

Cisco Embeds RFID Apps in Network

The networking company has embedded RFID filtering capabilities into its hardware and announced new partners.

By Mark Roberti

Sept. 14, 2005—Many applications that ran on servers powering the Internet in the early days—load balancing, caching, encryption and so on—are now embedded within networking hardware. [Cisco Systems](#) is moving radio frequency identification applications in the same direction.

The networking firm, located in San Jose, Calif., announced that it has embedded RFID middleware functions into its data-center switches and branch-office routers. This will reduce the cost of deploying RFID systems, the company reports, while making it possible to handle the expected rapid growth in data traffic on corporate networks.

"We believe in delivering more intelligence in the network," says Mohsen Moazami, vice president of Cisco's retailer/consumer products, transportation and Internet business solutions group. "It's important to distribute intelligence across the network. It is hard to imagine that all of the RFID intelligence will be located in one central location, and each time you will go there and look something up. People need to make decisions close to the edge of the network."

In June, Cisco announced its Application-Oriented Network (AON) message-routing system. AON is comprised of hardware—a network module that can be slotted into an existing router or data center switch—and software designed for RFID. In creating AON for RFID Solution, Cisco partnered with RFID software provider [ConnecTerra](#) to embed a version of its RFID middleware within this module to handle the filtering and routing of RFID data.

The AON for RFID module can be installed at the edge of a corporate network to filter data captured by RFID readers. Moazami says it can also be installed in corporate data centers to authenticate, filter and aggregate data. The module performs such tasks as encrypting outbound data, using digital signature for authentication and content-based routing when sharing data with external business partners.

"By embedding many of the common RFID applications in the network, we are simplifying deployments and lowering the total cost of ownership," says Chris Wiborg, Cisco's solutions product manager for application-oriented networking. "We want to make the RFID network manageable, secure and highly available. That's something that our customers are starting to care about as they go from pilots to real-life environments."

AON for RFID Solution has a list price of \$16,250 and is scheduled to ship in October 2005 in the United States, Europe, the Middle East and Africa, and in 2006 in Asia, Japan and emerging markets.

Cisco also announced that [Intermec](#) and [ThingMagic](#) have had their readers tested for interoperability and have joined the [Cisco Technology Developer Program](#). Framingham, Mass.-based [PanGo Networks](#) has also

joined the program and will develop applications built on top of Cisco's wireless location service (see [Cisco PanGo Unveil Tracking System](#)). This will allow companies to identify 802.11 Wi-Fi-based RFID tags and other Wi-Fi-enabled devices.

Copyright ©2005 RFID Journal, Inc. All Rights Reserved