RFID passport order given to Infineon

Contributed by Stan Beer
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Two weeks after the potential dangers of RFID chips embedded in passports were demonstrated at a security conference, German chip manufacturer Infineon has been given the nod by the US Government to supply millions of chips for US passports.

RFID passports hold personal information that can be scanned and read and viewed on a computer screen and the Infineon based system is expected to be installed on millions of US passports.

At the Black Hat security conference held in early August German researcher, Lukas Grunwald, demonstrated that he could access data from the RFID chip embedded in his own passport and copy it to another RFID chip embedded in a smartcard. Grunwald accomplished the task using standard hardware and self-developed software.

Security experts have warned that RFID based passport systems can be compromised to steal identities and even be used for terrorism because RFID tags can be read wirelessly from a distance.

However, with the US leading the way, the world is expected to move to e-passports in large numbers, as they make processing of travellers much quicker and more efficient. {moscomment}