

BIC Libraries – NFC Task and Finish Working Group Meeting Minutes

CILIP Building, 7 Ridgmount Street, London, WC1E 7AE

Monday 20th January 2014, 2–4pm

1. Apologies**Attendance:**

David Brett, 3M
Karen Carden, University of the Arts London
Andy Chadbourne, Bibliotheca
Simon Edwards, BIC (Chair)
Mick Fortune, BIC
Jessica Lawrence, BIC
Ian Manson, Infor

Apologies:

Mike Chambers, 2CQR
Catherine Cooke, Westminster Libraries
Marvin Crisp, D-Tech Direct
P Farrell, 3M
Jim Hopwood, Bibliotheca
Karina Luke, BIC
Stephen Mossop, University of Exeter

2. Purpose and Structure of Group

NFC (Near Field Communication) is a form of RFID capability which is now being applied to many devices including most new android smartphones. Over the last two years discussion of NFC has increased due to the potential threat from these devices which are capable of reading and writing to RFID tags in library books. Whilst this capability could be used to offer new services for users with these devices, it can also provide a threat to the integrity of library RFID solutions. Due to interest in this problem this group has been created to explore ways to alert the market to risks and advise on how to mitigate them.

3. Agree Project Leader

MF was nominated to be project leader and all agreed.

4. Draft Report on Current Situation

MF summarised an email from Alan Butters, in Australia, to the group. AB reported that most libraries there are locking tags and that the national profile has been amended to include this. The group discussed the issues with locking, such as the fact that the information is then entirely fixed. This and password protection raises problems if the libraries do it incorrectly, since if the error is not noticed for some time then potentially thousands of chips will have already been incorrectly locked and the data on them will be unchangeable. This could damage interoperability. KC commented, from a librarian's perspective, that libraries are very resistant to locking their tags. MF felt that any threat came more from vandalism than theft, although DB commented that in some cases the severity of an incorrect lock or password would outweigh vandalism. MF also noted that some companies developing new apps for using tagged books won't want them to be locked. The group agreed that locking is helpful in some cases but is not a solution. SE queried whether libraries have requested what they want to see in tags to make them readable for NFC. MF commented that this issue is only being raised now due to the increase in number of apps using NFC.

The group discussed the possibility of issuing a statement on behalf of libraries to app makers warning them about breaching copyright. It was commented that RFID tags may not come under the Computer Act (which would offer some legal protection and make an attack on library RFID chips against the law) as it's possible that the definition of a computer requires an operating system, not just a memory chip.

As UHF is not susceptible to NFC attacks (it is a different frequency), the group considered whether using UHF was a viable alternative to HF. The general consensus was that UHF is not well suited to the support and development of sophisticated solutions due to its data and environmental limitations. This situation should be monitored closely.

ACTION: DB and AC are to investigate the possibility that RFID tags can be covered by the Computer Act.

ACTION: Members of the group will consult with their various legal teams as to the viability of using a breach of copyright threat.

ACTION: MF aggregate their relevant seminar/documents from AC and DB and circulate to the group.

5. AOB

MF commented that he will contact other RFID suppliers and gather their comments.

6. Date of Next meeting

The group agreed that no meeting need be scheduled now. All agreed that the next meeting will likely be a conference call.

The group agreed that advisory papers should be put together by the end of **February 2014** and signed off by the end of **March 2014** with a conference call.