

# Seeburger Hosts RFID Compliance

The German middleware provider has launched a service for U.S. companies looking to outsource their program for tagging shipments of goods.

By Jonathan Collins

June 27, 2005—Lowering the entry point for its RFID products, German middleware and integration software provider Seeburger has launched a hosted offering for U.S. companies looking to implement an EPC-compliant slap-and-ship program without too much upfront expense.

Dubbed IDnet—the \$495-a-month subscription service lets subscribers match bar codes to EPCs, print and encode RFID labels and automatically generate and transmit advance shipping notices (ASNs).

IDnet customers receive a custom configured Printronix 5204R RFID label printer-encoder (labels are not included as part of the subscription) and the use of Seeburger's IDnet Web service. A subscriber needing RFID tags for a particular shipment uses an Internet connection to transmit details of the products set for tagging. Once the IDnet system receives that information, the appropriate labels can be printed and encoded, either by the Printronix printer or by Seeburger's designated label service bureau, the Systemedia division of NCR.

IDnet subscribers can also sign up for an optional package that will verify the functioning of labels before goods are shipped, issue electronic invoices and maintain an audit trail of all operations, including ASN receipt logs. For that additional service, subscribers pay a "small additional monthly fee" and also have to buy a handheld scanner. IDnet will be hosted at Seeburger's data center and offer secure online access to all reports and functions, including the system used to trigger the transmission of ASNs.

To accommodate customers that need to determine which tags to use and where to position them on their shipments, Seeburger has partnered with Venture Research to carry out that work. That service is not included in the IDnet package, however, and its price depends on the scale of each project.

According to Seeburger, the IDnet service targets companies facing RFID tagging mandates from their customers that haven't yet developed their own slap-and-ship solutions. "There are many companies, both small and large, that are not yet ready to make their investment in RFID," says Scott Lewin, president of Seeburger's U.S. division, based in Atlanta. The firm claims the hosted offering provides smaller companies a way to meet mandates, while offering larger companies an interim solution and a foundation for their own RFID system development.

Seeburger launched its first RFID product last year (see RFID Middleware Mimics Network). That offering, RFID Workbench, can function both as RFID middleware to integrate a company's RFID network with its existing applications, and as a planning tool to simulate an RFID network so the company can model and understand the possible effects of any potential RFID deployment. Should customers opt to move from the Seeburger-managed service, the company says any data collection settings and application integration carried out on IDnet can be reused with its RFID Workbench.

Seeburger reports that a version of the IDnet service for the Asia Pacific and European markets should be available within the next few months.

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