

RFID News Roundup

MIT, HID working together to address privacy; Citizens becomes latest bank to offer PayPass debit; Argent, Vue collaborating on asset-tracking solutions; Alien OKs NCR as Gen 2 label converter; Weber helping Alien demo automated labeling; NFC Forum shows membership growth; OTI expanding EasyFuel to Costa Rican market.

Feb. 24, 2006—The following are news announcements made during the week of Feb. 20.

MIT, HID Working Together to Address Privacy

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and HID, maker of RFID-enabled smart cards for identification and access control, report that they are collaborating on a joint effort to address concerns around the privacy and security of personal data used in connection with RFID technology. The two organizations are developing a Web site intended to serve as a public forum to discuss RFID and public policy. They will also explore means of using RFID technology to enhance the security of personal information linked to RFID-enabled devices, such as ID badges or key cards. Members of the general public and representatives from the RFID and IT industries, as well as from government, will be able to use the site to learn more about RFID and privacy-related topics, and to share comments. According to Kathleen Carroll, privacy lead for HID, the two organizations are designing RFID products and systems with built-in privacy protection mechanisms. In addition, HID has posted on its Web site a set of eight privacy principals and practices, such as not using HID products or services for the purpose of tracking any person without their knowledge and consent. The site notes that HID encourages buyers of its products and services to support its fair-information practices.

Citizens Becomes Latest Bank to Offer PayPass Debit

Citizens Financial Group, the eighth-largest commercial bank holding company in the United States, says it is issuing its Citizens Bank and Charter One Bank customers with MasterCard debit cards containing PayPass RFID payment functionality. PayPass enables cardholders to use an RFID tag embedded in the card to make transactions at the 25,000 U.S. merchant locations that accept PayPass. These include McDonald's, CVS, Duane Reade, 7-Eleven, Regal Cinemas and Wawa. Citizens Bank Park in Philadelphia has also installed PayPass-enabled card readers at all of its concessions. Citizens Financial Group operates branches in 13 states, including Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Vermont and Rhode Island. This month, reissued cards being sent to existing Citizens Bank and Charter One Bank customers will include the PayPass feature. In March, Citizens and Charter One will begin replacing all other existing customers' debit cards with PayPass-enabled versions. Tests have shown that RFID-enabled payments are completed more quickly than other forms, including cards with a magnetic stripe. PayPass transactions under \$25 do not require a signature. Citibank, HSBC Bank and Key Bank are also issuing PayPass-enabled debit cards.

Argent, Vue Working Together

Argent Group has signed an agreement with Vue Technology, a provider of item-level RFID tracking technologies, to incorporate Vue's hardware and software products into Argent's asset-tracking services. This will enable Argent customers not only to track assets within a facility, but also to pinpoint the assets' locations on shelves. The companies expect that the partnership will allow Argent to expand the range of solutions it

currently markets in RFID asset-tracking, while providing solutions focused on item-level tracking. It will also help Vue Technology increase its presence in the manufacturing and medical sectors, where Argent maintains a customer base. Argent says its customers will benefit from the agreement through the availability of more scalable and cost-effective solutions based on Vue's patented item-level tracking technology, which utilizes specialized banks of antennas to expand an RFID interrogator's capabilities.

Alien OKs NCR as Gen 2 Label Converter

Atlanta-based [NCR](#) says [Alien Technology](#) has certified NCR's Systemedia Division—a maker of printer supplies and label conversion services—as an EPC Gen 2 RFID label converter under Alien's certification program. Before awarding its converter certification to a company, Alien spot-tests that firm's labels against a set of performance specifications. The Gen 2 air interface protocol is designed to provide faster read rates, with fewer inaccurate reads, than the Gen 1 protocol. NCR says Systemedia is selling Gen 2 labels now and can customize the products to meet specific requests.

Weber Helping Alien Demo Automated Labeling

According to [Weber Marking Systems](#), a labeling systems developer based in Arlington Heights, Ill., [Alien Technology](#) is using Weber's 5200rfid smart label printer-encoder-appliator at its newly opened 23,000-square-foot [RFID Solutions Center Dayton](#) in Ohio. Alien opened the center earlier this month, hoping it would become a valuable resource for end users, researchers and RFID vendors (see [Alien Opens Dayton RFID Lab](#)). At the RFID Solutions Center, the 5200rfid is used to demonstrate how end users of RFID can automate their RFID labeling processes. Weber's 5200rfid system combines and automates the printing, encoding, verification and application of pressure-sensitive RFID smart labels to cartons and pallets. It can also reject labels with nonfunctioning inlays and divert them to a collection area so users can return them to their label providers.

NFC Forum Shows Membership Growth

The [Near Field Communication \(NFC\) Forum](#), a nonprofit industry association founded in 2004 to advance the use of NFC short-range wireless interaction in consumer electronics, mobile devices and PCs, says it has expanded its member roster to include more than 70 organizations worldwide. Since July 2005, [SK Telecom](#), a Korean telecommunications firm, has joined the forum at the principal member level. The following have joined the forum at the associate member level: chipmaker [Atmel](#); IT service provider [Atos Worldline](#); SIM-card maker [Axalto](#); broadband and wireless networking firm [Broadcom](#); RFID-based payment provider [Dexit](#); smart card and payment terminal provider [Hanchang System](#); [Payzy](#), a mobile payments provider based in Thailand; Paris' public transportation authority, [Régie Autonome des Transports Parisiens \(RATP\)](#); [SanDisk](#), a provider of data storage devices; [Silicide](#), maker of radio transceivers for NFC; [Smart Technologies Group](#); telecommunications firm [Sprint](#); mobile communications firm [Swisscom Mobile](#); and [Yoonison](#), a front-office solution provider. Five nonprofit organizations based in Europe and Asia have also joined the forum.

OTI's EasyFuel Expands to Costa Rican Market

[On Track Innovations](#) (OTI), an Israeli developer of smart card applications, says Crozet S.A., a Costa Rican technology consultant and integrator, will distribute OTI's EasyFuel platform throughout Costa Rica. EasyFuel is an RFID-based payment system designed to track vehicle fleet fueling in order to improve accuracy, maintain electronic records and fight fraud. In this system, vehicles are equipped with a passive RFID tag mounted near the gas tank and connected to the odometer and a sensor in the gas tank's filler neck that identifies the nozzle of the gas pump at the fueling station. The tag carries such data as the vehicle's identification number and odometer reading, the minimum distance the vehicle must be driven before refueling, the fuel grade the vehicle accepts and an account number for payment. Last month, OTI announced that Peruvian gold mining company [Minera Yanacocha](#) is deploying EasyFuel to automate the refueling of its truck fleet (see [Peruvian Mine Gases Up With RFID](#)).

