

Checkpoint Combines EAS Tags With RFID

The labels contain both a Checkpoint 8.2 MHz RF antitheft inlay and an EPC Gen 2 UHF RFID tag.

By Mary Catherine O'Connor

April 27, 2007—[Checkpoint Systems](#) unveiled today the Evolve product family of labels, which marries RFID technology with Checkpoint's electronic article surveillance (EAS) technology. Checkpoint developed the dual-purpose labels to offer its retail customers a means of leveraging RFID tools for in-store inventory visibility while continuing to use the EAS tags as a theft deterrent—without having to apply two separate tags to their products.

The Evolve labels contain a Checkpoint 8.2 MHz radio frequency (RF) EAS inlay, which does not contain a microprocessor or carry a unique ID. The inlay is designed to trigger an alarm if passed through an EAS reader stationed around store exits unless first deactivated at the point of purchase. The labels also contain an 850-950 MHz EPC Gen 2 RFID inlay, to which an EPC can be encoded to identify and track individual products.

The initial Evolve tag design, the Evolve 410, involves the placement of an EAS antenna around the RFID inlay, containing an [Impinj](#) Monza chip on an adhesive paper substrate. The label dimensions are slightly less than 2 inches square, enabling it to be attached to most hangtags for apparel and footwear products.

"Before joining Checkpoint, I spent 20 years in the retail industry, and whenever there's a big technology change, such as RFID, retailers face so much [transition]. There's training staff, converting software, new data to manage," says Checkpoint's CEO, George Off. "Anything that can offer [retailers] flexibility [in adopting new technology] and enable them to pace their investments really helps during these transitions. That's what we're trying to do with Evolve."

Off says Checkpoint envisions working with retailers to incorporate Evolve tags as part of CheckNet, the company's global logistics and data communications platform. Retailers and their contract manufacturers can use the system to order product tags—including Checkpoint's EAS tags—that are applied to house-brand products at the point of manufacture. This, in many cases, is done overseas.

Using the Evolve labels as part of the CheckNet platform, retailers and manufacturers alike would be able to leverage the RFID tag applied to products and track their movement through the supply chain—from the factory down to the store level. "Retailers," says Off, "want both EAS security and inventory tracking."

Presently, Checkpoint is still in the early stages of discussions regarding incorporating Evolve product labels into the CheckNet platform, Off says. To deploy such a system, Checkpoint would need to develop a means by which the EPC encoded to the labels would be generated, managed and shared with supply-chain partners. The required RFID hardware infrastructure would also need to be put in place at manufacturing and retail warehouses and facilities. To leverage the RFID tags for inventory tracking inside retail stores, he adds, interrogators would be needed in the back rooms, and possibly on store shelves and at point-of-sale terminals as well.

RELATED_ARTICLES The Evolve 410 RFID-EAS tag is available in testing quantities now. Pricing information has not yet been released.

Checkpoint will be demonstrating the Evolve 410 tags next week in booth 531, at RFID Journal LIVE! 2007, to be held in Orlando, Fla., from April 30 to May 2.

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