



Is RFID a friend or a foe?

You no doubt have heard of RFID technology. It is used in a lot of different things now and is an amazing data collection tool. I used to work at a Fortune 500 company that purchased from IBM their RFID research and technology for application in a wide range of data collection products. Cool tech.

Governments also use RFID technology. For instance, if you have a new US passport booklet there is a passive RFID chip in the passport that stores information about you. Border control reads that information to learn things about you. If you have

a new US passport card or a trusted traveler card (from the SENTRI program) there is an active RFID chip that border control machines read on entry to the US and other countries.

This leads us to the question, “Is RFID a friend or foe?”



The reason that question is valid is because some people are concerned that the RFID chips inside some identity documents are more “chatty” than we might like. Some people have gone to extremes like putting their passport into a microwave oven in order to damage the RFID chip. Others have boiled their RFID-enabled identity document.

Here is an [article](#) that describes why that is a very bad idea. The article makes this very valid point:

“Our desire to balance privacy with liberty has to be tempered with methods that do not draw unnecessary attention.”

What I didn’t know before reading the article is that any government-issued identity document is actually the government’s property, not yours. Did you know that? So tampering with an RFID-enabled government-issued identity document can put you in some serious hurt the next time you try to use it. That would amount to “draw[ing] unnecessary attention” to ourselves while traveling.

The options you have if you are concerned about unauthorized persons reading your RFID document are decidedly low-tech and work fine. Those options are outlined in the article.

Don't forget about protecting your privacy while on the Internet. Employ a robust and world-class VPN service. This topic, and a recommendation for a VPN, is covered in the section "Secure Your Internet Use" of our report [The Complete Guide to Computer Security... for Mere Mortals](#). The security and privacy of your personal information is within your control. Read the report and start to protect yourself now.

Here is a video from Frederick D. our Computer Security Expert... See what he has to say here about Computer Security Solutions.

All thanks and credit for the above article must go to the Graham Cluley at [GrahamCluley.com](#). He is a terrific resource on computer security and I follow his work everyday.