Mighty chip

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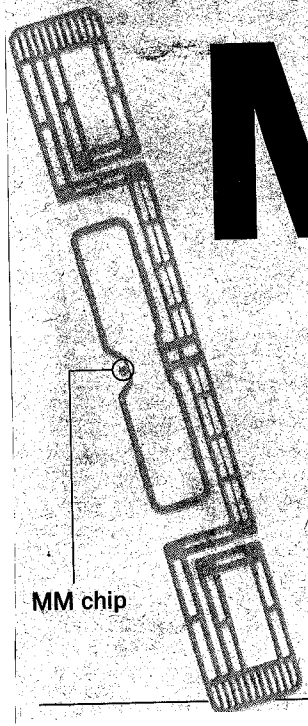
Malaysia Microchip has potential for wide usage



MM chip

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KUALA LUMPUR: After two years, the world's smallest Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) microchip with a built-in antenna has been successfully developed under the Malaysia Microchip (MM) Project.

The chip, which cost US$50mil (RM180mil) to develop, uses Japanese technology and is the first with multi-band frequencies. The microchip is so tiny that it can be embedded on paper. Each chip has its own serial number.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who launched the microchip yesterday, said some of the applications, currently being developed, would help improve the public service delivery system.

For example, he said, it could help counter the forgery of government documents, currency notes, *halal* certificates, medical products and compact discs.

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Radzi: The applications are mind-boggling and limitless

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The Home Ministry will roll out the first government application, with RFID-enabled B certificates – the holographic security labels to verify the authenticity of film discs.

Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Radzi Sheikh Ahmad said detection of forged B certificates would be made easier as the chips embedded on the labels could be read using mobile handheld devices.

From this year, the ministry would also embed the chips on marriage and birth certificates to counter forgery, he said, adding that other uses being studied were for foreign workers' identification cards and Malaysian passports.

Radzi said: "The applications are mind-boggling and limitless. The chip can be embedded on road tax discs, bank cheques and even university diplomas to prevent forgery.

"I urge all government agencies and government-linked companies to utilise the chip, consequently helping us to promote it globally.

"The MM chip is highly acclaimed to be the world's smallest RFID chip with a built-in antenna and it can operate on three bands of radio frequencies. Hence, other countries can adopt it," he said.

Another flagship application is the ongoing e-baggage management application for baggage handling systems at airports in which traditional barcoded baggage tags would be replaced with MM chip-based tags.

Radzi said the International Air Transport Authority had agreed to facilitate the usage of the tags between KL International Airport and Hong Kong Airport and the success of this application was critical in promoting it among other countries.

He also announced the first MM Chip application by a public university. Universiti Teknikal Malaysia in Malacca will use it on its student IDs to monitor time and examination attendance and for its asset management system.

The technology's many uses include product authentification, asset management, container tracking, animal tagging and tracking, patient tracking, electronic toll, logistics and warehousing, healthcare management and security access.

The Government embarked on the MM Chip project in 2004 to utilise the potential of RFID technology.

The MM Project Committee, chaired by Abdullah with Radzi as co-chairman, was set up to monitor the progress and usage of the chip.

Under the project, MM Chip series of MM1, MM2 and MM3, which vary in capacity and strategic features, are now ready for commercialisation.

The Malaysian Industry-Government Group for High Technology was appointed to head the project's implementation, and for this purpose, it established a wholly-owned subsidiary, Senstech Sdn Bhd.