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'Smart gun' would require shooter to be wearing watch before firing

Posted By [Kelsi Thorud](#) On 12:29 PM 02/19/2014 In | [No Comments](#)

A gun store in California is the first to sell the country's first "smart gun," which requires the shooter to be wearing an accompanying watch in order to be able to fire.

It's called the Armatix iP1, and this is how it works: The gun comes with a watch that not only tells time, but also has an electronic chip inside that communicates with another electronic chip inside the gun, [The Washington Post reports](#).

If the watch is on the wrist of the gun holder, a green light on the rear of the gun illuminates, allowing the gun to fire. If the watch is not on the gun holder, the green light will not light up and the gun will not fire.

Armatix uses RFID chips, which are also used in anti-theft tags attached to clothes in stores. Another smart-gun developer, the New Jersey Institute of Technology, is using sensors to recognize the unique grips and grasps of users. Other companies are using fingerprint and voice recognition technologies.

Gun-control advocates see the new technology as a step toward reducing gun violence and accidental shootings. But gun rights advocates are skeptical that the technology will come without glitches.

Self-proclaimed "extremely pro-gun" owner of the Oak Tree Gun Club in California, James Mitchell [told the Post](#) this new technology "could revolutionize the gun industry."

Lawmakers have wanted to mandate smart guns for over a decade. The Post recalled that in 2002, New Jersey passed a law requiring that within three years of a smart gun being sold anywhere in the U.S., only smart guns would be sold in their state.

At the federal level, Democratic Massachusetts Rep. John F. Tierney has introduced a similar mandate.

The National Rifle Association's lobbying firm, the Institute for Legislative Action, wrote on its website that it opposes "government mandates that require the use of expensive, unreliable features, such as grips that would read your fingerprints before the gun will fire."

"And NRA recognizes that the 'smart guns' issue clearly has the potential to mesh with the anti-gunner's agenda, opening the door to a ban on all guns that do not possess the government-required technology," the institute wrote.

Smart guns still have some looking to capitalize on the new technology.

Ron Conway, an investor in Google and Facebook from Silicon Valley, has created a \$1 million prize contest for smart gun technology.

"We need the iPhone of guns," Conway told the Washington Post. "The entrepreneur who does this right could be the Mark Zuckerberg of guns. Then the venture capitalists like me will dive in, give them capital, and we will build a multibillion-dollar gun company that makes safe, smart guns."

The big question going into the future is if these smart guns will actually sell.

"We think the market should decide," said Lawrence G. Keane, general counsel for the National Shooting Sports Foundation, to The Washington Post.

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