cybersecurity/gca/)
Related ITU publications

ITU Internet Reports 2005
THE INTERNET OF THINGS

www.itu.int/internetofthings/

ITU Internet Reports 2006
digital.life

www.itu.int/digitalife
EU RFID Policy

- Communication SEC(2007)312, *RFID in Europe: steps towards a policy framework*, calls upon
  - “standardization bodies to ensure that international and European standards meet European requirement (in particular re: privacy, security, IPR and licensing) to identify standardization gaps and develop future RFID standards”.
- RFID Stakeholder Group to be set up to define user guidelines for RFID applications (taking into account long-term issues and economic & societal aspects)
- 2008 communication to be published analyzing technical developments, “with particular attention to privacy, trust and governance”, and assess need for further legislative steps
User-centric innovation

Ubiquitous & global identity management systems

Understanding of the social & ethical impacts of new technologies

“edge” intelligence
user-needs analysis
demand-pull strategies
simplicity/”simplicity”

user consent
context-awareness
data minimization
anonymity and “identifiability”
transparency
accountability

interplay between ethics, law, education & regulation
“multi-disciplinary” design
let not the tail wag the dog

U for USER
global dialogue
global solutions
Wisdom demands a new orientation of science and technology towards the organic, the gentle, the non-violent, the elegant and the beautiful…

- E.F. Schumacher

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