

## Cornyn seeking the facts on RFID

Technology brings opportunities and concerns, senator says  
10:42 PM CDT on Wednesday, August 30, 2006  
By VICTOR GODINEZ / The Dallas Morning News

Radio frequency identification technology will eventually be in the products you buy, the credit cards you buy them with, and the driver's license you carry while driving home from the store.



VERNON BRYANT/DMN

U.S. Sen. John Cornyn discusses radio frequency identification technology at the Texas Competitiveness Summit at the University of Texas at Dallas.

But the proliferation of RFID has raised concerns among privacy advocates who worry that consumers will be at greater risk of fraud and identity theft. State and federal lawmakers are starting to look at regulating the technology.

In July, U.S. Sen. John Cornyn of Texas co-founded the Senate RFID Caucus. Wednesday, the senator was in Dallas to deliver the keynote speech at the Texas Competitiveness Summit at the University of Texas at Dallas.

He also sat down to discuss his interest in RFID technology, why he started the caucus, and his thoughts on the privacy concerns.

Here are excerpts from the interview.

### **How did you get interested in RFID, and what are your goals for the Senate RFID Caucus?**

This is a relatively new and emerging technology which offers great promise, and it also has some concerns that it raises in terms of privacy concerns, identity theft and the like. We see a lot of companies who are involved in RFID technology right here in the metroplex, so it's potentially a great job creator here in North Texas.

From a national security and immigration standpoint, we're going to see RFID technology included as part of the US-VISIT program, which monitors people who come to the United States on tourist visas and other temporary visas and then return, to allow us to monitor their presence and to make sure they're complying with our laws.

It's also going to be likely included in our passports and other travel documents as part of our efforts, post-9/11, to try to deter international terrorism and document fraud, which is a huge problem.

**Do you think the industry has done enough to address privacy concerns?**

No, not yet. Part of what I've found in Washington, D.C., is that the hardest thing to get – and this sounds strange but it's true – is good, solid information. So the RFID caucus is designed to get the facts and good information, so we can make better decisions.

**Do you foresee Congress passing legislation eventually to regulate how and where RFID chips can be used?**

I'm not one that thinks that things necessarily improve with more government regulation. I tend to think that government ought to have a light touch, especially on technology issues. We've seen this on the Internet, that the Internet has boomed and prospered in the absence of regulation, and everyone recognizes that the heavy hand of government would not improve it, but make it worse.