

RFID, Privacy and the Public Policy Void

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- **RFID Privacy Workshop**
- **MIT Computer Sciences and AI Laboratory**
- **November 15, 2003**

Topics

- Need for Technology Assessment of RFID
- Position paper of consumer advocates
 - www.privacyrights.org & www.nocards.org
 - Fair Information Practices
 - Platform for policy and practices
 - Myths debunked
 - Limitations of industry solutions

Fair Information Practices

- Traditional FIPs
 - Openness
 - Purpose specification
 - Collection limitation
 - Accountability
 - Security safeguards
- My summary
 - Transparency
 - Fairness
 - Consumer control
 - **Privacy by default**
- AutoID Center Recommendations
 - Notice
 - Choice
 - Control
- **Shortcoming of “choice”**
- **Importance of “privacy by default”**

Technology Assessment

- Multi-disciplinary analysis of technology to provide early indications of probable benefits and adverse impacts
- Overseen by impartial body, stakeholders
- Economic, social, and policy impacts
- Enable lawmakers and policymakers to make informed decisions

Office of Technology Assessment

- U.S. Congress
- 1972 - Sept. 1995
- Issued reports
- Archive - www.princeton.edu/~ota

Why Technology Assessment of RFID?

- “A conversation with society”
- Potential for societal harms
- Privacy and civil liberties erosion
- Impacts of workforce
- And more

Components of TA

- Project team and director
- Advisory panel of stakeholders
- Contractors, specific analytical tasks
- In-house research
- Hearings / workshops nationwide / internat'l
- Peer review of draft reports
- Final report

Components, cont'd.

- Several policy options -- not just one
- Technology capabilities & limitations
- Technology trajectory / diffusion
- Industry structure
- Marketplace structure
- Level of regulatory oversight
- Impacts on economy
- Environmental and health impacts

Components of TA, cont'd.

- Workforce implications
- Consumer impacts -- privacy, civil liberties
- Optional technologies, e.g. 2-D barcodes
 - Risk-benefit analysis, comparative with RFID
- Unintended consequences and how to mitigate them
- Several policy options -- not just one
- www.princeton.edu/~ota

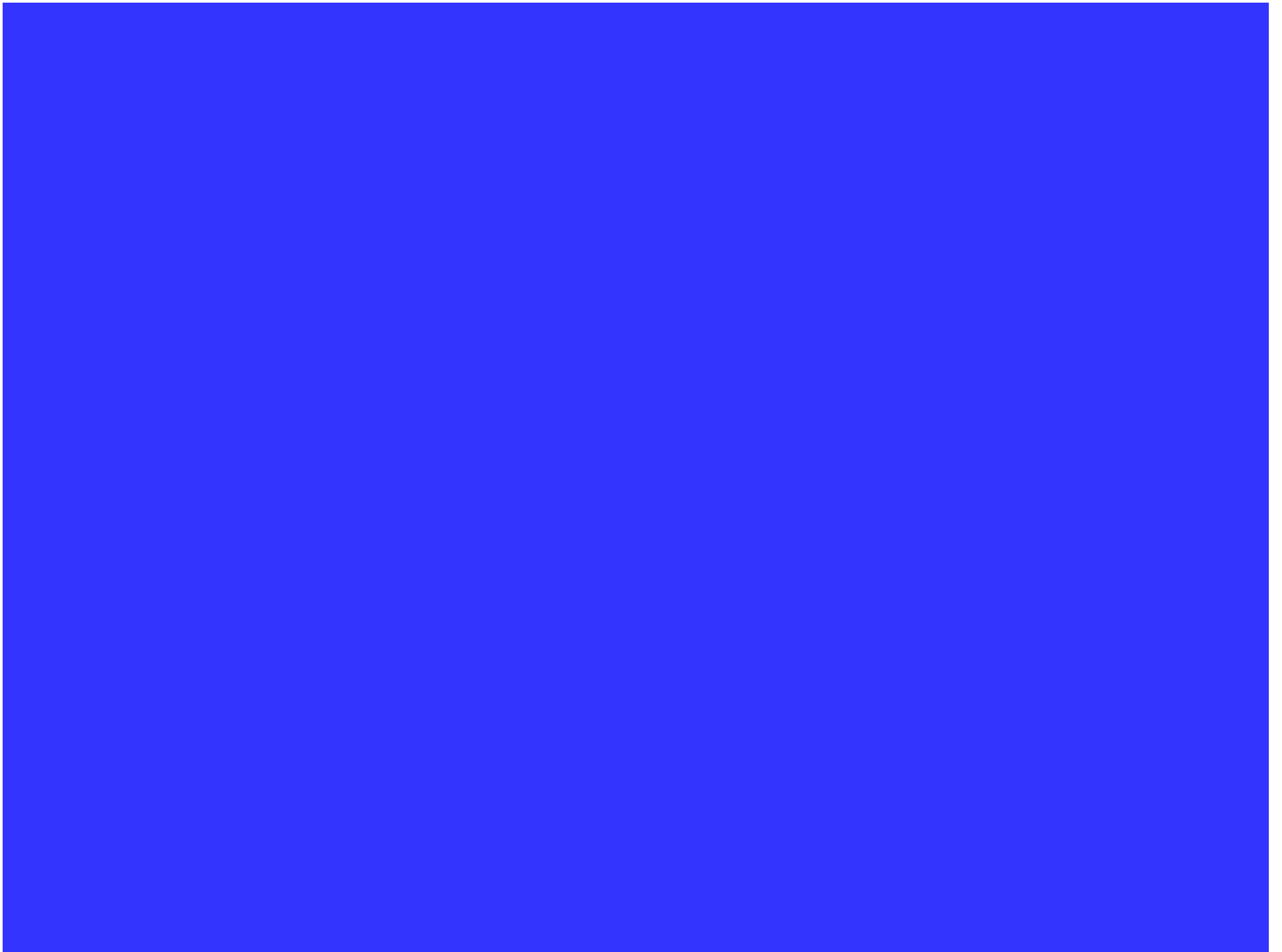
Conclusions:

Reversal of Public Policy Void

- RFID subject to technology assessment
- Policy / practices framework guided largely by Fair Information Practices -- codified into law
- Industry adopt voluntary guidelines -- including moratorium on item-tagging

Conclusions, cont'd.

- Must address gov't adoption of RFID because of civil liberties implications
- www.privacyrights.org



Myths Debunked

- Read-ranges not sufficient for surveillance
- Readers not prevalent enough for seamless human tracking
- Data on tags is limited
- Passive tags cannot be tracked by satellite
- High cost of tags are prohibitive to wide-scale deployment

Limitations of Industry Solutions

- Killing tags at point of sale
 - Does not address in-store tracking
 - Dormant tags can be reactivated
 - Tag-killing could be halted by gov't edict
 - Retailers offer incentives / disincentives to not kill tags
 - Creation of 2 classes of consumers

Industry Solutions, cont'd.

- Blocker tags
 - Still theoretical
 - Encourages widespread deployment of RFID
 - Adds a burden to consumers
 - Fails to protect consumers when products are separated from the blocker device
 - Creation of 2 classes of consumers
- Closed systems
 - Strong incentives to standardize and merge

RFID Rights and Responsibilities

- Openness re: tags, readers, and data files
- Merchants prohibited from coercing consumers to retain live tags
- RFID must not be used to track individuals
- Never use RFID to eliminate or reduce anonymity -- e.g. not incorporated in currency