

The Texas firm is partnering with data storage and recovery specialist Media Recovery to enable the solution.

By Mary Catherine O'Connor

May 19, 2006—[Access International](#), which provides RFID and real-time location system (RTLS) applications for vehicle and personnel access control and tracking, is partnering with [Media Recovery](#), a provider of data memory and recovery products. The two companies will provide an RFID solution aimed at financial institutions looking to better track and secure important customer data records stored on magnetic computer tapes and cartridges.

The system, which one undisclosed financial institution is already deploying, integrates passive and active tags into a custodial system through which the individual data tape and the tote carrying it are tracked throughout a facility. Their identities are associated with the RFID-enabled personnel badge of the person transporting the media. Transporting the media outside of a media storage facility might be required in the event of an emergency, and how it would be moved—and by whom—would be laid out in a disaster-recovery plan. This forms a chain of custody and responsibility for each tape.

Theft or loss of consumer data has plagued many U.S. companies and jeopardized the security of millions of consumers' personal and financial data in recent years. Access and Media Recovery are now offering a means of using RFID "to provide a solution to a fundamental problem for financial institutions," says Allan Griebenow, president and CEO of Access International.

Media Recovery uses a self-adhesive label to mark each data tape or cartridge it sells. Access has worked with a label-printer manufacturer to embed an EPC Gen 2 UHF inlay into each label, which has a unique identifier printed as both text and a bar code. That ID number is also encoded to the label's RFID inlay. Gen 2-compliant interrogators, mounted near exits of the data center, read the label's passive tag if a tape or cartridge is removed. Access active-tag interrogators, also installed near the doorways, read the Access 433 MHz or 315 MHz active asset tag (the customer can choose either frequency) attached to the tote or other carrier conveying the tagged tapes or cartridges. The interrogators also read the ID card worn by the employee transporting the media. The ID, supplied by Access, contains an active RFID tag that comes in a slim form factor, slightly bigger than a credit card.

All of this data is collected in Access ActiveTrac software, which calculates the custodial relationship between the passive and active tags, based on the time stamps of the read events and the placement of the interrogators within the monitored facilities that collected them. It also provides an inventory-tracking interface, so that the end users can look up the last location and time a given data tape was read in the facility.

In addition, the Access tracking system can be integrated with a facility's video surveillance system, says Griebenow, so that a read event triggers a security video recording and live remote video transmission of events.

Griebenow notes, however, that improved security of data records is not the only reason this system is attractive to financial institutions. In some cases, data media go missing not through theft but by being unintentionally misplaced. "It's not necessarily the bad guys stealing data," he explains. Banks spend significant time and labor costs looking for mislaid media containing consumer data, he adds, so this system could improve overall efficiency in the workplace.