

# BRIDGE Project Members Press Ahead

ETH Zurich says expectations are high that the organization will develop the EPCglobal infrastructure needed to enable new business models.

By Rhea Wessel

Oct. 27, 2006—Members of the [EU-funded BRIDGE](#) project, created to drive the acceptance of [EPCglobal](#) standards in Europe, provided a progress report on Friday, stressing that standards are the only way to build RFID networks that will work on a global basis.

Florian Michahelles, a project member at [ETH Zurich](#), said that as soon as objects are given identities (via tagging), have perceptive capabilities (via sensors), can record events (on microprocessors) and can communicate (via wireless networks), the "entire vision" of RFID changes and enables new business models. "It's important that these objects can interoperate on a global level," Michahelles told those attending the [RFID Journal LIVE! Europe 2006](#) conference this week. "For this, you have to be on standards."

BRIDGE ("**B**uilding **R**adio frequency **I**dentification solutions for the **G**lobal **E**nvironment") is a three-year project funded with 7.5 million euros, as part of the European Union's [Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development](#) (FP6). Headed by [GS1](#), the project includes member organizations from both the industry and research arenas.

The BRIDGE venture was launched in July 2006 (see [EU Pledges \\$9.5M to Study, Promote RFID Business Applications](#)). When it was first announced, Henri Barthel, the project's coordinator and a technical director at EPCglobal, said, "Cross-industry participation in such a large-scale project is a key to its success. The BRIDGE project will transform RFID from being an identification technology into providing an EPCglobal-based product information network."

BRIDGE members include GS1 organizations from six countries, five research labs, 12 solution providers and seven end users. Though closed to new members, the group welcomes contact from those interested in cooperating with it. The participants are presently working together to design and deploy pilots, and to develop comprehensive training materials for using RFID in a variety of business applications. Among such apps are anticounterfeiting, supply-chain management in the textile industry, item-level tagging at retail stores and authentication of drugs by means of electronic pedigrees.

In regard to anticounterfeiting, BRIDGE plans to develop new services in the EPCglobal Network to reduce piracy of goods. To facilitate supply-chain management in the textile industry, BRIDGE aims to devise ways to get better information from the global supply chain; the organization also wants to deploy a pilot of item-level tagging to improve consumer satisfaction.

Testing of a drug-pedigree application, the ePedigree pilot, began in September. The system is designed to improve supply-chain management, reduce medication errors and protect against counterfeits. To that end, the original manufacturer of a drug creates a pedigree for a particular pharmaceutical item, which is automatically supplemented with tracking information by each trading partner as the product flows along the supply chain.

The result is a log that fully traces the item's chain of custody.

The ePedigree pilot's participants include solution providers Domino, JJ Associates, Melior Solutions, Unisys and VeriSign, as well as several major pharmaceutical companies and related organizations. These include Actavis, Athlone Laboratories, TjoaPack, UDG/Alloga, Celesio and Barts and the London NHS Trust. The organization expects to complete the pilot and publish the results by the autumn of 2007.

With one pilot launched and more to go, expectations for BRIDGE are high. Michahelles said, "I do expect from BRIDGE quite a lot. That's also why we at ETH have joined the project. Apart from training and education, one major goal and expectation is to develop the [EPC] infrastructure. We are developing an open-source project that is a prototypical implementation of the EPC Network. This allows end users to experiment with the framework, and also to develop their own applications."

Copyright ©2005 RFID Journal, Inc. All Rights Reserved