

# Controversy over Identity Chip

A Florida technology company, Applied Digital Solutions (ADS), is poised to ask the US government for permission to market a computer identity chip which can be embedded beneath a person's skin. This new implant technology could be good news for airports, nuclear power plants, and other high-security facilities, as it could replace ID cards, which are easy to counterfeit, and avoid the problem of negligence on the part of security guards. In addition, the computer chip, which is no bigger than a grain of rice, is extremely difficult to remove or fake.

Other uses of this technology include satellite tracking of an individual's every move to the storage of sensitive data such as medical records. As a result, the technology is attracting interest worldwide among people involved in tasks such as foiling kidnapping and providing paramedical services. Already, eight companies based in Latin America, where kidnappings are endemic, have asked ADS to develop programs for them. Also, a man who suffers from serious allergies is keen to be the first person to have one of the chips implanted in him. Jeff Jacobs of Florida said, "In case I had an allergy attack, medical personnel would be able to tell from the chip whom to contact, what medications I'm on, what I'm allergic to, what kind of operations I've had, and where there might be problems."

More than a decade ago, ADS bought a competing firm which had been making chips for implanting into animals. The chips helped owners find lost pets and also stored vaccination records. Chips for humans are not much different. The makers of the chip foresee it being used to help emergency workers diagnose a lost Alzheimer's disease patient or to access an unconscious patient's medical history.

The chip has no power supply; rather, it contains a millimeter-long magnetic coil that is activated when a scanning device is run across the skin above it. A tiny transmitter on the chip sends out the data. Without a scanner, the chip cannot be read. ADS plans to give scanners free to hospitals and ambulance companies, in the hope that they will become standard equipment.

However, several groups advocating personal privacy have expressed fears that the chips may be used to infringe on personal freedoms. A spokesman for the Electronic Frontier Foundation, one of such organizations, said, "The problem is that you always have to think about what the technology will be used for tomorrow. It's what we call function creep. At first, a device is used for applications we all agree are good. But then it is slowly used for more than what was originally intended. For instance, people who fall foul of the law and order authorities may be compelled to have the chips implanted in them in order to monitor their movements. This brings the individual helplessly into the power of the state."

ADS responds to this criticism by asserting that it will never provide the technology to anyone who intends to coerce people to have the chips implanted in them.

Adapted from an article by the Associated Press

*Complete the summary below.*

*Choose NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS from the passage for each answer.*

*Write your answers in boxes 1-6 on your answer sheet.*

ADS has developed a technique aimed at strengthening security systems using a \_\_\_\_\_ 1 \_\_\_\_\_ which would be embedded in the body. Two of the areas where the system could be very helpful are in efforts to combat \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ and provide \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_. The technology was developed from a system used to trace \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_. The data cannot be read without a \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_, but ADS intends to supply such equipment free to certain users. A problem is that groups which champion personal privacy are alarmed about what they call \_\_\_\_\_ 6 \_\_\_\_\_.