

iAnywhere's RFID Middleware for Mobility

The Sybase subsidiary says it has developed middleware for connecting RFID readers to enterprise applications and wireless handheld devices.

By Jonathan Collins

Feb. 14, 2005—Looking to build on its line of mobile middleware and its software for managing mobile and remote devices, [iAnywhere](#) has announced its first RFID offering: middleware that connects RFID readers to enterprise applications and mobile devices such as handheld computers.

According to iAnywhere, many RFID implementations will require the integration of RFID-collected data with mobile computing devices. "In an RFID network, there will be a great deal of real-time notification data that that will never make its way back to the central enterprise system but will instead go to handheld devices so action can be taken," says Chris Foley, director of RFID and machine-to-mobile technology at iAnywhere, a Dublin, Calif., subsidiary of wireless application provider [Sybase](#). Such data would include alerts to situations detected at an RFID portal and sent to handheld devices of staff working nearby.

The company's new offering, called RFID Anywhere, is aimed both at companies just starting to look at designing and implementing an RFID system and but it can also be expanded to manage an RFID system deployed across large-scale operations. RFID Anywhere will compete directly with RFID middleware offerings from a host of vendors specializing in RFID middleware, including middleware providers [OATSystems](#), [GlobeRanger](#) and [ConnecTerra](#), and from larger IT players such as [IBM](#) and [Sun Microsystems](#).

RFID Anywhere is set to become commercially available this March, with a starter version limited to 20 connected devices, priced at \$30,000. When used for larger deployments, RFID Anywhere will be priced according to the number of managed devices.

To help companies just starting to look at potential RFID deployments, RFID Anywhere will include a network-simulator feature that allows developers to determine the impact of RFID-collected data on existing networks and applications.

The company claims that its experience with mobile networks has already attracted potential customers looking for RFID middleware that can adapt to deployments where RFID readers need to be transportable and not permanently connected to a network.

"We are working with a Wal-Mart supplier that operates as a product aggregator for around 200 fresh-food suppliers. Some [of these suppliers] are little more than a shed and a truck, and so they aren't in a position to deploy RFID," says Foley. Operating as service, the RFID Anywhere software could enable that aggregator to also manage RFID services for its suppliers.

RFID Anywhere middleware can connect a range of readers and other devices to enterprise applications. Currently, it can connect enterprise networks to RFID readers from [Alien Technology](#), [Intermec Technologies](#)

or Symbol Technologies, as well as Symbol scanners for one- and two-dimensional bar codes. The software also provides support for EPC Class 1.0, Application Level Event (ALE) 1.0 (the draft specification proposed by EPCglobal as a replacement for Savant, to provide a standard interface for filtering and consolidating EPC data from a variety of sources), ISO 15693, ISO 18000-3 and ISO 11784 interface standards. Over time, iAnywhere will add other manufacturers and standards to that list. The company says that the structure of its middleware will enable new devices as well as new categories of devices to be added easily by its customers.

While it was in development, RFID Anywhere middleware provided the software and RFID experience for Sybase's first steps into the RFID market when Sybase launched a partnership (see Sybase Initiates RFID Solution) with AeroScout, a San Mateo, Calif., provider of RFID real-time location systems. Although initial trial customers for that joint solution have not opted to deploy the joint real-time RFID offering, Sybase does expect to see demand for it to grow as RFID technology continues to be integrated into the enterprise.

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