

Educating the Public About RFID

AIM Global and many of its member companies have worked toward educating consumers about RFID and addressing their privacy concerns.

Oct. 9, 2006—As Mark Roberti correctly points out in his editorial [It's Time to Address Privacy](#), there is—and has been for some time—an acute need for consumer education about RFID, and for better, broader efforts to address privacy concerns.

However, I was disappointed to read his suggestion that a new industry group was needed to address these concerns. I want to take this opportunity to convey some of the more relevant activities [AIM Global](#) has already undertaken in this area.

- AIM Global published the initial version of its [RFID Emblem](#) in 2004 as a way of identifying labels and items containing RFID tags clearly. The AIM RFID Emblem was designed primarily for use with non-EPC applications, but it was also, at the time, the only standard graphical image and nomenclature to identify RFID tags.
- AIM Global's RFID Experts Group is actively working on an RFID Data Access Security document to provide best-practice technology recommendations for ensuring consumer privacy. We welcome and encourage broad industry participation in the research and preparation of this document.
- AIM Global published a position statement on consumer privacy in January 2006, and frequently addresses privacy in its weekly *RFID Connections* e-newsletter. We regularly discuss these topics to identify legitimate concerns that can be addressed by our member companies through technical innovation or best-practice recommendations.
- AIM Global worked with five corporate sponsors—[Feig Electronic](#), [Intermec](#), [Markem](#), [PSC](#) and [Symbol Technologies](#)—along with [Boeing](#) and the [University of Arkansas](#), to produce an educational video, "Spotlight on RFID," which is airing on the [U.S. Public Broadcasting Service](#) (see [PBS Video Spotlights RFID](#)). This video is also free to view at the [RFID section of AIM Global's Web site](#).
- Earlier this year, a number of AIM Global member representatives and staff conducted media tours at major business media outlets in New York City, Washington, D.C., San Francisco and Sacramento. This was in keeping with its charter to educate the public, journalists, legislators and regulators about RFID and its potential benefits, opportunities and privacy issues.

As a not-for-profit trade association representing automatic-identification and mobility technologies for nearly 35 years, AIM Global is in a unique position to educate the public about the benefits of the entire range of auto-ID technologies, RFID included. Our member companies are committed to ensuring intelligent and beneficial deployment of the appropriate technology—whether bar-code, RFID, magnetic-stripe, biometrics or other auto-ID technology. Each technology has its limitations and advantages, and AIM Global constantly works to ensure that these are presented in an unbiased manner.

Is enough being done? Are all companies with interests in this effort devoting resources to the campaign? Probably not, but [AIM Global members](#) are contributing time, money, partnership relationships (including

one with RFID Journal LIVE!) and member-volunteer hours to undertake the challenge of providing RFID education.

While Mark Roberti and I would both agree that more is needed, I would urge *RFID Journal* and its readers to recognize those companies that have come together under AIM Global, putting aside competitive differences, and committed significant resources to this effort. AIM Global would gladly welcome increased collaboration with end users, academia, the media and other associations to further this important work.

James S. Childress is AIM Global's chairman of the board.

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