



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on July 26, 2017

Wisconsin Company to Microchip Employees

A Wisconsin company has announced that it intends to be the first in the United States to embed microchips in the hands of its employees. While the procedure has been touted as voluntary, Three Square Market, a company that provides technology for company break rooms and “micro markets,” said that at least 50 of its employees in River Falls, Wisconsin, have agreed to allow the grain-of-rice sized chip to be embedded in their hands.



The chip, which uses Radio-Frequency Identification (RFID) and has been used on pets and other animals for several years, can be implanted between the thumb and forefinger within just a few seconds, and will initially be used to scan employees into their workplaces, as well as to charge them for food purchases.

But the plans apparently go a bit further. “We foresee the use of RFID technology to drive everything from making purchases in our office break room market, opening doors, use of copy machines, logging into our office computers, unlocking phones, sharing business cards, storing medical/health information, and used as payment at other RFID terminals,” said Three Square Market CEO Todd Westby. “Eventually, this technology will become standardized, allowing you to use this as your passport, public transit, all purchasing opportunities, etc.”

Explaining how the microchip will be used initially, Westby said that just like people are able to use a smart phone for purchases, an employee will be able to do the same thing with the wave of his hand. “We’ll come up, scan the item,” he demonstrated at a break room market kiosk. “We’ll hit pay with a credit card, and it’s asking to swipe my proximity payment now. I’ll hold my hand up, just like my cell phone, and it’ll pay for my product.”

Apparently, Three Square employees are being used as guinea pigs for technology the company hopes to sell to its customers. “We see this as another payment and identification option that not only can be used in our markets, but our other self-checkout and self-service applications that we are now deploying, which include convenience stores and fitness centers,” said a Three Square executive.

While Westby insisted that there is nothing intrusive about the chip implant, and the technology would not be used to track employees, CSOonline.com noted that as far back as 1998, “University of Reading Professor Kevin Warwick reportedly became the first person to be microchipped. He used the implant at the Cybernetics department to open ‘smart’ doors, turn on lights, be tracked through the building, and for his PC to recognize and talk to him.”

The website also observed that Europe “has had some companies microchipping their employees for years. Just this year, it was reported that the Swedish company Epicenter intended to ‘embed’ a chip into about 150 workers, so bosses can monitor toilet breaks and how long they work.”

In the United States, an increasing number of individuals and groups have expressed concern that such embedded technology could pave the way for increased control over people and populations, and a



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number of states — including Wisconsin, Oklahoma, California, and North Dakota — have responded by passing laws banning the involuntary micro-chipping of human beings.

The latest to consider such a measure is Nevada, where State Senator Becky Harris recently introduced a bill that would make it a felony to implant RFID devices into humans against their will. Harris expressed concerns over the risk to personal privacy and even health. “This is a completely new issue,” she said. “I just want a safety measure in place until we better understand the technology and the reasoning behind people’s desire to require implanting chips.”

Privacy advocate Liz McIntyre, co-author of the book *SpyChips: How Major Corporations and Government Plan to Track Your Every Purchase and Watch Your Every Move*, said that while micro-chipping some individuals — such as children, Alzheimers patients, prisoners, and sex offenders, to name a few — may seem reasonable, “once you start tracking them, you have others who will say, ‘See how effective this is? Why not use it in other people?’ It becomes commonplace, normal, and people accept it.”

Addressing the pushback the Nevada bill has had from lawmakers who say it is unnecessary, McIntyre recalled that “years ago if you said people would be tracking you with your phone you would say, ‘No way.’ But now everyone knows it and accepts it. So there is very good reason for this legislation, and if lawmakers say, ‘hey, there is no reason we’d ever forcibly chip a human being,’ then why are they so worried about passing the bill?”

Photo: Screenshot of [Three Square Market ad](#)



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