

RFID News Roundup

Raytheon estimates big savings from RFID pilot; ThingMagic releases Mercury4 OS upgrade; EMS launches new HF reader; NFC Forum gains 20 members.

Feb. 25, 2005—The following are news announcements made during the week of Feb. 21.

Raytheon Estimates Big Savings From RFID Pilot

Raytheon, a government defense, aviation and technology company, announced in a statement by Waukesha, Wis.-based RFID-enabled supply chain software provider RedPrairie that it expects to save an estimated \$235,825 annually by using RFID technology to track assets. The savings was calculated at the end of its three-month pilot of a joint RFID Mobile Resource Management (MRM) solution from RedPrairie and Nacogdoches, Texas-based systems integrator RadiantWave. During the pilot, it took Raytheon an average of 60.8 minutes to manually track a sample group of lab equipment, compared with 8.4 minutes using RedPrairie's MRM technology during the pilot. Raytheon is using RFID to track and optimize utilization of lab equipment across many of its campuses to improve loss prevention and reduce time and labor associated with manual equipment tracking and searches. Using the RedPrairie MRM solution, assets are tagged and monitored by static RFID readers stationed throughout Raytheon facilities. Raytheon calculated the savings by multiplying the time-savings associated with RFID searches by the number of times the company searches for a particular asset per year, and then adding up all the individual savings to establish overall savings.

ThingMagic Releases Mercury4 OS Upgrade

ThingMagic, a Cambridge, Mass.-based RFID hardware developer, has released the Mercury Operating System version 2.1, the first system upgrade for its Mercury4 RFID reader. The Mercury4 is a multiprotocol, multifrequency fixed reader that can be used with RFID tags that comply with the EPC Class 1, 0, 0+ and ISO 18,000-6B standards. It is available only through resellers, including Omron and Tyco Fire & Security's Sensormatic division. The upgrade, called Maxwell, gives users of the Mercury4 more scalability by providing the capacity to completely configure and manage thousands of RFID readers simultaneously through a remote systems administrator. It also gives developers more flexibility through a complete set of APIs and control of Mercury4's general-purpose input/output lines. In addition, new algorithms for EPC Class 1 provide improved write performance, and accelerated reading for large populations of 64-bit and 96-bit Class 1 tags. Maxwell also enhances the Mercury4's reader-synchronization functionality. Users should contact their reseller to request Maxwell. Terms will vary, but upgrades are generally covered by existing agreements. The upgrade can be administered by downloading a firmware upgrade through the Mercury4's standard Web interface

EMS Launches New HF Reader

Escort Memory Systems (EMS) has launched the HF-0405 RFID Controller, its first high-frequency multiprotocol reader with an integrated antenna. The HF-0405 has a small profile at 40mm by 50mm with eight LED indicators that signal successful reads of RFID tags and a network connection. It reads HF tags compliant with, ISO 15693 and 14443-A standards, including Phillip's I-Code 1 and EMS' HMS and LRP series of tags, which have a read range of up to 100mm. The HF-0405 comes with a mounting bracket that can be used to install the reader in tight corners or alongside conveyers. The HF-0405 is available in three different communication port configurations: an RS232 serial connection, an RS422 connection or an RS485

connection with multidrop functionality for linking the controller into a network of the same devices. EMS has also released the GWY-01-TCP-01, or Gateway. The Gateway is used with the HF-0405 to create a multidrop network of HF-0405 readers. Each Gateway supports up to 16 readers that connect to the user's host PC or programmable logic controller (PLC) via an Ethernet connection. Users can communicate directly to each individual HF-0405 reader on the network through the Gateway using TCP/IP protocol. Connectivity to the network using TCP/IP allows real-time visibility of the network for remote diagnostics and firmware upgrades. Both products are available now; unit price for the HF-0405 RFID Controller is \$675 and the Gateway is \$600.

NFC Forum Gains 20 Members

the Near Field Communication (NFC) Forum, a Wakefield, Mass.-based nonprofit industry association promoting the implementation of NFC technology in consumer electronics, mobile devices and PCs, has announced that 20 more organizations from around the world have joined the group, launched in 2004 by Nokia, Royal Philips Electronics and Sony. MasterCard International, Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Microsoft, Motorola, NEC, Samsung, Texas Instruments and Visa International have become sponsor members, receiving seats on the NFC Forum's board of directors. The sponsor members constitute the leading players in key industries in all the major regions of the world. Additional organizations that have joined the NFC Forum in other membership categories include 3ALogics, CETECOM Spain, Gemplus, Giesecke & Devrient, Innovision Research & Technology, JCB, LG Electronics, Logitech, MeT, Mobey Forum, SKIDATA and Smart System Technologies. NFC applications use short-range RFID technology to allow users to wirelessly access content and services and make financial transactions on their smart phones, PDAs and other consumer electronics.

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