

RFID News Roundup

Infineon supplying inlays for Arthur Blank's smart cards; LG and Integrated Engineering combine products for ePassports; EM Microelectronic announces new smart card IC; three new bundled solutions from RedPrairie; TagStone launches, announces partnerships; research firm issues reports on RFID hardware, software, services.

May 27, 2005—The following are news announcements made during the week of May 23.

Infineon Supplying Inlays for Arthur Blank's Smart Cards

Arthur Blank, a Boston-based provider of custom-printed plastic cards, including credit, gift, security and ID cards, and Infineon Technologies North America, a subsidiary of German semiconductor maker Infineon Technologies, have formed an agreement under which Infineon Technologies will supply its ISO 14443 and ISO 15693 family of RFID inlays to Arthur Blank for production of contactless smart cards for retail and transportation payment applications. The two companies say they can provide contactless smart cards in any size order.

LG and Integrated Engineering Combine Products for ePassports

LG Electronics' U.S.-based Iris Technology Division and Integrated Engineering, a Dutch developer and manufacturer of contactless smart card solutions, have announced a collaboration to combine Integrated Engineering's contactless smart card readers with LG's iris-recognition software platform for use in reading International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)-compliant travel documents that include passports requiring electronic authentication. The two companies will initially work to combine LG's third generation of IrisAccess iris-recognition platform, which stores an image of an individual's iris and then uses it to authenticate his or her identity, with Integrated Engineering's e-Document (T=CL) reader, which received top ratings among operating system-independent ePassport readers when tested at the ICAO interoperability trials in Japan last March. Iris recognition is one of the biometric identification methods being endorsed by the ICAO for use with electronic passports at border crossings. Integrated Engineering's new e-Document (T=CL) reader reads biometric and other pertinent data stored in smart chips embedded in electronic passports. It reads both ISO 14443 A and B chips from multiple manufacturers, such as Philips, Infineon, Sharp and ST. It is ICAO-compliant and supports data transfer rates up to 848 kbps using a USB 2.0 interface.

EM Microelectronic Announces New Smart Card IC

EM Microelectronic, a Swiss electronic systems company of the Swatch Group, has announced the immediate availability of the EMTCG176-3G, a unique flash memory-based smart card integrated circuit (IC) designed for use in Subscriber Identity Module (SIM) and Java cards for Global Systems for Mobile (GSM) phones, as well as for healthcare and loyalty card applications. The EMTCG176-3G is compatible with the ISO 7816-3 IC smart card specification, and operates with high-speed communication baud rates, making it compatible with 3G cellular telephones. The EMTCG176-3G has 176 kilobytes of flash memory that can be partitioned so the user can decide what amount of code is allocated to the operating system and how much can be used to save data. This memory partitioning functionality allows the software and personalization to be developed at the smart card manufacturer facility, according to EM Microelectronic. This enables inventories of cards to be quickly personalized at low cost. Pricing information was not released.

RedPrairie Announces Three Bundled Solutions

RFID systems provider RedPrairie has announced three bundled RFID compliance solutions to support clients in addressing various retailer RFID mandates. The solutions offer three levels of sophistication. The first is a simple slap-and-ship package, in which RFID tags are placed on cases of goods when they are shipped. This package includes an Alien or Symbol reader and a Printronix or Zebra RFID label printer-encoder. The second level enables users to begin a print-and-apply system that automatically applies RFID labels and allows some integration of RFID data with legacy business software. This package includes the same hardware as the level-one package, as well as a Weber 5200 label applicator. The level-three package enables users to deploy a conveyor-based tagging system that could be used to place inlays on packaging before it is filled with product, then encode the inlay after the package is filled. Level three also allows users to integrate RFID data into legacy business software. Level three includes the same hardware as level one, as well as the Accraply PA 924 label applicator for conveyor systems. All three levels include RedPrairie's RFID Igniter and Accelerator middleware, both designed for EPC deployments, or its Mobile Resource Management software for non-EPC asset-tracking deployments. RedPrairie says it determines the most appropriate UHF passive RFID labels to include with each package based on the needs of the user. The packages are available now, but pricing has not been released.

TagStone Launches, Announces Partnerships

TagStone, a newly established RFID consultancy based in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, has partnered with Oracle, UPM RafSec, SAMSys and Printronix to provide comprehensive RFID solutions in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. TagStone operates an RFID testing and demonstration facility in Dubai and offers business assessment, process and technology blending, solution architecture, technology selection, and solution integration and support in those areas of the world. It plans to eventually extend its services to Asia. TagStone's RFID solutions incorporate RFID middleware from Oracle, RFID readers from SAMSys, RFID tags from UPM Rafsec and RFID printers from Printronix.

Research Firm Issues Reports on RFID Hardware, Software, Services

Research and Markets, a Dublin, Ireland-based market research firm that reports on trends and forecasts in communications, telecommunications, the Internet, computers, software and telephone equipment, has released a 570-page report called RFID Network Equipment Market Opportunities, Strategies, and Forecasts, 2005 to 2010, as well as an 817-page report called RFID Products, Applications and Services Worldwide—A Market Strategy Report. The report on network equipment lists the largest RFID network hardware providers, including Cisco and Symbol Technologies, and provides market share analysis based on interviews with customers of products, industry segment leaders, marketing directors, distributors, leading market participants and companies seeking to develop measurable market share. It can be ordered online and costs \$2,800 (2,996 euros) for a print copy or electronic version. The "RFID Products, Applications and Services" report provides insights into the global RFID market, including drivers and hurdles, as well as analysis of current and emerging applications, sectors, market and technology trends and evolving standards. It includes market estimates and forecasts by product category, application, sector and region and profiles of more than 500 RFID vendors. It costs \$1,495 (1,600 euros) for an electronic version and \$4,485 (4,799 euros) for a print copy.