

RFID based systems and their perceptive: A review of the literature and future trends

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Abstract— Internet of Things has endorsed a huge success in different smart applications of ubiquitous computing and Wireless Sensor Network's other applications. Due to IoT, the demand of many technologies like Radio Frequency Identification, Bluetooth etc. has raised in many fields and RFID gained a great interest of researchers. In this paper, we provide a general review of 264 academic articles that were published on RFID based systems to investigate the researchers' interest in RFID's different areas during 2006-2019. We categorize the research published in these journals into four main groups: RFID technology, RFID based localization, RFID applications, and others, like RFID tags collision, RFID security & privacy. The major focus of the research to provide helpful bits of knowledge to the researchers who want to work on RFID based systems in future. It is trusted that the survey will be a decent resource for any individual working in this research domain, and will encourage to explore this field in depth. At last, investigations, comparative analysis, suggestions and future trends for RFID based systems are also discussed in detail.

Keywords- Radio Frequency Identification (RFID), classifications, RFID tags, collision.

I. INTRODUCTION

Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) has emerged as a hot topic in the field of Internet of Things (IoT). It has arisen as fundamental technology of inter-organizational systems to improve the quality and speed of supply chain's processes. There are many well-known organizations like Wal-Mart, Metro, Tesco, the US Defense Department etc., which are effectively using this technology from a long period of time. It also became an important part of many applications such as health care, asset tracking, location-based network access, manufacturing, games, government, industry, security, shopping, conference guides, tour guides etc.

Moreover, RFID is also used for the motive of both indoor and outdoor localization. As most of human beings spend their large amount of time (approx. 80%) [165] indoors to do different activities, so their accurate location information for different purposes became a fundamental demand. There is no standard exists for RFID based indoor localization, so according to our requirements and for a particular application for which we are going to use localization, we have to choose ourselves that which localization technique is to be chosen. In case of outdoor localization, an RFID tag is attached with an object and RFID readers are deployed at fixed positions. Whenever an RFID reader will scan that object having an RFID tag, it processes the recorded data and for further processing, send the results to a server on which the localization algorithm is running. [177].

The purpose of this paper is to provide a detailed review of RFID systems' literature that was published during 2006 to

2019. Further, it helps the creation and gathering of knowledge in this domain by summarizing RFID research categories and their perceptive. Basically, the objectives of this paper are as follows.

1. To develop a classification framework based on existing RFID research.
2. Utilize this classification framework to outline what is the current status of RFID research.
3. Analyses and review the RFID literature by considering both the existing quantitative developments and the qualitative matters that have been raised in a way that is beneficial for both practitioners and researchers.
4. To guide future RFID researchers for choosing a specific topic to explore.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

It is expected that the findings of this paper will draw special attention to the importance of RFID technology and their perceptive. It also gives insights into current RFID based indoor and outdoor localization, its applications, collision, security & privacy related research for both practitioners and academics. Furthermore, it incorporates a methodical reference for the current RFID literature. As research in this field is moderately later, the extent of this examination is restricted to the time span of 2006-2019. This 14 years' time frame is regarded to be illustrative of the RFID literature.

To achieve the investigation points, the research is based on the examination of different journals, all of which are straightforwardly connected with RFID technology and its

other classifications. As we accept that journals are the resources which are most usually used to collect data and deliver new discoveries, Master proposals, doctoral thesis, conference papers, text-books, news report, and unpublished papers are avoided. Research articles are dispersed over a range of journals due to the recent and a decent variety of this field of research, and thus a literature search was conducted using the following electronic databases:

1. IEEE/IEE Electronic Library
2. Science direct
3. ACM (Association for Computing Machinery) Digital Library
4. Scopus (Elsevier)

The literature search depended on the descriptors “RFID” as

A. RFID Technology

A classic RFID system generally made up of tags and readers, computing hardware, middleware and application software. Our center of attention is on those articles which are directly concerned to the RFID systems, like RFID tags and antennae, RFID readers, and communication infrastructure [90, 118]. We classify the RFID technology category into the sub-categories which are given below: -

1) RFID tags and antennae

An RFID tag contains an integrated circuit with microprocessor chip which works as memory. RFID tags are of two types: active RFID tags which have batteries and passive RFID tags which do not have batteries. Each tag has a unique identity (ID), that can be share with a reader that is using same tag protocol and working on the same frequency. The research area related to tags includes tags’ design and their testing, manufacturing

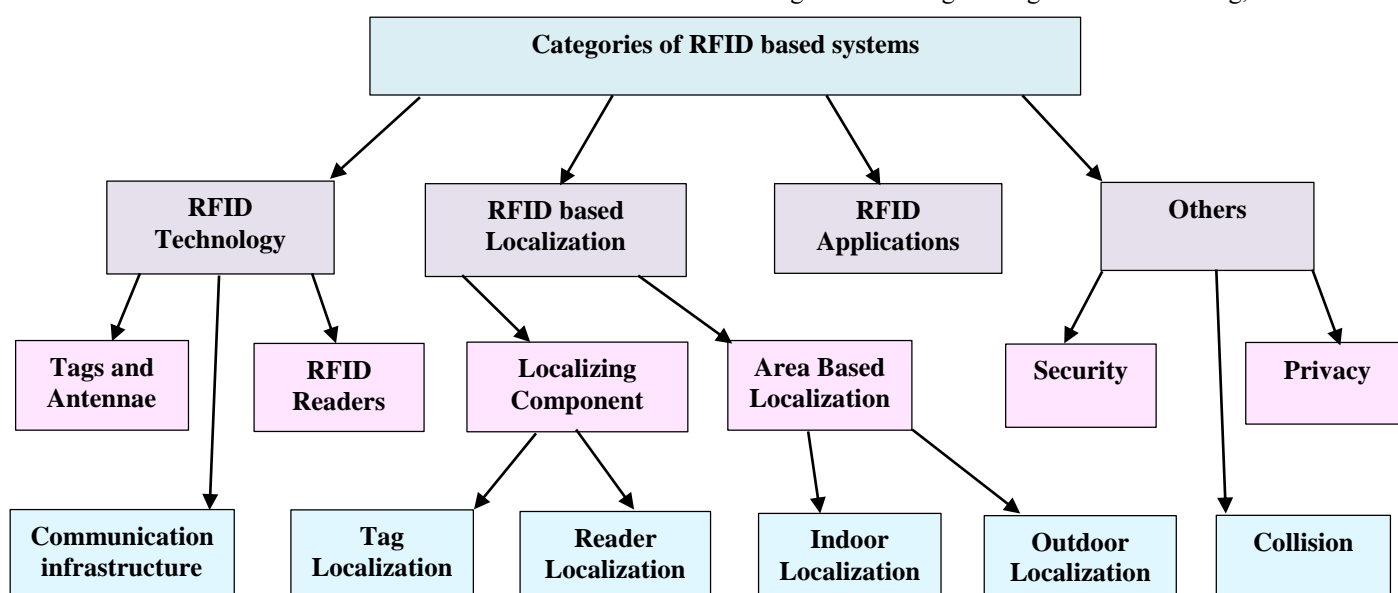


Figure 1. Categories of RFID based systems

well as “Radio Frequency Identification”, “RFID applications”, “RFID localization”, “RFID security, privacy, collision”. The full content of each article was inspected to remove articles that are not related to RFID. In this survey, we distinguished 264 published papers for the period 2006-2019 that were published in 19 journals. However, the search was not complete, it works as a comprehensive basis for acquiring the knowledge of RFID research. Each article that was recovered through the search procedure was deliberately looked into before making a decision with respect to its consideration in the review.

III. CLASSIFICATION METHOD

The paper includes a content-oriented classification of the RFID literature. We categorize the review of literature into four categories, namely, (A) RFID technology, (B) RFID Based Localization, (C) RFID Applications, (D) Others which includes (RFID tags Collision, RFID Security & Privacy). Each of these categories are divided into several sub-categories as shown in Fig 1. The explanation about all these categories is as follow: -

2) RFID readers

An RFID reader is a device that can read the data from a compatible RFID tag and also has the privilege to write data to that tag. The main use of this communication between a tag and a reader, is to take the location information of any object with that the tag is attached [117]. An RFID reader will send this information to a server through the computer network. So, RFID technology is generally used for the tracking purpose of objects and human beings too. For the successful communication, the tags and the readers must work on the same

frequency and the protocols. The RFID readers are available in four different forms: handheld, vehicle-mounted, post-mounted, and hybrid [119]. The first three can read either passive or active tags, and the hybrid readers can switch between passive and active modes.

3) *Communication infrastructure*

It is the collection of wired and wireless network communications. The communication infrastructure executes a series of data transfer operations which deliver the data that are stored in a tag to the reader [123, 127]. The research area under this category includes the articles based on the relevant communication criteria, protocols, network connectivity issues, and Safe guards.

B. *RFID based localization*

RFID has become popular and typical application, spanning from asset tracking, service industries, logistics, and manufacturing, to supply chains. This large number of applications drives the price of RFID system down, and hence, create a reliable device for automatic identification [157]. RFID can be used for both indoor and outdoor localization. In present time, for outdoor localization, GPS technology is often used to locate people, equipment and other tangible objects. However, this technology might not be suitable for indoor localization since GPS requires a direct line-of-sight communication to the satellites [173]. There are various sub-categories of RFID based localization:

1) *On the basis of which part is localizing the missing entity*

- Tag Localization
- Reader Localization

2) *On the basis of area*

- Indoor localization
- Outdoor localization

C. *RFID applications*

RFID is a growing technology that has generally a number of applications in supply chain management, logistics, and manufacturing but it has numerous applications in other areas too. Its use is increasing day-by-day, so a number of companies which have successfully used this technology in real-world applications. Woodhead (2018) stated that this is one among the fast-growing technologies which have scope of applications in business intelligence [97]. We classify this category into sub-categories on the basis of its applications in different areas, as given below: -

- Business intelligence
- Healthcare system
- Knowledge prediction and management
- Animal identification, detection and monitoring
- Weather/temperature monitoring
- Grapevine management
- Farming/agriculture management
- Supply chain management
- Construction management
- Meat supply management
- Warehouse management
- others

D. *Others (RFID tags Collision, RFID Security & Privacy)*

Some other topics that are gaining interest for research are RFID tags collision, RFID security & privacy. The RFID based system is made up of one or more readers and a large number of tags. RFID reader is generally responsible for the proper management of communication among various tags which has their unique and unmodified identity. RFID reader can identify only one tag at a time. When a large number of tags send signal to reader for the identification purpose at the same time then collision can occur and identification of tags will become unsuccessful. There are generally three types of RFID collisions: - Tag to Tag collision, Tag to Reader collision and Reader to Reader collision [253, 259, 261].

The tag-to tag collision occurs when two or more tags try to communicate to a reader simultaneously and as a result no communication occur with any of the tags. Readers to Tag collision happens when more than one reader attempts to communicate with a single tag at the same time. In the Reader-to-Reader collision, transmission signal generated by one reader can be interfered by the communication of other readers in its RFID zone and therefore, the readers are unable to read tags.

Security and privacy methods are the fundamental requirement for the communications with sensing devices. Security issues surround around the vulnerabilities and confidential data protection from unauthorized access and modifications. If there is no security, then various security attacks like illicit tracking of RFID tags may affect the RFID system. Some other security issues include confidentiality, authentication, authorization, anonymity, nonrepudiation and integrity etc. So, for the normal functioning of the RFID communication system security mechanisms are very crucial [183]. On the other hand, privacy of RFID mainly works around the misuse of data by authorized users. Privacy can be controlled by limiting the range of tags, which in turn prevents personal information leakage [227, 247].

IV. CLASSIFICATION RESULTS

In this paper, 264 articles from the different journals are classified based on the year of publication, research area and journal names. This review analysis will provide direction to choose a topic for the future research on the RFID technology and its applications by providing the historic growth of RFID in various fields (RFID localization, RFID collision, security & privacy, applications) over the years.

A. *Distribution of articles by year of publication*

The distribution of articles by year from, 2006-2019 is shown in Figure 2. The x-axis represents the number of published articles and y-axis provide years. The number of articles published in a particular year is shown in the above figure.

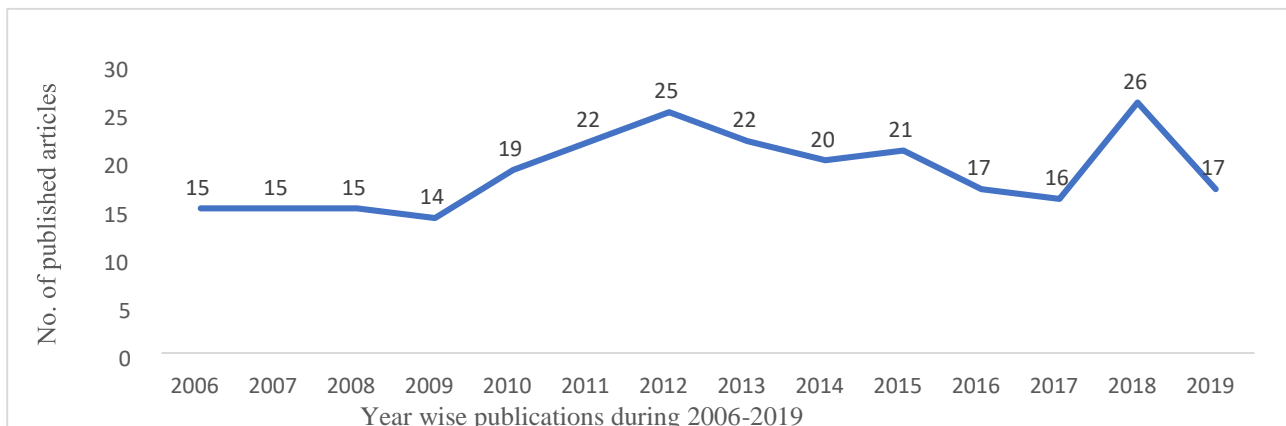


Figure 2. Distribution of articles by years

B. Distribution of articles by journal

From various disciplines such as engineering, IT, networking, business and management etc., a total of 19

journals. Computers and Electronics in Agriculture (64) and Automation in Construction (58) published most of these articles as shown in the Table 1.

TABLE 1. JOURNALS PUBLISHING 13 OR MORE ARTICLES ON RFID

Name of Journal	No. of articles
1. Information Systems Management (Taylor and Francis Online)	17
2. Computers and Electronics in Agriculture {Elsevier}	64
3. AEU-International Journal of Electronics and Communications {Elsevier}	15
4. Microelectronics Reliability {Elsevier (ScienceDirect)}	13
5. Automation in Construction {Elsevier}	58
6. International Journal of Logistics Management (Emerald insight)	18
7. Communications of the ACM	17
8. Wireless Networks (Springer)	23
9. International Journal of Advanced Manufacturing Technology (Springer)	23

journals included in our results list that published articles related to RFID topic in the period 2006-2019. Table 1 included the name of journals that published 13 or more articles related to RFID in this period and the number of articles published in

C. Distribution of articles by topic

The distribution of the articles is shown in Figure 3. Most of the articles are related to RFID applications (88 out of 264 or 33.33% of the total), with the least being published on RFID tag

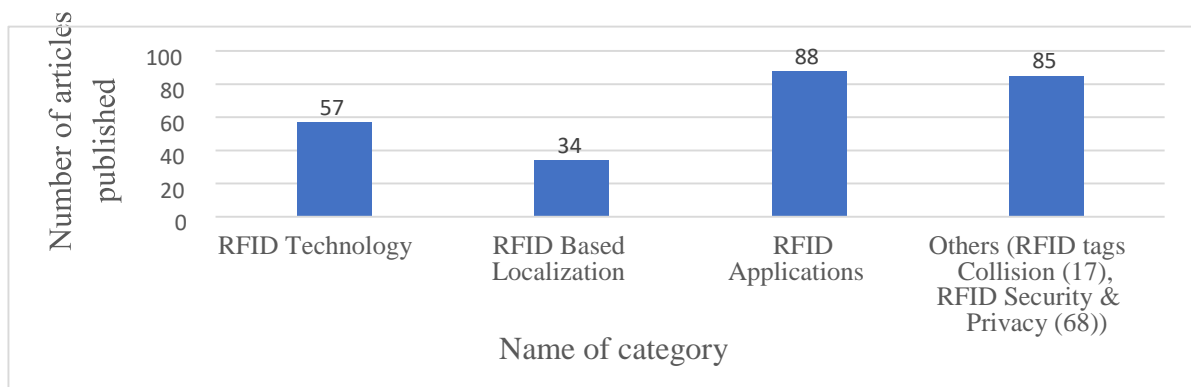


Figure 3. Distribution of articles by topic

collision (17 out of 264 or 6.44% of the total) as shown in figure 4. The number of articles related to each RFID application are listed in Table 2.

business intelligence's applications have the highest number of publications. In business intelligence, RFID has been used in automation feature to increase the volume of data collection and

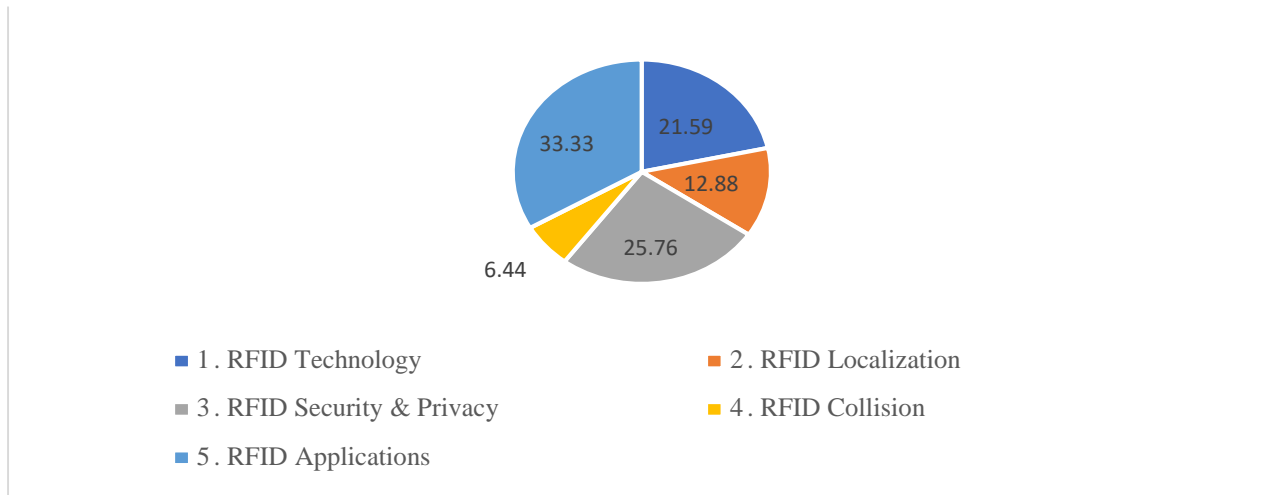


Figure 4. Percentage of articles by all subjects

TABLE 2. NUMBER OF ARTICLES OF EACH APPLICATION

Application Name	Number of articles	Percentage by Subject	Percentage by all Subjects
1. Business Intelligence [1-15]	15	17.04	5.68
2. Healthcare Systems [16-22]	6	6.89	2.27
3. Knowledge Prediction & Management [23]	1	1.12	0.38
4. Animal Identification, Detection & Monitoring [24-36]	13	14.77	4.92
5. Weather/Temperature Monitoring [37-42]	6	6.89	2.27
6. Grapevine Management [43-46]	4	4.45	1.52
7. Farming/Agricultural Management [47-54]	8	9.1	3.03
8. Supply Chain Management [55-64]	10	11.36	3.79
9. Construction Management [65-78]	14	15.91	5.3
10. Meat Supply Management [79]	1	1.12	0.38
11. Warehouse Management [80]	1	1.12	0.38
12. Others [81-89]	9	10.23	3.41
	88	100	33.33

TABLE 3. CLASSIFICATION OF ARTICLES RELATED TO COLLISION, SECURITY & PRIVACY

Classification name	Number of articles	Percentage by subject	Percentage by all subjects
1. Security [181-225]	45	52.94	17.05
2. Privacy [226-248]	23	27.06	8.71
3. Collision [249-263]	17	20	6.44
	85	100	32.2

There are many applications of RFID that covers 12 different areas and have 88 articles (33.33%). From all these areas,

speed for analysis. Other uses of RFID in businesses are antitheft control, inventory control and management, self-checkout systems etc. In most of the articles, a general view of

the RFID's use to improve the traditional business style, the businesses dealing with animals utilize the RFID for animal traceability, remote monitoring control etc. Some articles discuss the future of RFID technology's utilization, its benefits, challenges, and effects.

Like other wireless technologies, RFID also has a threat to collision, security and privacy, and it is also the main concern related to its applications. Table 3 includes the number of articles published on collision, security and privacy issues. More than half in this category, 45 articles (52.94%) are related with security issues, 23 articles (27.06%) deal with privacy issues and 17 articles cover collision related problems.

Table 4 includes classification of articles related to RFID. Among these, 21 articles (36.84%) deals with RFID tags, 9 articles (15.79%) cover RFID readers and highest number of articles 27 (47.37%) are related to communications infrastructure.

TABLE 4. CLASSIFICATION OF ARTICLES BASED ON RFID TECHNOLOGICAL PARTS

RFID Technology's Part Name	Number of articles	Percentage by Subject	Percentage by all Subjects
1. Tags & antennae [90-110]	21	36.84	7.95
2. Readers [111-119]	9	15.79	3.41
3. Communications infrastructure [120-146]	27	47.37	10.23
	57	100	21.59

Table 5 presents the number of papers published on RFID based localization. It shows that tag localization has more publications, 11 articles (32.35%) than other localization techniques. Reader localization has 6 articles (17.65%), indoor localization has 7 articles (20.59%) and there are 10 articles (29.41%) articles are based on outdoor localization. Researchers are gaining interest to improve the quality of outdoor localization so that various outdoor localization techniques can be used by the public with confidence. The articles related to outdoor localization were generally included the methods to enhance the security and privacy of the users.

TABLE 5. CLASSIFICATION OF ARTICLES RELATED TO VARIOUS LOCALIZATION TECHNIQUES

RFID Localization types	Number of articles	Percentage by subject	Percentage by all subjects
1. Tag Localization [147-157]	11	32.35	4.17
2. Reader Localization [158-163]	6	17.65	2.27
3. Indoor Localization [164-170]	7	20.59	2.65
4. Outdoor Localization [171-180]	10	29.41	3.79
	34	100	12.88

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Building and maintenance of relevant publications' reference collection is a critical part of any research. To represent the status of RFID technology, this paper is the first

known academic literature review to the best of our knowledge during this time. It generates a database of RFID technology and its applications' academic literature from 2006-2019 by statistical and classification analysis. It also presents functional insights into the analysis of RFID literature identification, and provides a guide for future research work in this area. It is predicted that as the researchers' interest is growing on RFID, it will lead to a depletion in the proportion of descriptive or conceptual analyses on the side of analytically based studies. In recent years, RFID and its applications have gained much interest among the researchers and practitioners. This article provides several important inferences.

- Undoubtedly, RFID has become an emerging research area from last few years since 2009. According to the number of publications shown in Fig.1, it can be predicted that there will be a substantial development of RFID in the future.

- However, RFID has many applications in its long history, but till 2009 it was not a trusted and well used technology. With time as it improved by many security and privacy methods, its applications started growing in many industries.

- In this review paper, we discovered that RFID tags and readers related articles make up 52.6% of published literature on RFID. As a whole system's cost and performance depend upon the performance and cost of tags used in it. On the other hand, 47.4% articles are related to RFID networks which are made up with RFID based communication infrastructure.

- Among the RFID security, privacy and collision related

articles, there are a smaller number of articles (17articles, 20%) related to collision. However, security and privacy have highest publications (68 articles, 80%) during the period 2006-2019 and that is why, RFID's applications increased during this time period than before. Another implication from this

analysis can be made that in future, RFID collision can gain more interest of researchers to make it more useful technology.

- This review shows that the RFID based localization has least number of publications (34 articles, 12.88%). From all types of localizations, reader-based localization has just 6 publications over the period 2006-2019 and most of the publications discuss technical issues of this technology in spite of the business issues.

- Our review highlights the truth that the most of the research articles has been published in the more technical journals of IEEE, ACM, Elsevier etc. However, in future as the focus of researchers will shifts from technical issues to the business issues, we can expect to have more research articles published in business and management related journals.

VI. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

This literature review shows that most of the research is done on the RFID applications (33.33%) and the various components of RFID technology like tags & antennae, readers and communication infrastructure (21.59%). Till 2013, there were a smaller number of articles on business and organizational areas, but with time as the RFID technology grows, we see researchers' interest on these less developed areas such as collision, security & privacy etc.

There is no standard which provide specific set of protocols for an RFID system's designing, evaluation and implementation processes. So, we believe that to develop this technology at large scale, further research is needed. Although, RFID has numerous applications in different fields, but it has many challenges too which need to be overcome.

For future to extend this work, the papers of conference proceedings, doctoral dissertations, magazines can be included as this review article only includes the journal articles. Further, for the more recent analysis, publications of 2022-2024 can also be included.

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