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Wireless Networks and Applications
Lecture 23: RFID and NFC

Peter Steenkiste
CS and ECE, Carnegie Mellon University

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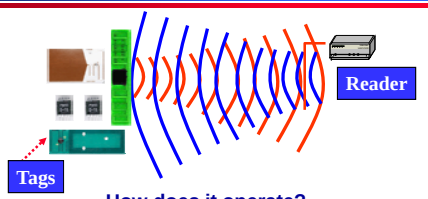
Plan, outline

- RFIDs
  - Concept and applications
  - EPC and backend processing
  - PHY and MAC
  - Security
- Near Field Communication

What is RFID ?

- Radio Frequency IDentification (RFID) is a method of remotely storing and retrieving data using devices called RFID tags and RFID Readers
- An enabling technology with many applications
  - Data can be stored and retrieved from the tag automatically with a Reader
  - Tags can be read in bulk
  - Tags can be read without line of sight restrictions
  - Tags can be write once read many (WORM) or rewritable
  - Tags can require Reader authentication before exchanging data
  - Other sensors can be combined with RFID
- Technology has been around for a long time
- Also has critics, e.g. privacy concerns

How Does It Work?



How does it operate?

- RFID tags are affixed to objects and stored information may be written and rewritten to an embedded chip in the tag
- Tags can be read remotely when they receive a radio frequency signal from a reader and use the energy to respond
- Can operate over a range of distances
- Readers display tag information or send it over the network to back-end systems

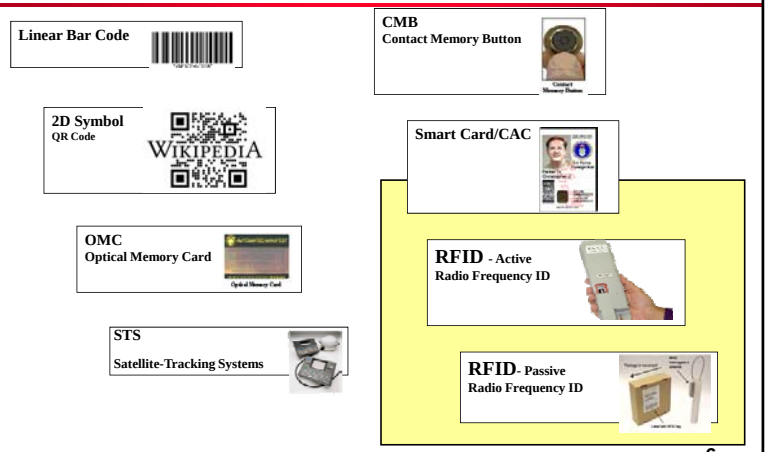
What is RFID?

- A means of identifying a unique object or person using a radio frequency transmission
- Tags (or transponders) store information, that can be retrieved wirelessly in an automated fashion
- Readers (or interrogators), either stationary and hand-held, can read/write information from/to the tags

Applications

- **Operational Efficiencies**
  - » Shipping and Receiving
  - » Warehouse management
  - » Distribution
  - » Asset management
- **Total Supply Chain Visibility**
  - » Inventory visibility in warehouses
  - » In-transit visibility, asset tracking
  - » Pallet, case level
  - » Item, instance level
- **Shrinkage, counterfeit**
  - » Reduce internal theft
  - » Reduce process errors
  - » Avoid defensive merchandizing
  - » Product verification
  - » Origin, transit verification
- **Security, Regulations**
  - » Total asset tracking
  - » Defense supplies
  - » Container tampering
  - » Animal Tracking

Automated Identification Technology Suite



RF ID Types

- **Passive Tags: rely on an external energy source to transmit**
  - » In the form of a reader that transmits energy
  - » Relative short range
  - » Very cheap
- **Active Tags: have a battery to transmit**
  - » Has longer transmission range
  - » Can initiate transmissions and transmit more information
  - » A bit more like a sensor
- **Battery Assisted Passive tags are a hybrid**
  - » Have a battery transmit
  - » But need to be woken up by an external source

A Bit of History

- **Early technology was developed in the 40s**
  - » Originally used as eaves dropping devices
  - » Used reflected power to transmit (transponder), e.g. the membrane of a microphone
- **First RF IDs were developed in the 70s**
  - » Combines transmission based on reflected energy with information in memory – can now distinguish devices
- **Dramatic growth in last decade as a result of mandates**
  - » Big organizations (DOD, Walmart) requiring the use of RFIDs from their vendors for easy inventory control
- **Now used in increasingly larger set of applications**

Standards

- Passive tags operate in the LF, HF, and UHF unlicensed spectrum
  - 30-300 KHz, 3-30 MHz, 300-3000 MHz
  - Distance drop with frequency
- Transmission consists of a bit stream and CRC
- Many standards exist, mostly incompatible
  - » Early standards mostly defined by the ISO
  - » Widely used standard: ISO/IEC14443
- In 2003 EPCGlobal was formed to promote RFID standards
  - » Defined a standard for the Electronic Product Code (EPC)
  - » Also defined standards for coding and modulation

Primary Application Types

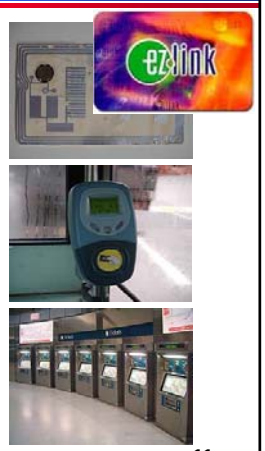
Identification and Localization

- Readers monitoring entering and exiting a closed region
  - » security (RFID in identification cards)
  - » automatic ticketing (NFC on mobile phone)
- Readers tracking an RFID-tagged object
  - » business process monitoring (RFID tags on pallets)
- Tags marking a spatial location
  - » an NFC enabled mobile phone passes tags in the infrastructure whose location is known

Example: Smart Card

Public transport system in Singapore

- FeliCa Smart Card
- 2001 – 2009
- faster boarding times
- Other uses
  - small payments retail
  - identification
- Replaced by contactless card (RFID)



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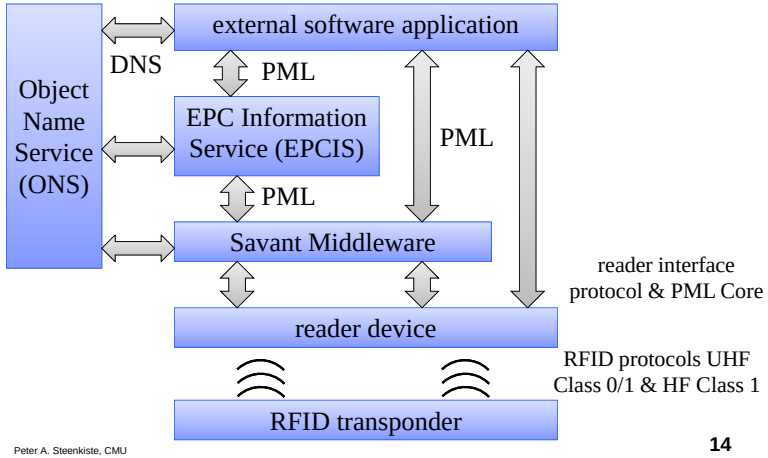
  - » PHY and MAC
  - » Security
- Near Field Communication

Electronic Product Code (EPC)

- "A Universal identifier for physical objects"
  - EPC is designed to be unique across all physical objects in the world, over all time, and across all categories of physical objects.
  - It is expressly intended for use by business applications that need to track all categories of physical objects, whatever they may be.
  - urn:epc:id:sgtin:0614141.012345.6285210cc Syringe #62852 (trade item)
- Combine
  - EPC data located on the RFID tag
  - reader's middleware
  - locate EPC Information Services (EPCIS), using Web Services like SOAP and WSDL

EPC Network Concept (2001)



What information does an RFID tag contain?

Gen 2 tags have four memory banks

Bank 0	Bank 1	Bank 2	Bank 3
Reserved Memory •32-bit Kill Password •32-bit Access Password *(64 bits)*	EPC Memory •16-bit CRC •16-bit Protocol Control •96-bit EPC *(128 bits)*	Tag Identification Memory * •8-bit Class Identifier •12-bit Tag Designer •12-bit Tag Model Number •32-bit Serial Number (optional) *(0, 32, or 64 bits)*	User Memory * •User-defined format *(0 or more bits)*

The CBP "GDTI-96" bit unique number

A 64-bit TID memory bank contains a tag serial number that uniquely identifies a tag.

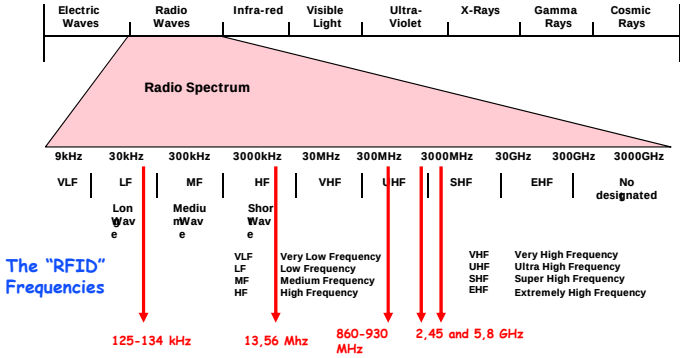
* *TID and User Memory banks are not initialized on some Gen 2 tags*

Passive RFID Tags

- Power supply
  - passive: no on-board power source, transmission power from signal of the interrogating reader
  - semi-passive: batteries power the circuitry during interrogation
  - active: batteries power transmissions (can initiate communication, ranges of 100m and more, 20$ or more)
- Frequencies
  - low frequency (LF): 124kHz – 135 kHz, read range ~50cm
  - high frequency (HF): 13.56 MHz, read range ~1m
  - ultra high-frequency (UHF): 860 MHz – 960 MHz (some also in 2.45GHz), range > 10m

Frequency Bands
Passive RFID Tags

Electromagnetic Spectrum



Standards

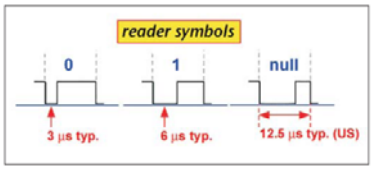
- ISO 18000: multipart standard for protocols in LF, HF, and UHF bands
- For example, HF:
  - » ISO 14443 (A and B) for "proximity" RFID
  - » ISO 15693 for "vicinity" RFID (basis for ISO 18000 part 3)
- Two classes:
  - » Class 0: read only
  - » Class 1: read/write, can for example be used for tracking

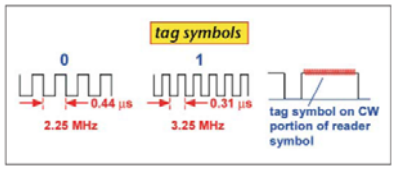
Transmission methods

- LF and HF: inductive coupling
  - » coil in the reader antenna and a coil in the tag antenna form an electromagnetic field
  - » tag changes the electric load on the antenna.
- UHF: propagation coupling: backscatter
  - » tag gathers energy from the reader antenna
  - » microchip uses the energy to change the load on the antenna and reflect back an altered signal
  - » Different modulations used by reader and tag

PHY Layer

- Depends on the frequency band used
- Different modulations used by reader and tag
  - » Different constraints, e.g. power and complexity
  - » E.g. cannot used amplitude modulation for HF tag (why?)
- Example of EPCGlobal symbols for UHF





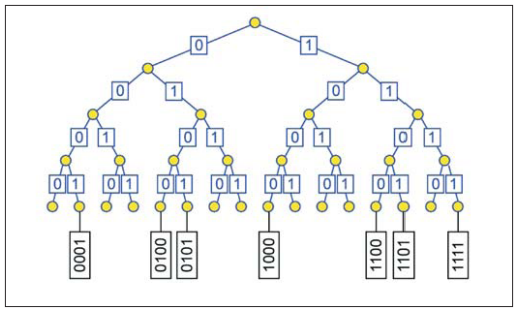
What does an RFID tag look like inside a card?

MAC Layer

- Typically assumed that only one reader is present, i.e. no need for MAC on the reader
- MAC for tags is a challenge: very high concentrations of tags are present in many contexts
  - » And tags are dumb, i.e. cannot have sophisticated protocols
- Two types of schemes used (standard):
  - » Binary tree resolution: reader explores a tree of relevant tag values
  - » Aloha: tags transmit with a random backoff

Binary Tree Resolution

- Send requests to tags with ids that start with a certain string
- Narrow down search until one tag responds



General Security Concerns

- RFID tags raise a number of security concerns:
  - » Privacy risks, e.g., eavesdropping
  - » Cloning and forging of tags
- Specific disadvantages due to tag limitations
  - » Encryption algorithms are too complex to be implemented on tags
- But also specific advantages:
  - » Tags are slow to respond, maximum no. of read-out operations
  - » Adversary has to be physically close

Privacy Concerns

- Tracking
  - » Depends only on unique id (even if random)
  - » Today:
    - – automated toll-payment transponders
    - – loyalty cards
  - » Future: pervasive availability of readers
- Inventorying
  - » Invisible items become visible
  - » Libraries
  - » Passports
  - » Human implants: VeriChip
    - – Medical record indexing
    - – Physical access control

Privacy for Business Networks

- Major concern for industry:
  - » Supply chain visibility
  - » Supply chains and business networks are business assets
- Example provenance checking: competitors may be able to get a lot of information
  - » Depending on how detailed the information associated is:
    - – Where an object and its parts where manufactured
    - – When it was manufactured
    - – By which sub-contractors
  - » Who are the suppliers of a company
  - » Which companies are the customers of a company

Reading Ranges

- Controlling reading range can limit privacy risk
- Nominal read range (RFID standards and product specifications):
  - » 10cm for contactless smartcards (ISO 14443)
- Rogue scanning range: sensitive reader with more powerful antenna or antenna array
  - » 50cm
- Tag-to-reader eavesdropping range: need to power the tag limits range for passive RFIDs
  - » Eavesdropping on communication while another reader is powering the smartcard: > 50cm
- Reader-to-tag eavesdropping: readers transmit at much higher power

Use for Authentication

- RFID tags uniquely identify objects
- Many proposals to use tags for authentication
  - » Passport or driver's licence
  - » Identification of stolen goods
- Counterfeiting attack
  - » Scanning and replicating tags
- Possible options
  - » EPC:
    - – Simple bitstring
    - – No access-control
  - » VeriSign:
    - – Digital signing
    - – Against forging but not cloning

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Near Field Communication (NFC)

- One device combines the functionality of
  - An RFID reader device
  - An RFID transponder (tag)
  - Bit rates ranging from 106 Kbs to 424 Kbs
- Integral part of mobile devices (e.g. mobile phones) NFC components can be accessed by software to
- Operates at 13.56 MHz (High frequency band) and is compatible to international standards:
  - ISO/IEC 18092 (also referred to as NFCIP-1),
  - ISO/IEC 14443 (smart card technology, "proximity coupling devices"),
  - ISO/IEC 15693 ("vicinity coupling devices").
- Use of NFC is growing fast
  - Driven by NFC Forum (founded by Nokia, Philips, and Sony in 2004)
  - http://www.nfcworld.com/nfc-phones-list/#available

N-Mark trademark of NFC Forum

NFC Devices

Modes of operation

- Smart Card emulation (ISO 14443):
  - Phone can act as a contactless credit card
  - Information can be generated rather than pre-stored
- Reader mode
  - Allows NFC devices to access data from an object with an embedded RFID tag
  - Enables the user to initiate data services, i.e., retrieval of rich content, advertisements, ..
- Peer-to-peer (ISO 18092)
  - Allows two way communication between NFC devices
  - NFC can act as smart tag, i.e., generates information

Example: contactless payment applications
Sony FeliCa, Asia
MIFARE, Europe
Google Wallet

(c) Google

Active and Passive Communication Modes

- Passive communication: one device acts as a reader and the other as a tag
  - Reader generates a field while the other responds
  - The second device can be a tag or another NFC device
- Active communication: both devices alternatively act as readers
  - Allows fairly general two way communication
  - Both devices must have a battery
- Since NFC devices can read and write, they must check for collisions
  - Compare received signal with transmitted signal

Comparison: Main Applications

RFID

- Retail
- Logistics
- Supply chain management
  - » accurate inventories
  - » product safety and quality

NFC

- Mobile payment
- Mobile ticketing
- Pairing of devices (esp. Bluetooth devices)
- Download of information from "smart posters"