

Startup Offers Low-Priced Reader

SkyeTek has developed a multi-protocol 13.56 MHz handheld reader that costs just \$249.

Jan. 29, 2003 - [SkyeTek](#), a startup based in Boulder, Colo., has developed a line of low-cost multi-protocol 13.56 MHz readers. The SkyeRead H1 is a handheld reader/writer that sells for \$249. The company is also marketing an OEM module that costs just \$49 when purchased in quantities of 1,000 or more.

"We're not fooling around," says SkyeTek founder Sean Loving, who previously worked at RFID vendors ID Technologies and Indala. "We've kept the price down by reducing the number of components. As we get the volumes up, we'll be able to manufacture the readers in Asia and chew the price even lower."

The SkyeRead handheld is compatible with ISO-15693 and ISO-14443 standards and can read Texas Instruments' Tag-It and Philips I-Code tags. Loving says the company is working on protocols for tags from Tagsys and other vendors.

The H1 is designed to be used for a variety of applications, including point of sale, shop floor data collection and ticketing or validation. It can be powered by a battery or DC power supply. Companies can purchase optional on-board memory and an LCD display for remote data capture applications.

The SkyeRead M1 also reads a variety of tags. The module is small (38 mm x 40mm x 4mm) and was designed to be integrated by OEMs into handheld computers, smart label printers, vending machines and custom equipment. It includes an on-board antenna, but can also be connected to off-the-shelf and custom external antennas from SkyeTek.

The reader can scan a credit card-size tag from three to four inches away. The company is selling a developer's kit for \$499. It comes with one M1 module, one external antenna, sample tags, cables and connectors. The kit also includes a CD-ROM with documentation, software libraries, and demo software (with source code that can be customized).

Loving says the company is looking to line up channel partners, including distributors, value-added resellers and system integrators that have vertical industry expertise.

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