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Although considered a leading edge technology, IC contact cards, an original French invention, have been with us for over 20 years. Since the 1970s, the history of smart cards has reflected steady advances in chip capabilities and capacity, as well as increases in the number and variety of applications.

The dates below show the historical milestones in the development of smart card technology.

1970 Dr. Kunitaka Arimura of Japan filed the first and only patent on the smart card concept.

1974 Roland Moreno of France filed the original patent for the IC card, later dubbed the "smart card".

1977 Three commercial manufacturers, Bull CP8, SGS Thomson, and Schlumberger began developing the IC card product.

1979 Motorola developed the first secure single chip microcontroller for use in French banking.

1982 Field testing of serial memory phone cards took place in France--the world's first major IC card test.

1984 Field trials of ATM bank cards with chips were successfully conducted.

1986 In March, 14,000 cards equipped with the Bull CP8 were distributed to clients of the Bank of Virginia and the Maryland National Bank. Also, 50,000 Casio cards were distributed to clients of the First National Palm Beach Bank and the Mall bank.

1987 First large-scale smart card application implemented in the United States with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's nationwide Peanut Marketing Card.

1991 First Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) smart card project launched for the Wyoming Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

1992 A nationwide prepaid (electronic purse) card project (DANMONT) was started in Denmark.

1993 Field test of multi-function smart card applications in Rennes, France, where the Telecarte function (for public phones) was enabled in a Smart Bank Card.

1994 Europay, MasterCard, and Visa (EMV) published joint specifications for global microchip-based bank cards (smart cards).

Germany began issuance of 80 million serial memory chip cards as citizen health cards.

1995 Over 3 million digital mobile phone subscribers worldwide begin initiating and billing calls with smart cards.

First of 40,000 multi-functional, multi-technology MARC cards with chips were issued to U.S. Marines in Hawaii.

1996 Over 1.5 million VISACash stored value cards were issued at the Atlanta Olympics.

MasterCard and Visa began sponsorship of competing consortia to work on solving the problems of smart card interoperability; two different card solutions were developed: the JavaCard backed by Visa, and the Multi-application Operating System (MULTOS) backed by MasterCard.

1998 In September 1998, the U.S. Government's General Services Administration and the United States Navy joined forces and implemented a nine-application smart card system and card management solution at the Smart Card Technology Center in Washington, DC. The Technology Center's primary purpose is to demonstrate and evaluate the integration of multi-application smart cards with other types of technology, showcasing systems available for use in the Federal

Government.

Microsoft announced its new Windows smart card operating system.

France began piloting a smart health card for its 50 million citizens.

1999 The U.S. Government's General Services Administration has been involved in the Smart Access Common ID Project for the past year. The Smart Access Common ID Card program will establish a contract vehicle for use by all Federal agencies to acquire a standard, interoperable employee identification card, from one or more vendors, capable of providing both physical and logical (system/network) access to all Federal employees.

The United States Government (General Services Administration) began a true multi-application Java card pilot in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area.

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