

RFID News Roundup

Kennedy Group launches fast label applicators; Paxar releases compact smart labels; Plitek earns Alien's quality endorsement; Savi offers solutions for DOD supplier compliance; ThingMagic makes reader for handhelds.

Oct. 8, 2004—The following are news announcements made during the week of Oct. 4.

Kennedy Group Launches Fast Label Applicators

The Kennedy Group, a Cleveland-based producer of labels, packaging and identification systems, is introducing three new RFID tag applicators for EPC 900 MHz and 13.56 MHz labels that operate at what it says are the highest speeds in the industry—and with a built-in function to identify and eject nonfunctioning smart labels. The SmartOne RFID printer applicators apply the Kennedy Group's SmartTherm labels in various sizes, embedded with Alien "squiggle" or "M" tags, or Matrics "glass bottom" or "dual dipole" tags. The Model 1000 applicator, available now, can encode, verify and apply 50 labels per minute. The Model 2000 applicator, which should be available within the next few weeks, incorporates a print engine and can encode, print, verify and apply 30 labels per minute. The Model 3000 applicator, set for a November release, shares the Model 2000 functionality but with a printing speed of 65 labels per minute. (All of the above print speeds are with the label-eject feature activated.) The estimated pricing range is \$18,750 to \$24,750 per unit, depending on the model and added features.

Paxar Releases Compact Smart Labels

Paxar, a White Plains, N.Y., provider of bar code and ID technologies, announced the release of 915 MHz Class 1 RFID smart labels with feed lengths as short as 1 inch, a product which it calls an industry first. The labels, which have a read range of 3 to 4 meters, can be used with the Monarch 9855 RFID printer-encoder or other RFID printer-encoder systems. The short feed length of the labels leads to lower paper costs and less waste, as well as higher productivity rates, says Paxar. The company says the labels are intended for use on pallets and cases and are available with either 64-bit or 96-bit tags. The labels are available now, and pricing is dependent on quantity.

Plitek Earns Alien's Quality Endorsement

Plitek, a Des Plaines, Ill., label converter, announced that RFID hardware provider Alien Technology has certified it as a "preferred Electronic Product Code (EPC) Class 1 label converter," thereby permitting Plitek to provide labels containing Alien's EPC Class 1 tags direct to consumers. Plitek says this could lead to cost savings of 5 to 10 percent for its customers—which include some of Wal-Mart's top 100 vendors—because the labels it produces will no longer need to be shipped to Alien for tag verification before they are distributed. The company says that its proprietary RFID tag testing system and the consistent quality and accuracy of the smart labels it produces led to the certification by Alien Technology. Plitek's RFID products include 915 MHz and 13.56 MHz paper, synthetic and film labels, contactless tickets and custom-designed tags.

Savi Offers Solutions for DOD Supplier Compliance

Savi Technology has announced a trio of solutions for helping suppliers to the Department of Defense comply with the initial minimum requirements of the DOD's RFID policy, which mandates that shipments to its

facilities be tracked automatically by RFID systems by 2005. Called “RFID-ACT: Assured Compliance Today,” the solutions can be integrated into existing systems and can enable suppliers to automatically link information about their outbound shipments to DOD supply chain management systems. The program is being offered in partnership with [Zebra](#) and [Symbol Technologies](#). There are three tiers of offerings, which range from \$20,000 for a software-only solution; \$35,000 for a package that also includes Zebra smart label printers and Symbol readers; and a third-tier level for \$50,000 that also includes a verification portal with an RFID reader to determine if pallet tags are readable and the information accurate. This portal also includes a DOD supplier shipping application to automatically reconcile the verified EPC codes on the pallet shipment with information being prepared for a DOD-compliant advance shipment notice.

ThingMagic Makes Reader for Handhelds

Cambridge, Massachusetts-based [ThingMagic](#) introduced its Mercury4h, a handheld RFID reader designed for handheld devices such as portable data terminals (PDTs), personal digital assistants (PDAs), portable scanners and other wireless data equipment. ThingMagic claims that the device reads multiple tags simultaneously, can read any tag currently available and is upgradeable to read future protocols. The credit card-sized, 15mm-thick reader can connect to its host processor through a serial connection, leaving PCMCIA or CompactFlash interface slots free for wireless LAN card or other devices. It comes with 512 KB of onboard flash memory and can be configured to work with either one or two antennas that both transmit and receive or two antennas where one antenna transmits and the other receives. It has two general-purpose input/output (GPIO) lines that can be used to control handheld device accessories, such as visible or audible indicators. The Mercury4h is available now directly from ThingMagic. Pricing for a single unit will be less than \$500 if ordered in volume.

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