

Chemical Industry Studies RFID's Applications

A trade association made up of chemical producers and suppliers is examining the technology, and has issued a report detailing how RFID can be used by its members.

By Beth Bacheldor

June 26, 2006—The [Chemical Industry Data Exchange](#) (CIDX), a trade association made up of more than 80 chemical producers, suppliers, marketplaces and industry consultants, has published a report detailing RFID's potential effect on the chemical industry.

CIDX members help foster the creation and use of standards and emerging technologies (such as EDI and XML) among chemical companies. The 20-year-old organization opted to do the report because of growing interest among members about RFID. "It is the hottest topic at our annual meetings," says Laura Fields, CIDX's spokeswoman. "And for CIDX, it is not a question of whether or not RFID will be used in the chemical industry, it is a question of when, and in how many different applications."

The white paper, entitled "Radio Frequency ID Framing," outlines the prospective impact of RFID and Electronic Product Code (EPC) technology on chemical companies' business, data, processes and technology. A team of experts representing several member companies developed the document, including [Dow Chemical](#), which spent a year researching the technology. The team talked extensively with member companies, meeting numerous times with experts at [EPCglobal](#). The report details RFID and its uses, outlines current challenges involving the technology and presents an overview of different tag and reader systems and standards, including high frequency and ultrahigh frequency.

The paper examines a variety of RFID applications that could be developed for the chemical industry. These include the possibility of using RFID tags as part of an automated documentation system similar in function to electronic pedigree systems being developed for the pharmaceutical industry to combat counterfeit drugs. An electronic pedigree is a secure file that stores data about the origination and movement of a product as it travels through a supply chain. Such a system for the chemical industry could provide electronic documentation, including product information and material safety data sheets (MSDS), governmentally required documents that relay chemical, physical and hazard information about specific substances.

The 46-page report also provides recommendations regarding the establishment of hardware, software and information standards specific to the chemical industry. It advocates participation in the development of EPCglobal and ISO 18000 Part 6 standards, and is available for free to CIDX members at [the organization's Web site](#). Nonmembers can purchase the paper for \$2,500, or can elect to join CIDX for a free copy.

Now that CIDX has completed this paper, the organization's RFID team will concentrate on presenting the chemical industry's RFID requirements to EPCglobal. CIDX plans to draw up a document of RFID requirements based on best practices from EPCglobal, and to draft another report on how CDIX might integrate its standards with those of EPCglobal. In addition, CDIX is planning to host a special RFID-only Solutions Showcase at the organization's general meeting, being held Nov. 13-16 in Dallas. There, members will have the opportunity meet with RFID vendors and technology providers to learn more about their product

offerings.

Copyright ©2005 RFID Journal, Inc. All Rights Reserved