

German Security Consultant Clones E-Passports

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Las Vegas, NV (AHN) - A German computer security expert has revealed that he is able to duplicate e-passports that the U.S. and other countries are planning to distribute later in the year.

The controversial electronic passports contain radio frequency ID, known as RFID, chips that the U.S. State Department believes will make it difficult to forge. However, Lukas Grunwald, a security consultant working with DN-Systems in Germany claims it is, in fact, easy to clone.

Grunwald told Wired News, "The whole passport design is totally brain damaged."

He elaborated, "From my point of view all of these RFID passports are a huge waste of money. They're not increasing security at all."

Grunwald anticipates a demonstration of his cloning technique at the Black Hat conference in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Gus Hosein, a visiting fellow in information systems at the London School of Economics and Political Science and senior fellow at Privacy International, a U.K.-based group that opposes the use of RFID chips in passports, told Wired News, "Either this guy is incredible or this technology is unbelievably stupid."

Hosein went on to say, "I think it's a combination of the two...Is this what the best and the brightest of the world could come up with? Or is this what happens when you do policy laundering and you get a bunch of bureaucrats making decisions about technologies they don't understand?"

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