

# RFID News Roundup

Active tags dominate in health care; UPS investment arm funds RFID chipmaker; PEAK awarded GSA schedule; ScanSource offers RFID education to resellers; Zebra demos Gen 2 capabilities.

Aug. 19, 2005—The following are news announcements made during the week of Aug. 15.

## **Active Tags Dominate in Health Care**

A recent study by Spyglass Consulting Group, a market intelligence firm and consultancy focused on mobile computing and wireless technologies within the health-care industry, shows that fewer than 23 percent of RFID solutions deployed by health-care organizations are using passive RFID technology. The study was done to better understand how RFID solutions could be used for positive patient identification, accurate mobile asset and patient tracking, and supply chain inventory management to help increase operational efficiency and improve the quality of patient care delivery. For the study, Spyglass interviewed more than 100 health-care organization professionals working in clinical engineering, materials management, pharmacy and medical/nursing informatics. Many said they do not see a strong business case for passive RFID. The reasons cited include a lack of industry-wide standards, cheaper alternative solutions based on bar coding and a lack of government or regulatory mandates. Health-care organizations, however, are deploying active RFID systems for tracking assets, patients and medical staff, says the report, and through them are receiving an ROI, increasing operational efficiency and improving the quality of patient care delivery. The complete study, "Healthcare Without Bounds: Trends in RFID," is available for \$1,995 from the Menlo Park, Calif.-based consultancy's Web site.

## **UPS Investment Arm Funds RFID Chipmaker**

The UPS Strategic Enterprise Fund, the United Parcel Service's investment fund that supports companies developing technologies with transportation and logistics applications, has invested an undisclosed amount of capital in G2 Microsystems, an Oakland, Calif.-based developer of integrated circuits. (Within the RFID industry, the UPS Strategic Enterprise Fund has also made investments in supply chain execution company Savi Technology and tag and reader manufacturer Impinj.) Other investors in G2's initial round of funding include Starfish Ventures and DB Capital Partners, the private equity and venture capital arm of Deutsche Asset Management. Both of these firms are based in Australia, and the amounts of their investment were not disclosed. G2 is developing SmarTag, an active 2.4 GHz tag that is being designed for systems using Wi-Fi (2.4 GHz) RFID and location software to track people or assets. G2 says its tags can be combined with sensors to provide other data. The company expects to have its SmarTag commercially available later this year or early next year.

## **PEAK Awarded GSA Schedule**

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) has awarded an IT schedule contract to PEAK Technologies. Under the terms of the contract, PEAK will offer government agencies its automatic identification/data collection (AIDC) products and services, including data-collection and forms-handling equipment, thermal ribbons, labels, wireless RF site surveys, RF security audits, consulting and maintenance services. In addition, PEAK is establishing agreements with other hardware vendors, enabling the firm to provide turnkey AIDC solutions. The GSA's Federal Supply Schedules Program ensures that all agencies, regardless of size or location, are provided with access to the same services, convenience and stated prices

from PEAK Technologies. State agencies also use the GSA procurement schedules when acquiring materials and services with federal grants or allocations.

### **ScanSource Offers RFID Education to Resellers**

ScanSource, a value-added provider of RFID systems, has expanded its RFID Edge program. The company devised this program to offer the RFID solution providers it serves with a strong understanding of how to deploy RFID systems for end users. To do this, ScanSource is offering weeklong RFID training courses in its Memphis, Tenn., facility. The courses focus on showing ScanSource's solution provider clients—many of whom have already completed various training courses from specific RFID vendors—how to install and service complete RFID systems, rather than disparate components, so that end users will be better served. The courses, held in a 1,500-square-foot classroom and RFID lab, are taught by RFID professionals within ScanSource. One weeklong class is offered each month, at a cost of \$2,500. For more information, visit the RFID Edge program [informational Web site](#).

### **Zebra Demos Gen 2 Capabilities**

During a recent meeting of [EPCglobal's Fast-Moving Consumer Goods Business Action Group](#) in Houston, [Zebra Technologies](#), a maker of RFID-enabled printer-encoders based in Vernon Hills, Ill., demonstrated its prototype Gen 2-enabled R110Xi and R170Xi printer-encoders. The devices were shown encoding and reading smart labels with [Texas Instruments](#) EPC UHF Gen 2 inlays. The Gen 1 R110Xi and R170Xi printer-encoders were released in November (see [RFID News Roundup](#)) and contain a Mercury4e RFID reader module from RFID reader manufacturer [ThingMagic](#). The Gen 2 firmware upgrades for the R110Xi and R170Xi will be available in the fourth quarter of this year.

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