

From Progress to Bans: How Close Are Human Microchip Implants?

A lot has happened in the past 12 months regarding human microchip implants. Here's your roundup of recent developments.

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A headline from *The Hill* in January 2023 proclaimed "[Human microchip implants take center stage](#)."

Here's how that article begins:

"The novelty of replacing one's 'home key' with a microchip implant is [gaining](#) worldwide interest, but there's another more compelling story under the surface. Why is this technology — an integrated circuit the size of a grain of rice — [reviled](#) by some and celebrated by self-proclaimed human [cyborgs](#)?

"Arguably, [William Shakespeare's Hamlet](#) offers the most elegant explanation: 'Nothing is neither good nor bad, but thinking makes it so.' However, it would be prudent to tell Prince Hamlet that not all microchip implants are [designed](#) alike, and understanding the technological design enables one to better evaluate the [competing viewpoints](#). Today, more than 50,000 people have elected to have a subdermal chip surgically inserted between [the thumb and index finger](#), serve as their new [swipe key](#), or credit card. In [Germany](#), for example, more than 2,000 Germans have opted to receive these implants; one man even used it to store a link to his last will and testament. As chip storage capacity increases, perhaps users could even link to the [complete works of Shakespeare](#)."

The article goes on to provide an update of many advances and concerns in the practice of inserting microchips into humans, and this blog is referenced several times.

Indeed, I have written about microchip implants from a cybersecurity and privacy perspective three times before, and it is clear to me that inquiring minds still want to know:

What is the future of microchip implants?

Why do I say that with confidence? Because blogs on this topic of microchip implants still receive very high page views and lots of interest from global readers. For your reference, here are those three blogs:

- July 2017: "[Where Next for Microchip Implants?](#)"
- November 2018: "[Chip Implants: The Next Big Privacy Debate](#)"
- January 2022: "[Chip Implants: Opportunities, Concerns and What Could Be Next](#)"

Microchip implant stories from the past year

Back in March of last year, *Wired* magazine offered this video on "The Science Behind Elon Musk's Neuralink Brain Chip":

And in April 2022, the BBC published this story on [microchip implants that let you pay with your hand](#). Here's an excerpt:

"Patrick Paumen causes a stir whenever he pays for something in a shop or restaurant.

"This is because the 37-year-old doesn't need to use a bank card or his mobile phone to pay. Instead, he simply places his left hand near the contactless card reader, and the payment goes through.

"The reactions I get from cashiers are priceless!' says Mr. Paumen, a security guard from the Netherlands.

"He is able to pay using his hand because back in 2019 he had a contactless payment microchip injected under his skin."

But last December, another article asked if [microchip implants in the human brain are still too dangerous](#). The article does a great job in covering the many benefits and drawbacks of the microchip implants, from curing diseases to complications in getting Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval.

Meanwhile, many state governments are passing laws to prevent forced microchip implants on employees and others. For example, [Wyoming just passed such a bill](#).

According [The Hill](#), "to date, at least 10 state legislatures in the United States have passed statutes to ban employers from requiring employees to receive human microchip implants."

Final thoughts

[Back in 2018](#), I listed a number of key questions that I think need to be answered as this human chip implant practice moves forward. I still think these are the right questions (and some are starting to get answered):

- What are the benefits of implanting the chip(s)?
- Is implanting chips physically and emotionally safe?
- Who owns the data on the chip?
- Who has access to the data — and when?

- Do the chips communicate, somehow, with outside networks?
- How are chips updated when flaws are found?
- Can the chips be hacked? Assuming yes, what security is in place to stop unauthorized access to data and manipulation of data?
- Do religious beliefs forbid the practice?
- Is implanting the microchip truly voluntary? Will it still be voluntary tomorrow or in 10 or 20 years?
- Is the practice medically necessary?
- Are incentives offered to those who participate?
- Are penalties coming for those who don't participate?
- Will being chipped start as an exception and become the rule?
- Will ethical and moral processes and procedures be breached by hackers? (No way to stop the bad actors once you begin.)
- What laws are put in place on this implanted chip topic?
- What company policies are affected?

On a wider scale, since [the Internet is an accelerator for good and evil](#) at the same time, what good or evil outcomes will we see from this implanted chip trend?

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