

The new interrogator offers the same functions as the Mercury4, plus added interference filtering.

By Mary Catherine O'Connor

May 1, 2006—RFID interrogator maker [ThingMagic](#) announced its latest product, the Mercury5 interrogator, at [RFID Journal LIVE!](#) The fixed-position reader uses a proprietary means of filtering RF interference from non-RFID sources, such as cordless phones, wireless networks and even fluorescent lighting. This allows the interrogator to read more RFID tags in its interrogation zone than earlier ThingMagic readers. The Mercury5 is designed for use solely in the United States, but ThingMagic reports that versions of the interrogator may eventually be available for operation in other regulatory environments, such as the [European Union](#).

Kevin Ashton, vice president of marketing for ThingMagic, says that while the Gen 2 protocol allows for interrogators to function in the dense-reader mode (DRM), reducing instances of interference between multiple interrogators, the Mercury5 was also designed to reduce other types of interference. "The Gen 2 protocol makes sure one DRM reader doesn't conflict with another DRM reader," Ashton notes, "but there tends to be interference in the spectrum that dense-reader mode can't solve. That's what we've addressed with the Mercury5."



ThingMagic's new Mercury5 reads more RFID tags in its interrogation zone than previous models.

The products to which tags are attached can, of course, cause RF interference as well. However, Ashton says that in testing with end users (whom he could not name), the Mercury5 outperformed other interrogators, reading 100 percent of the tags on a given pallet being pulled through an interrogation zone.

Like its Mercury4 predecessor, the Mercury5 reads all EPC standard tags (Gen 1, Class 0, 0+ and 1, and Gen 2 Class 1), as well as and ISO 180006B. According to Ashton, because the Mercury5 has the same footprint as its predecessor and uses the same software Mercury4 users can swap it out for the Mercury5, or use them both in combination.

The Mercury4 is certified as conformant to the EPCglobal Gen 2 air-interface protocol. Ashton says the company is seeking the same certification for the Mercury5 as soon as possible. The new reader also comes with APIs to link into the same middleware platforms with which the Mercury4 can interface.

ThingMagic uses a network of partners and resellers to make ThingMagic readers available to end users. The Mercury5 reader will be available from AbeTech, Accu-Sort, Acsis, BuyRFID, CIT, Conectag, Creek Systems, Fujitsu, IconNicholson, M/A-COM, Omron, Quest Solutions, RFID Global Solutions, Rush Tracking, Sontec, Tyco Fire & Security, Ubi-Tech, VeriSign and Venture Research.

The Mercury5 is now available. ThingMagic is launching the reader for a manufacturer's suggested retail price of \$1,995, while lowering the Mercury4's MSRP from \$2,395 to \$995.