

Expert Says Information On E-Passports Can Be Copied

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Mary K. Brunskill - All Headline News Staff Writer

Las Vegas, NV (AHN) - Personal information stored on electronic passports could be copied and transferred to another device, German computer security expert Lukas Grunwald said at a demonstration late Friday. Grunwald warned that criminals could duplicate embedded secret code and enter countries illegally.

Grunwald's demonstration seemed to contradict assurances made by officials in government and private industry that the electronic information stored in passports could not be copied.

Holding up a computer chip containing electronic information he had copied from his German passport, Grunwald said, "If there is an automatic inspection system, I can use this card to enter any country."

Countries like Germany are already using RFID, short for radio-frequency identification, in passports. Through the use of RFID, everyday objects such as store merchandise, livestock and security documents can beam electronic data to computers equipped with special antennas. U.S. officials are planning to begin embedding RFID in passports in October.

Grunwald's presentation was one of dozens delivered at this year's annual Defcon conference, which is being held in Las Vegas through Sunday. Many of the best-known security experts in the world attend the conference, which focuses on the latest discovered weaknesses in computers, phone equipment and other machines.

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