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Near Field Communication: Introduction and Implications

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Near field communication is an emerging technology that allows objects, such as mobile phones, computers, tags, or posters, to exchange information wirelessly across a small distance. Though primarily associated with mobile payment, near field communication has many different potential commercial applications, ranging from marketing to nutrition, transportation, gaming, and health care. In libraries, near field communication could enhance outreach and existing services such as self-checkout. More importantly, near field communication also serves as a new way to link physical materials with digital information, potentially transforming the way users interact with the information environment. This introduction to near field communication will address its background and functionality, its current and anticipated commercial applications, and its potential effect on libraries, librarians, and library patrons. The authors of the article will also discuss the time frame for mainstream adoption, and the privacy and security concerns of this new technology.

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