

RFID News Roundup

Kennedy to sell Alien 128-bit tags; Chicago hospital picks Mobile Aspects; INSIDE and Axalto collaborating on mobile RFID; Swiss IC for animal tracking; Alien qualifies Paxar products.

Feb. 18, 2005—The following are news announcements made during the week of Feb. 14.

Kennedy to Sell Alien 128-bit Tags

The Kennedy Group, a Cleveland-based producer of labels, packaging and identification systems, has become the first company to be qualified as a reseller of Alien Technology EPC Class 1, 128-bit tags with 96 bits of user-programmable memory. The qualification means that The Kennedy Group can begin producing its SmartTherm smart labels with Alien's 128-bit RFID inlays, thereby providing its customers with an RFID chip with increased memory capacity—something that end users have been asking for, according to The Kennedy Group's director of business development Joe Jiner. Alien is making a number of its UHF EPC Class 1 products available with a 128-bit chip, including the squiggle, I and M inlays, as well as its new 2-by-2-inch tag that has applications in the pharmaceutical supply chain and for baggage and retail hang tags. The Kennedy Group says its Smart Therm labels with 128-bit Alien tags will be available beginning Mar. 1 in standard sizes of 4 by 2 inches and 4 by 6 inches, as well as others, to meet the smart label specifications of such printer manufacturers as Zebra, Sato and Printronix. The Kennedy Group says pricing will depend on volume.

Chicago Hospital Picks Mobile Aspects

Pittsburgh-based Mobile Aspects, a supplier of RFID-based tracking systems in hospitals, has announced that the University of Chicago Comer Children's Hospital, a new \$135 million facility, has purchased Mobile Aspects' Intelligent Radio-Frequency Inventory System (iRIS) inventory management system and RFID-enabled, modular inventory management cabinets (iRISupply) for the hospital's congenital heart disease catheterization and electrophysiology labs. Part of Mobile Aspects' One System of Care suite of products (see Unified System for Healthcare), the iRIS and iRISupply products will enable healthcare providers at the hospital to automatically track in real time hospital assets tagged with passive 13.56 MHz Texas Instruments RFID tag. Based in Health Level 7 (HL7), a data-exchange protocol that is a standard in the healthcare industry and is similar in structure to XML, the iRIS system will link into Comer Children's Hospital's information management systems to automate the replacement of equipment in the two hospital labs.

INSIDE and Axalto Collaborating on Mobile RFID

INSIDE Contactless, an RFID technology provider, and Axalto, a provider of smart card products and microprocessors for mobile communications systems, have announced a partnership to provide a range of services to GSM mobile phone carriers. The companies will combine Axalto's universal subscriber identity module (USIM) cards for GSM phones with INSIDE's PicoRead, a near field communication (NFC) device that acts as an RFID reader when the phone is on and a passive RFID tag when the phone is off. The USIM and PicoRead products will work together in any GSM phone equipped with an antenna to enable mobile payment services, such as purchasing fares for transit systems or purchasing items at convenience stores that

offer contactless payment options. Axalto's USIM card is Java-based and works in any 2G and 3G phone. PicoRead is compatible with the existing installed RFID reader base, including those complying with the ISO 14443 A/B, ISO 15693 and Phillip's FeliCa protocols. The companies did not announce any product releases based on this partnership.

Swiss IC for Animal Tracking

EM Microelectronic, a Swiss maker of integrated circuits for RF applications, has released the EM4569, a 125 kHz, 512-bit integrated circuit (IC) for RFID transponders. The passive IC can be set to several different data transmission rates and data-encoding options for low power consumption and is being targeted for use in animal identification. It is compliant with ISO 11784 and 11785, ISO's standards for tracking cattle with RFID. Mougahed Darwish, president of the management board of EM Microelectronic, explained in a statement that in a recent field trial using a long-range reader, the EM4569 embedded in an ear tag was read at a distance of up to 1 meter. The IC has a temperature range of -40 to +85 degree Celsius, which also makes it appropriate for outdoor applications. The EM4569 IC is available now and pricing starts at \$0.50 each in quantities of 10,000.

Alien Qualifies Paxar Products

Paxar, a White Plains, N.Y., provider of Monarch RFID and bar code printing products, announced that it has been qualified by Alien Technology as a supplier of RFID smart labels containing 64-bit and 96-bit Alien EPC Class 1 squiggle and I-type tags. According to Paxar, this designation ensures that Paxar smart labels containing Alien tags are prequalified by Alien to be of high quality and performance. Paxar has previously been designated an Alien printer-encoder partner, meaning that Alien has tested and qualified the Alien encoders used in Paxar printing product; Paxar is the first company to receive Alien's qualification in both printer-encoders and smart labels.

Copyright ©2005 RFID Journal, Inc. All Rights Reserved