

RFID News Roundup

TI releases multifrequency, multiprotocol reader kit; Sensormatic demos at Columbian tech center; ASK makes new OS for smart cards; paper-thin tag for government IDs; more venture funds for custom battery maker.

Oct. 29, 2004—The following are news announcements made during the week of Oct. 25.

TI Releases Multifrequency, Multiprotocol Reader Kit

Dallas-based [TI-RFid Systems](#), which makes RFID tags and readers, announced the availability of its S4100 Multi-Function Reader (MFR) Evaluation Kit. The MRF device supports dual frequencies (134.2 kHz and 13.56 MHz) and accepts multiple protocols (ISO/IEC 15693 and ISO/IEC 14443). The new kit is designed to help systems integrators and engineers design and implement RFID solutions for contactless payment, ticketing, loyalty, and logical and physical access control. Included in the kit are one fully housed MFR reader, an additional MFR reader board, samples of 134.2 kHz and 13.56 MHz transponders, a power supply and communication cables, a demo CD, software and documentation. Also included is a platform-independent software application programming interface (API), developed by Fairfield, Ohio-based RFID integrator [DataBrokers](#). The API is not only compatible with the S4100 but also TI's 13.56 MHz S6500 Long-Range reader and S6350 Mid-Range reader. The kit is available immediately and costs \$595.

Sensormatic Demos at Columbian Tech Center

Boca Raton, Fla.-based Tyco Fire & Security, an RFID solutions provider through its [Sensormatic](#) brand, announced its participation in LOGyCA, an education and technology center in Bogota, Columbia, that opened in August. LOGyCA was developed by standards association [IAC Colombia](#), a member of [EAN International](#), to provide a supply chain technology demonstration and business decision center for Latin American entrepreneurs. LOGyCA allows businesses to learn about leading-edge supply chain technologies, evaluate them for their own business needs and make technology decisions more quickly. Tyco Fire & Security has provided the facility with a fully deployed manufacturing, distribution and retail supply chain RFID demonstration system that includes eight Sensormatic Agile II RFID readers, which operate at both UHF and HF frequencies and work with EPC Class 0, 0+ and 1 RFID tags; 20 Sensormatic RFID antennas; an RFID-enabled printer-encoder; a labeling and pallet-building station; two shipping/verification stations; and two receiving stations.

ASK Makes New OS for Smart Cards

[ASK](#), a French manufacturer of RFID smart cards, has introduced a new operating system for contact/contactless smart cards that comply with ISO7816-4 and ISO14443 A/B standards. ASK is running the operating system, called TanGO, on chips manufactured by [Atmel](#) and [Philips Semiconductors](#) and is marketing it for use in smart cards for transit systems, banking and access control. TanGO can hold 0.5 to 16 KB of data and can store a cryptographic contactless signature to perform authentication on transactions. The OS accommodates the creation of new directories and files, so users can add accounts or functionality after the smart card is issued. The cards are available immediately and cost around \$6 (5 euros) each.

Paper-Thin Tag for Government IDs

ASK, a French manufacturer of RFID products, has introduced a paper RFID tag that it is marketing for passports, national ID cards, visas and driver's licenses. The tag, called Smart Paper ID, is comprised of a microchip attached to a printed (rather than etched) silver antenna on a paper substrate. It complies with ISO 14443A/B standards and operates at 13.56 MHz. ASK uses Smart Paper ID technology to manufacture fare tickets for mass transit systems throughout Europe. ASK says the Smart Paper ID meets the specifications of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the United Nations standardization agency. The embedded microchip and antenna does not add to the overall thickness of the paper tag and is therefore hard to detect. Because the tags are manufactured in a reel-to-reel process, ASK says they could be incorporated into existing printing processes for government IDs. Price information is not available.

More Venture Funds for Custom Battery Maker

Micro Power Electronics, a Hillsboro, Ore., developer and supplier of custom battery systems, announced a \$5 million second round of venture investment. It received an initial round of \$9 million in May. Custom battery systems are used in a range of portable electronics, including handheld RFID readers and battery-powered RFID tags. Micro Power supplies custom power supply units for Everett, Wash.-based Intermec Technologies' Intellitag IP3 add-on RFID reader for its 700 Series handheld bar code scanners. Micro Power plans to use the new funding to increase production capacity, expand sales and marketing efforts, and add engineering resources. A report from market researchers at Frost & Sullivan forecasts that the market for portable devices in the medical, auto-ID, point-of-sale and handheld computing markets represents a \$1 billion opportunity for custom battery solutions by 2008. Micro Power is one of at least three other private firms in the portable battery market to receive venture funding in the past six months. Palisades Ventures, Los Angeles VC fund, was lead investor in Micro Power's second round.

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