

# RFID News Roundup

TransCore acquires IntelliTrans; PanGo introduces PanOS Platform 4.0 and PanGo Locator 4.0; Gao RFID separates from Gao Tek; U.S. Department of State to begin issuing e-passports to the general public; Swedcom unveils new RFID antenna; ThingMagic, SATO America form partnership, offer RFID products; ABI Research reports 14 percent increase in RFID reader shipments; SkyeTek ships small, low-cost UHF RFID reader module.

August 3, 2006—The following are news announcements made during the week of July 31.

## **TransCore Acquires IntelliTrans**

TransCore, a global manufacturer of transportation-based RFID products located in Harrisburg, Penn., and a unit of Roper Industries, has completed its acquisition of Atlanta-based IntelliTrans, a track and trace software platform servicing the rail and intermodal industry. TransCore will combine IntelliTrans' in-transit visibility, maintenance, repair, yard and inventory-management service offerings with its own RFID and satellite communications products to provide integration for rail, truck, container, barge and intermodal applications. More than 10 years ago, TransCore spokesperson Barbara Catlin explains, the Association of American Railroads (AAR) adopted TransCore's Amtech RFID technology as the standard for automatic equipment identification (AEI) in North America, and 100 percent of all railcars in interchange service are now mandated to utilize TransCore passive tags operating at 902-928 MHz. The firm has installed more than 6.5 million tags and 20,000 readers (interrogators) throughout the rail and intermodal industry. Through the acquisition of IntelliTrans, TransCore will merge its Atlanta-based CarrierPoint organization, which provides Web-based transportation management systems, into the IntelliTrans reporting structure.

## **PanGo Introduces PanOS Platform 4.0 and PanGo Locator 4.0**

PanGo Networks Inc. of Framingham, Mass., has introduced an updated version of its solution for tracking critical mobile assets: the PanOS Platform 4.0 and the PanGo Locator 4.0. PanGo's open, standards-based location management platform and Web-based asset-tracking application are designed to provide companies the asset visibility necessary to increase asset utilization, operational efficiencies and regulatory compliance. This solution is marketed for use in the health-care, manufacturing, transportation and logistics industries, facilitating the location and tracking of assets, personnel and inventory. Available now, PanGo's new products were reportedly created based on input from customers and partners. Version 4.0 enhancements include updated location-management capabilities; expanded event-based notifications; a redesigned user interface across all PanGo Locator applications; streamlined integration with third-party solutions; and improved asset monitoring, reporting, notification and management capabilities. As with previous versions of PanGo, 4.0 supports Wi-Fi tags. A user-management application provides user-based security and authentication, enabling single sign-on for all PanGo Web applications, role-based application access and user/group privileges.

## **Gao RFID Separates from Gao Tek, Focuses on RFID Market**

Toronto-based Gao RFID, a provider of RFID interrogators, tags, antenna, modules, sample packages, evaluation kits and other products, has spun out from Gao Tek (formerly Gao Engineering), a manufacturer of engineering development tools, test and measurement instruments and electronic components for electronic engineers. In a prepared statement, Gao Group CEO Frank Gao, explained, "Our RFID business grows at a

phenomenal rate. We have a fast-growing customer base with customers from all over the world, and developed a strong network of VARs and resellers in all of the countries with significant RFID markets. As a result, we feel that creating an independent company dedicated to RFID will serve our customers better." Gao RFID develops integrated solutions designed to serve various vertical markets and is reportedly partnering with other RFID vendors to offer additional integrated solutions. Gao RFID and Gao Tek are members of the Gao Group of Companies, a privately owned consortium of corporations headquartered in Toronto, serving the high-tech sector. The Gao Group also includes Gao Research, a developer of embedded communications software for voice, video, data and fax over IP/wireless, and Gao Engineering, a producer of engineering development tools, test and measurement instruments and electronic components for electronic design engineers.

### **U.S. Department of State to Begin Issuing e-Passports to the General Public**

The U.S. Department of State (DOS) has announced plans to begin issuing electronic passports embedded with RFID chips. By 2017, the government expects all American e-passports will eventually include RFID chips containing personal information, says Anna Hinken, a spokesperson for the DOS' Bureau of Consular Affairs. All American passports, she says, have a maximum 10-year validity, and the DOS plans to transfer all passport production to e-passports by 2007, so by 2017, all U.S. passports in use will have embedded RFID chips. In October 2004, the DOS began testing e-passports in an eight-week trial program (see U.S. Tests E-Passports). It started issuing e-passports to diplomats in December 2005, Hinken says, followed by government officials and their families in April 2006. Starting the week of Aug. 14, the DOS plans to begin issuing tourist e-passports for the general populace. In January of this year, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) instituted a separate three-month trial to test the RFID technology underlying e-passports (see DHS Testing E-Passports in San Francisco), and in April, it started selecting interrogators and inlays for use in the eventual widespread deployment (see DHS Completes E-Passport Test at SFO). The US-VISIT Program, meanwhile, is testing RFID tags embedded in I-94A forms issued to visitors with nonimmigrant visas (see DHS Testing Tags for US-VISIT Program). "By Oct. 26, 2006," explains US-VISIT's Kimberly Weissman, "Visa Waiver countries must begin issuing e-passports, so any traveler who wants to travel under the VWP must have an e-passport." The e-passports can be read approximately 4 inches from a scanner. The passive 64-kilobyte RFID tags in the passports is being supplied by Infineon Technologies' San Jose, Calif., subsidiary and Amsterdam-based Gemalto. The e-passports meet specifications laid down by the Montreal-based International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), a United Nations standards body that has urged its 189 member countries to adopt machine-readable, electronically enabled passports by 2010.

### **Swedcom Unveils New RFID Antenna**

Swedcom, a Belmont, Cal., provider of radio base station antennas, has announced the release of an RFID antenna, the SR 7008. Designed to function with UHF frequencies ranging from 900 to 930 MHz, the antenna supports both RHCP (right hand circular polarization) and LHCP (left hand circular polarization). The SR 7008 is 10.1 inches in length and weighs 2 pounds, yielding a gain of 6 dB for linear setups or 8 dB for circular. This device features a return loss of 20 dB (VSWR 1.2), with printed circuit board technology (PCB) for improved power management and isolation at 915 MHz of 30 dB. The antennas are encased in a plastic cover and may be wall- or mast-mounted for indoor or outdoor use. The SR 7008 is VESA 100/75 standard-compliant at 3.94 in. (100 mm) for access to various mounting systems.

### **ThingMagic, SATO America Form Partnership, Offer RFID Products**

RFID technology developer ThingMagic, located in Cambridge, Mass., is partnering with Charlotte, N.C.-based SATO America, a provider of bar-code printing, labeling and RFID solutions. Under the terms of this partnership, ThingMagic will become a SATO America Preferred RFID Partner and begin providing SATO America its Mercury4e embedded UHF RFID readers. SATO America will use the interrogators in the United States with its CL408e/CL412e RFID tabletop printers and M8485Se RFID OEM print engine. In partnering with ThingMagic, SATO America says it hopes to serve its automotive, government, manufacturing and retail customers better, and to begin serving the automatic identification and data

collection (AIDC) industry, as well. SATO RFID printer-encoders can read, write and print smart labels with visual images, text and bar codes on the label surface, as well as read and encode the transponder embedded in the label. ThingMagic's Mercury 4e reader is credit card-sized, supports two antennas and is designed to read passive UHF tags complying with a variety of standards, including EPC Gen 2 and such older protocols as ISO 18000-6B, EPC Class 0, rewriteable EPC Class 0 and EPC Class 1. SATO printers incorporating the Mercury4e reader are immediately available from SATO America through authorized resellers and distributors.

### **ABI Research Reports 14 Percent Increase in RFID Reader Shipments**

New metrics released by market research firm ABI Research, located in Oyster Bay, N.Y., report that the global market for UHF RFID interrogators and reader modules grew to more than 35,500 unit shipments in 2005. According to Michael Liard, director of RFID and contactless practice at ABI Research, the shipments examined for the purpose of this report consisted solely of interrogators that read passive UHF tags based on EPC Gen 1, EPC Gen 2 and ISO-18000-6C standards. "[The] reader volume figure includes finished readers (handheld, fixed and vehicle-mount) and OEM/embedded modules (such as those that go into thermal bar printers/RFID encoders)," Liard explains. All readers studied were used for supply chain management, Liard says, noting that other applications will be added in the future. ABI Research's analysis shows the number of UHF passive-tag readers sold has grown nearly 14 percent in the first quarter of 2006, as compared to the same period last year. These market-size findings are available as part of ABI Research's RFID Reader Market Sizing Database report, compiled in collaboration with several global RFID equipment manufacturers. According to the research firm, this new report focuses on passive UHF supply-chain technologies. Future updates to ABI Research's market metrics are expected to include additional frequency ranges, active technologies and other applications. ABI Research also publishes a similar RFID tag IC market-sizing report; for more information, consult the firm's Web site. The RFID Reader Market Sizing Database report is part of ABI Research's RFID Research Service, which provides RFID forecasts examining technologies, applications and markets through 2011; specialized research reports; the ABI Vendor Matrix; ABI Insights; analyst inquiry support; and regular quarterly updates analyzing RFID market developments.

### **SkyeTek Ships Small, Low-cost UHF RFID Reader Module**

SkyeTek, a provider of embedded RFID reader technology located in Westminster, Col., has announced the availability of its M9 UHF SkyeModule, an EPC Class 1 Gen 1 and Gen 2 ISO 18000-6B/C OEM reader module. Approximately half the size of a business card, the M9 was designed for such embedded UHF applications as item-level inventory, printing and handheld reading and encoding. Based on SkyeTek's Advanced Universal Reader Architecture (AURA), the M9 contains a ReaderWare software layer for enhanced reader intelligence, providing adaptive behavior, tag support and standards-compliant security. The M9, priced at \$199 per module and \$59 per ReaderWare license, offers support for anti-collision, dense-reader mode, security, inductive UHF and an array of EPC Class 1 Gen1 and Gen 2 ISO 18000-6B/C tags, including as-yet-unreleased tags based on Gen 2 silicon. According to the manufacturer, as tag memory increases, customers will be able to leverage ReaderWare Security to provide privacy protection, anti-tampering and anti-counterfeiting on generic tags without additional costs.

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