

RFID News Roundup

G2 Microsystems launches Wi-Fi tag chip; Avery Dennison sets price for 'content-insensitive' AD-420 Gen 2 inlay; Metrologic makes RFID agreement with MaxID; Datamars donates readers for Pet ID; Georgia Tech Researchers to study RFID; Tagsys, Psion Teklogix collaborate on products.

Mar. 31, 2006—The following are news announcements made during the week of Mar. 27.

G2 Microsystems Launches Wi-Fi Tag Chip

G2 Microsystems, a startup supported by a large group of investors, has announced the release of its first product, the G2C501 system-on-chip (SOC) for active, real-time-location tags that could be used for asset-tracking applications. The G2C501 includes a built-in 2.45 GHz transceiver that supports the 802.11 Wi-Fi standard network infrastructure. Leveraging existing Wi-Fi access points to read the tags, rather than installing a proprietary network of readers can provide end users 75 percent reduction in total cost of ownership, says G2. The company also says the G2C501 chip consumes significantly less power than similar chips on the market today. In fact, it says a tag with the G2C501 chip will last five years at a 40-second report rate. Current tags with the same configuration are lasting about two weeks, it says. The G2C501 also includes a built-in 125 KHz receiver that can be used to excite a tag containing the chip as it moves through choke points. Ekahau, maker of Wi-Fi real time locations systems for asset tracking in health care and other industries, is testing a prototype tag using the G2C501 chip and expects to announce a new Wi-Fi tag based on the chip this spring. The next-generation tag will have a longer battery life and be less expensive than Ekahau's current tag products.

Avery Dennison sets price for 'content-insensitive' AD-420 Gen 2 inlay

Avery Dennison RFID is now selling its UHF Gen 2 inlay AD-420 for 8.9 cents each in quantities of 1 million. In September, the tag manufacturer, based in Clinton, S.C., began offering its AD-220 Gen 2, as well as its AD-210 and AD-410 EPC Gen 1 Class 1 tags, for 7.9 cents each in quantities of 1 million (see Avery Dennison, RSI ID Lower Price Bar). The AD-420 is designed for case and pallet tagging and is resistant to RF interference from metals and liquids, says Avery Dennison. It can be converted into labels sized 3.7 by 1.26 inches or larger. The company says it is offering the price in expectation of increasing order sizes as the end users of RFID begin using automatic tag application for a growing number of cases of stock-keeping units, and in higher volumes than what companies are currently tagging.

Metrologic Makes RFID Agreement with MaxID

Metrologic Instruments, a global supplier of data capture and collection hardware, optical solutions and image-processing software, has made an agreement with MaxID to sell certain of MaxID's RFID products in North America, under the Metrologic brand name. Metrologic says adding RFID technology to its offerings will enable it to better serve its customers. MaxID's RM100 UHF Gen 2 reader module received EPCglobal's Gen 2 conformance certification in September 2005. Eventually Metrologic might expand its distribution area for MaxID goods to other parts of the world. Based in the United Kingdom, MaxID has the exclusive international distribution rights for a broad range of products from the South African company Sygade Solutions, which markets, develops and outsource-manufactures rugged mobile-computing, financial transaction and RFID products.

Datamars Donates Readers for Pet ID

Crystal Import Corp., the U.S. distributor of Swiss RFID manufacturer Datamars, says it will donate 20,000 handheld Datamars interrogators to shelters and veterinary hospitals across the nation. The interrogators are capable of reading both the 134.2 kHz and 125 kHz RFID tags that are implanted under the skin of companion pets and used to identify the animals when they are lost, so they can be reunited with their owners. Animal welfare groups have been expressing concern over the fact that some shelters and veterinarians hospitals do not possess RFID readers that can read both 134.2 kHz and 125 kHz tags, and therefore cannot identify all lost, tagged pets. This concern led to a provision in the 2006 Agriculture Appropriations Bill (HR 2744), signed into law this fall, requiring the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) "to develop the appropriate regulations that allow for universal reading ability and best serve the interests of pet owners" (see U.S. Bill Includes RFID Provision for Pets). Datamars and the Crystal Import Corp. are donating the dual-frequency readers in support of this measure. They will also offer a free scanner to up to 10,000 additional shelters and veterinarians with a purchase of 20 RFID microchips. APHIS--the branch of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture charged with protecting and promoting U.S. agricultural health and safeguarding the wellbeing of domestic animals--is currently holding public meetings around the country to gather input as it develops specifications for a standard device that could be read all tags implanted in pets in the United States. It plans to complete this information-gathering phase by September.

Georgia Tech Researchers to Study RFID

The Georgia Tech Research Institute, the applied research arm of the Georgia Institute of Technology, says it is establishing a research enterprise in Athlone, Ireland, to research and develop a number of technologies based on RFID, digital media, biotechnology and energy. It will establish the research programs over the next five years and at full operation expects to employ 50 researchers. RFID research at the center will focus its RFID on authentication and identification technologies for the commercial sector. Leveraging Ireland's strong pharmaceutical industry, some of this research will focus on pill-tracking applications with RFID, designed to ensure authenticity and dosage. GTRI Ireland will be GTRI's first applied research facility outside the United States.

Tagsys, Psion Teklogix Collaborate on Products

RFID infrastructure provider Tagsys and Psion Teklogix, which provides solutions for mobile computing, wireless data collection, imaging and RFID, are collaborating to offer portable RFID terminals designed for the distribution and logistics industries. Psion Teklogix will integrate Tagsys' RFID OEM high-frequency (13.56 MHz) interrogator modules into a selection of Psion Teklogix handheld terminals, including the Workabout Pro, which also includes scanners for 1-D or 2-D bar codes. These offerings will target the needs of the logistics and distribution industry, from warehousing to transportation companies. They could also be used for reading tagged products such as pharmaceuticals and apparel.

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