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Regulations being introduced in RFID

By Pavan Duggal, | 22 May, 2005, 02:35AM IST Post a Comment

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What is RFID? I hear that it is a technology that's beginning to be regulated in various countries?

SK

Radio frequency identification (RFID) is a method of remotely storing and retrieving data using devices called RFID tags/transponders. An RFID tag is a small object, such as an adhesive sticker, that can be attached to or incorporated into a product. RFID tags contain antennas that enable them to receive and respond to radio frequency queries from an RFID transceiver.

RFID is used for various purposes - among others to tag merchandise at stores, to prevent shoplifting, to tag prescriptions, over-the-counter medicines, and hospital products and to help combat the illegal trafficking of counterfeit pharmaceutical products. This technology is used in several widescale systems including vehicle immobilizers, for passports and other government-issued identification

There is no global public body that governs the frequencies used for RFID. In principle, every country can set its own rules, but some standards have been made regarding RFID technology. EPCGlobal is the standard that is most likely going to form the basis of a Worldwide standard.

The standard proposed by EPCGlobal includes privacy-related guidelines for the use of RFID-based EPC (Electronic Product Code) .

They include the requirement to give consumers clear notice of the presence of EPC and to inform them of the choice that they have to discard, disable or remove EPC tags.

However, these guidelines are non-binding. However, governmental regulation of this technology by passage of legislation is beginning to take shape.

A unique bill is making its way into the legislative system in California. This bill, if passed, would be the first legislation in the United States and possible the world, which relates to the issue of regulation of RFID. A look at the bill shows that it proposes to enact the Identity Information Protection Act of 2005.

The bill stipulates that no identification document created, mandated, purchased, or issued by a state, county, or municipal government, or subdivision or agency thereof shall contain a contactless integrated circuit or other device that can broadcast personal information or enable personal information to be scanned remotely, except the exceptions detailed in the bill.

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The proposed law also stipulates that any person or entity that remotely scans or attempts to remotely scan a person's identification document without his/ her knowledge may be punished, upon conviction, by imprisonment in a county jail for up to one year. The court may also impose a fine of \$1,000 to \$5,000, or imprisonment or both.

The proposed law further seeks to regulate 'skimming', a phenomenon where the electronic information on a RFID chip is read by someone without the consent or knowledge of the person carrying it. This is possible with the help of an electronic reading device .

The bill has already generated a lot of interest. If passed, it be the benchmark for all subsequent legislations.

How important is information security from the perspective of law?

RB

Information security is centre stage ever since the 9/11 attacks.

What initially began as a concern for physical and critical infrastructure security, has swiftly transformed into concern for information security and overall security in the electronic medium.

That is the reason why we are finding that increasingly, countries across the world and their governments are beginning to make regulations and laws impacting information security and data security, more so in the light of the events that have developed after the 9/11 attacks. I believe information security is the most important sector and crucial foundation on which any e-commerce ecosystem can be built.

In Indian, some security aspects relating to the electronic medium are covered by the Indian Cyberlaw and the various rules made thereunder. However, information security is constantly evolving phenomenon and as time passes, we are likely to see more attempts at regulation of various aspects of information security in the coming times.

That is the reason why increasingly people need to be conscious about security. However what we require is enablement and not regulation. Governments need to provide enabling legal infrastructure and mechanisms to preserve and protect the security of not just information or data but also of computers, computer systems and/or computer networks at all.

I Read on the Net that companies do not register their cyber crime cases. Is this correct? What is the reason for this?

AJK

It is true that companies are normally not inclined to report cyber crimes because of the peculiar mindset in different countries. In India, any cyber crime registration receives extensive press coverage and most companies do not that kind of media publicity for fear of losing potential business prospects.

However, we do have instances of companies effectively prosecuting claims in cyber crime cases. The decision of whether to report a case or not is always taken by the management of the company.

My email is being regularly hacked. What do I need to do? Please help me. Is there a legal recourse to this problem?

RKV



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It appears that someone is to target you and the electronic communication of your email account. I don't know about your area of work - it is possible that you deal with sometime valuable. Alternatively, you could be the target of the wrath of some hacker. You need to report the matter to the concerned deputy superintendent of police in your area.

If the police decides to register the case, they will do so under Section 66 of the Indian cyberlaw. Hacking has been made a penal offence under the Indian cyberlaw. This act is punishable with imprisonment of up to three years and fine which may extend to Rs 2 lakh.

Besides registering a case, you should protect yourself from future hacking attacks. If you cannot do so, you should stop communicating anything valuable through email. If you can afford it, you should create a new email account and stop using the current one.

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