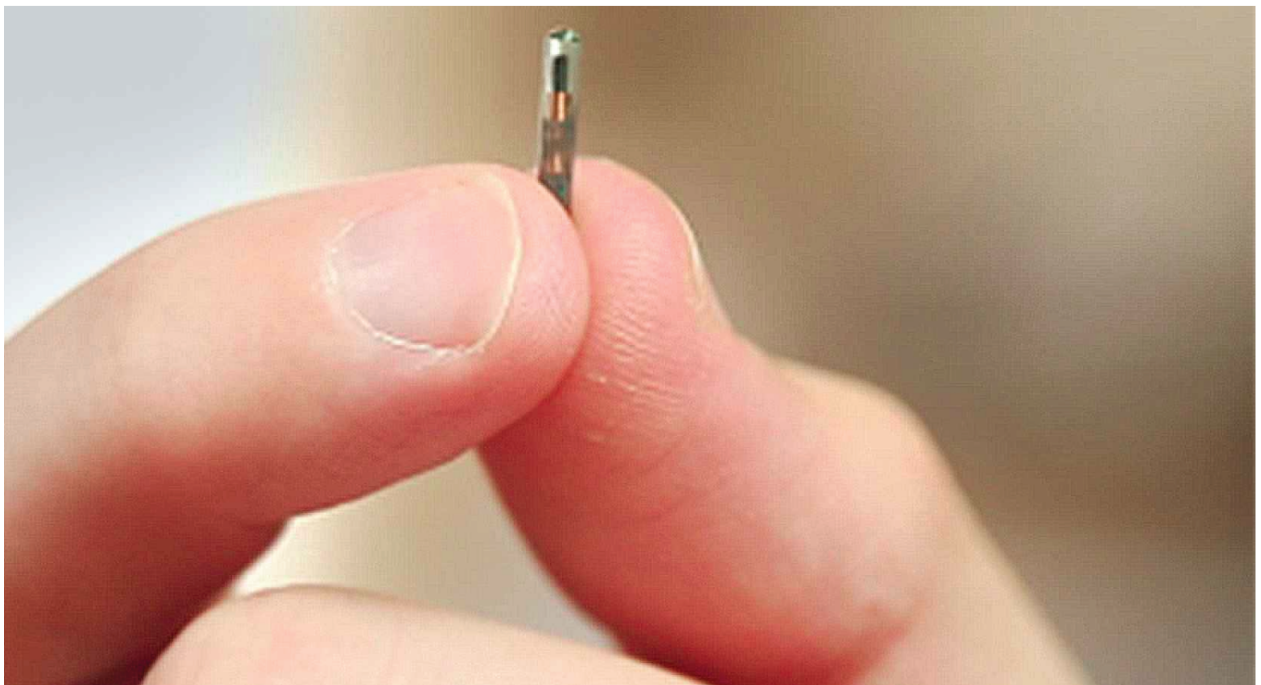


Why This Wisconsin Company Is Embedding Rice-Size Microchips Into Employees

You read that right--rice-sized microchips implanted under the skin for enabling all sorts of things.



By **Scott Mautz** Author, 'Find the Fire: Ignite Your Inspiration and Make Work Exciting Again' [@scott_mautz](#)



CREDIT: Courtesy 32Market

Holy [science fiction](#) movie--the [future](#) has arrived.

A Wisconsin-based company called Three Square Market [announced](#) this week that they are giving employees an option to actually install microchips under the skin (between the thumb and forefinger) to allow them to scan into work, log on to their computers and pay for food at vending machines--all with the wave of a hand.

The rice-sized microchip uses RFID technology (Radio-Frequency Identification) and near-field communications (NFC); the same technology used in contactless credit cards and mobile payments.

While the microchip is meant for micro conveniences, company CEO [Todd Westby](#) said in a company press release that he believes it will become much, much more.

Said Westby,

"We foresee the use of RFID technology to drive everything from making purchases in our office break room, 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. Eventually, this technology will become standardized allowing you to use this as your passport, public transit, all purchasing opportunities, etc."

The company has partnered with Swedish company BioHax International, which already has many employees with implants.

Three Square Market will do the actual implanting at the inaugural August 1st "chip party" at the company's River Falls, Wisconsin HQ.

Sooo...many...questions.

First of all, where does a company draw the line? What if ease in buying a Kit-Kat bar evolves into recording the exact time you show up for work or in tracking your whereabouts?

Would you be OK with that?

I, for one, would not want my employer to know where I'm actually taking that phone conference call from (here's hoping Facetime isn't enabled by the microchip) or how soon I leave after my boss leaves (can the microchip measure nanoseconds?)

Three Square Market is clearly not saying this is what the microchip would be used for, but it's not unfathomable that things could head this way upon application in more companies.

In fact, Nevada State Senator Becky Harris [recently proposed a bill](#) that would ban forced implantation of such chips, citing concerns that "the chips pose serious ethical concerns, such as who owns the information stored on the chip and who owns the chip itself. Hacking is also problematic".

I think it would require a specific set of rules up front on what the microchip would be used for, what it wouldn't be used for, what future applications could be, and provision of "hacking prevention" precautions.

It would make sense if you could "opt-in to upgrades" as a lab rat, or I mean employee. For example, level 1 is vendor machines and laptop login. Level 2 allows the company to collect pertinent productivity data, etc.

Next questions: do you get the microchip removed when you leave the company? Can the same one be used in other institutions? Is there any risk of infection? (You're putting something here in the human body folks.)

Harris weighed in on this last question stating "the chips pose a potential health problem", referring to studies that found cancerous tumors at injection sites in animals.

Net, is this a slippery slope or a step up the mountain of progress?

Time will tell.

In the meantime, I think I'll just get that bag of chips the old fashion way--by tipping the vending machine forward.

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PUBLISHED ON: JUL 25, 2017