

Could the Mark of the Beast Look Like This 'Bar Code on Steroids'?

It's been called a "bar code on steroids." Radio Frequency Identification identifies people or things and transmits information through microchips.

Is it all about convenience, or are there biblical implications?

Thrilling Convenience

A banner at the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions Expo, or IAAPA as it is known, reads "Prepare to be thrilled!" And if you're into amusement parks, the expo is the place to be.

Each year, theme park entertainment grows more exciting and cutting edge, like the Tru-Trackless Ride Systems.

From trackless to cashless, the operators described the latest ways to make the park experience more convenient for customers and employees.

That includes RFID.

"We're going to have the ability to do it through an RFID chip," Megan Morrow, with the company Core Cashless, an exhibitor at IAAPA, said. "So it would be as simple as walking up, tapping your card to accept that form of payment on the system."

"RFID technology can sense when either a certain device ... or if that device is on a person, where they are, what they're doing, and depending on how you want to use it, it can help with things like data collection," Patrick Frickleton, also

with Core Cashless, explained.

How It Works

RFID uses radio waves to transmit information at a distance. A microchip in an RFID tag contains unique identification numbers.

Tom Foster, who works for Precision Dynamics Corporation, said the organization pioneered the technology around the turn of the century.

“We use a passive chip, which means there’s no battery, so it lays dormant on your wrist until it comes in contact with an RFID reader,” Foster explained.

Companies like PDC, which produce RFID products, say the technology helps with areas such as access control, keyless entry, and cashless point of sale.

Precision Dynamics developed the first kiosk that dispenses and encodes RFID wristbands for amusement park purchases. It’s like a wallet on your wrist.

“You simply have the ability to spend,” PDC sales manager Greg Cetera said. “Here, again, RFID is going to drive sales.”

Convenience vs. Privacy

It raises a number of questions, however, like what about privacy? And can the information on that wristband be stolen?

“With the RFID technology, we’re not tracking anybody,” Foster said. “There’s a two- to three-inch read range required to be able to read that information on the tag, and if you can read that information on the tag, there’s nothing you can do with that information because everything is encrypted also on the back-end server.”

That may be the case with the wristbands, but consumer privacy

expert Katherine Albrecht is concerned about RFID technology in general and what the future holds.

"They want RFID tags in your refrigerator, in the objects that you buy, and ultimately, as Dr. Katina Michael is making so clear, they want these tags in us," Albrecht shared on her nationally syndicated radio show.

"We're using radio frequency to identify things and transmit information all the time nowadays," Albrecht said. "I think what is coming next, though, is what the marketers and developers of this technology call the 'Internet of Things.' This idea is that every physical object would have its own equivalent of an IP address encoded into the microchip."

She said their goal is to track the consumer's habits.

Mark of the Beast

Beyond the privacy concerns, Albrecht said RFID technology carries biblical implications, with hobbyists embedding microchips into their flesh.

"There will be a time when humanity will be forced to take a mark, and that mark will be on the right hand or the forehead," said Albrecht, referring to Revelation 13:16-18. "It is the number 666; we're told to pay attention and look out for that, and people who do not take that mark, of course, will not be able to buy or sell."

"Some people say RFID will be the mark of the beast because it can be a mark in your hand that you can transmit," Albrecht added.

"If it isn't, and it may well not be; there may well be something that comes next beyond that to become, to fulfill that biblical prophecy, but every one of those steps was getting us closer to that end destination," she said.

Radio isn't the only way that she is getting her message out

about the dangers of RFID technology and what it can lead to. She's also a best-selling author, writing books for both adults and children.

Caution Against Blind Acceptance

Albrecht has devoted a decade to studying RFID.

One result of her research is the book, *Spychips: How Major Corporations and Government Plan to Track Your Every Move with RFID*.

She especially wants to reach younger readers with her book *I Won't Take the Mark, a Bible Book and Contract for Children* to help kids understand the book of Revelation.

"I am stunned at the number of people who have gone to VBS and summer camp and Bible school and Sunday school, and they've never even heard of the mark of the beast," Albrecht said. "The churches aren't preaching it; they're not discussing it."

"There's an embarrassment factor about this, which is ironic because throughout all of history, it's been a huge topic," she continued. "Now that we're actually seeing these technologies develop before our eyes, no one wants to talk about them."

Albrecht is working to change that, wanting people to think before blindly accepting new tracking technology.