

RFID News Roundup

Consumer RFID awareness continues growth; Inside Contactless becomes Dexit supply partner; Agility upgrades AgileTrac 2.0; Accraply releases new printer-encoder label applicator; Worldlabel.com labels tested by lab.

Dec. 24, 2004—The following are news announcements made during the week of Dec. 20.

Consumer RFID Awareness Continues Growth

An online survey shows consumer awareness about RFID has increased by a 7.3 percent during the three past months. The survey results were published in *RFID Consumer Buzz*, a syndicated report by [BIGresearch](#), a Columbus, Ohio-based market intelligence company focused on consumer research. [Artafact](#), an online research company based in Fremont, Calif., carried out the survey, as well an identical survey completed three months ago (see [Consumer Awareness of RFID Grows](#)). Along with a rise in consumer awareness, the survey found growing consumer concern surrounding the technology. Of respondents who said they were aware of RFID technology, 44.7 percent said using RFID to track products is a good thing, down from the 50.6 percent of RFID-aware respondents in the first survey who said it was a good thing. More than a third of RFID-aware respondents (34.4 percent) in the December survey said they weren't sure whether using it was good or not. With regard to the notion of using RFID to track private information, respondents said they have more trust in manufacturers and retailers using the practice than in government and Internet-based companies. Artafact will conduct online focus groups of some respondents next month for a more detailed analysis of consumer awareness. Artafact believes the recent increase in news coverage of RFID in the mass media is responsible for the increasing awareness.

Inside Contactless Becomes Dexit Supply Partner

[Dexit](#), a Toronto-based contactless payments service provider to convenience stores and other low-value transaction outlets, announced it has entered into a multiyear nonexclusive supply agreement to use RFID products produced by [Inside Contactless](#), an RFID technology provider based in France. The first orders to be delivered under this agreement include 50,000 13.56 MHz key fobs and an additional 1,500 RFID couplers used to process the tag's RF signal in Dexit's point-of-sale (POS) merchant terminal readers. Per the agreement, Dexit can buy between 500,000 to 1 million key fobs for contactless payments at a discounted but undisclosed price. Inside Contactless products comply with ISO 14443 A/B and ISO 15693 standards. Dexit currently has 37,000 contactless devices, in the form of key fobs and tags embedded in cellular phones, distributed to users in the Toronto area. It hopes to add more users to the contactless payment service, which it is developing to provide a cashless alternative to users whose purchases are too small for the use of credit cards (see [Dexit Turns RFID Cards into Cash](#)), both within and outside the Toronto area. The Dexit devices hold a unique ID and are linked to accounts preloaded with funds.

Agility Upgrades AgileTrac 2.0

[Agility Healthcare Solutions](#), a subsidiary of Trenstar, a Denver-based provider of RFID-enabled asset management solutions, has released AgileTrac 2.0, an upgrade to the RFID tracking system for healthcare environments the company released earlier this year (see [Hospitals Get Healthy Dose of RFID](#)). AgileTrac uses readers with built-in 802.11b capabilities to connect to a wireless LAN and relay data from the hospitals'

RFID network back to an inventory management system. It can be used to track assets, patients or surgical equipment. AgileTrac uses battery-powered RFID tags that transmit at 303 MHz to avoid interference with other medical or scientific telemetry systems found in hospitals. AgileTrac 2.0 offers an enhanced Web front-end for better system usability and navigation, and an e-mail alert system for sending users inventory alerts and other data. Handheld readers have also been added to the system. Pricing information was not released.

Accraply Releases Printer-Encoder Label Applicator

Accraply, a Plymouth, Minnesota-based designer and manufacturer of pressure-sensitive labeling machinery, has released the PA926 printer-encoder label applicator that can read, encode, verify and print most passive smart labels on the market in sizes from 0.5 to 8 inches in length and 3 to 6 inches in width. Accraply says the PA926 machine can achieve print speeds of up to 14 inches per second and can read, write to and verify RFID tags rates of up to 60 per minute. The PA926 rejects nonfunctioning smart labels, leaving them on the label roll for later review. Accraply says the PA926 is the only printer-encoder that can read, write to and verify Alien Technology's 5/8- by 6-inch passive squiggle tags on a label roll without requiring more than the standard 1/8-inch gap between labels (some printer-encoders require more room between labels in order to read, write to and apply them). It can apply the encoded squiggle labels at up to 40 boxes per minute. The PA926 is available now; pricing information was not released.

Worldlabel.com Labels Tested by Lab

Worldlabel.com, a manufacturer of laser and inkjet printer labels based in New York City, says that 105 of its 4- by 6-inch Xtrack RFID Smart Labels, embedded with Rafsec dipole design UHF RFID tags, were tested by the RFID Alliance Lab. A not-for-profit testing facility housed at the University of Kansas, the lab produces objective benchmarking reports on RFID equipment, but it tested the Worldlabel.com labels at the company's request, not as part of a benchmarking test. The lab tested one tag at a time, with the label placed approximately 4 feet above the antenna of a ThingMagic Mercury 4 reader, the tag was given several seconds to be read, and the lab observed that all 105 labels were readable. This test did not detect any "quiet" tags—those that might not perform at distances greater than the 4 feet at which they were tested. Worldlabel.com also announced that it has developed the first 8.5- by 11-inch sheets of smart labels for laser printers. But Worldlabel.com says that while it can embed up to six smart labels on one sheet, the labels will not be mass-produced until the technology needed to encode multiple tags on one sheet is developed.

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