

Web Site Teaches German Consumers About RFID

Launched by Informationsforum RFID—a business group that includes DHL, Metro Group, Intermec and P&G—the RFIDABC Web site aims to educate in an entertaining manner.

By Rhea Wessel

Oct. 24, 2006—An association dedicated to educating German consumers about radio frequency identification has launched a new Web site presenting simplified RFID applications to the public. Users can click on such categories as "soccer," "refrigerator," "children" or "mobile phones" to read a short passage about how RFID is affecting their lives in these areas.

The Web site, [RFIDABC](#), was announced Wednesday in Berlin, just a few days after the [European Union](#) (EU) released preliminary results from its recent consultation process. These results showed that the public lacks a basic understanding about RFID, and that more information on the subject needs to be made available.

"In our first analysis of the results of the public consultation, the challenges are much clearer," Viviane Reding, the EU's Information Society commissioner, told members of the European Parliament and international guests on Monday in Brussels. "We need to make considerably greater efforts to explain the risks and benefits of RFID to the wider public. It is no longer just a playground for technologists and lawyers."

These findings were backed up by another report released on Oct. 20 by [Informationsforum RFID](#), [AIM Deutschland](#) and the [Forschungsinstitut fuer Telekommunikation](#) (Research Institute for Telecommunications). This report indicated that 94 percent of the 202 people surveyed believe consumers don't have enough information on RFID. Those participating in the survey were individuals at small or mid-sized companies (about 54 percent) or at companies with more than 250 employees; about 42 percent of those surveyed were consultants, while 46 percent were hardware vendors and 44 percent were involved with software.

The new Web site was launched by Informationsforum RFID, a German organization whose members include such big names as [DHL](#), [Hewlett-Packard](#) (HP), [Intermec](#), [Metro Group](#) and [Procter & Gamble](#) (P&G). The group aims to educate German consumers in an enjoyable and playful manner, using a variety of photos and short texts. The site also features a memory game in which cards are flipped over electronically so players can identify matching RFID-related images.

"We want to animate RFID for consumers to help them take a better look at it, and to become a resource for questions about RFID," says Andrea Huber, the head of Informationsforum RFID.

Hartmut Schultz, a spokesman for Informationsforum RFID, says the launch of the Web site was not timed to coincide with the EU's findings, though the head of Informationsforum RFID did attend Reding's speech. Schultz states he knows of no initiatives in other European countries aimed solely at the consumer, but says Informationsforum RFID is working together closely with partners in the United Kingdom and the

Netherlands to educate the general public.

Informationsforum RFID's partner in the Netherlands is a foundation called RFID Platform Nederland, which was set up in 2004 by 30 business and research organizations to raise the awareness and acceptance of RFID in the Netherlands, and to assure that RFID projects are implemented in a responsible manner. The partner in England is the National RFID Centre, led by AIM UK, with support from the British government and Yorkshire Forward, the regional development agency for Yorkshire and Humberside.

Separately, GS1 Germany, a member association of the international standards-setting organization GS1, is also offering information to consumers on how RFID will impact them. GS1 Germany, which represents EPCglobal in that country, is a member of Informationsforum RFID. Part of its regularly updated Web site is dedicated to the topic, and GS1 has prepared a list of frequently asked questions. Consumers can also send questions in to GS1 via e-mail.

Myriam Hoffmann, communications manager at GS1 Germany, says all members of the RFID community must work together to educate consumers about RFID. To that end, she commended retailer Metro Group for its leading role in educating German consumers about the technology.

Copyright ©2005 RFID Journal, Inc. All Rights Reserved