

# Airbus Hires ODIN Technologies for RFID Deployments

The systems integrator will help Airbus deploy the technology across its airplane-manufacturing operations.

By Mary Catherine O'Connor

June 19, 2007—RFID systems integrator [ODIN Technologies](#), based in Dulles, Va., announced today that airplane maker [Airbus](#) has engaged it in a five-year agreement. Under the terms of this contract, ODIN will provide RFID system design, testing, deployment and support services to help the manufacturer employ RFID technology so it can improve the visibility of its supply chain at more than 40 sites worldwide.

According to Bret Kinsella, ODIN's chief operating officer, the company began working with Airbus in January, and has since performed early tests of active and passive RFID hardware. Kinsella says the plane maker plans to roll out RFID in three phases, which will include using RFID to track parts and other supplies from its vendors, as well as increase the efficiency of its manufacturing processes and track the location and maintenance histories of aircraft components.

Kinsella says Airbus is investing heavily in RFID across its business because manufacturer believes the technology will enable them to reduce costs, increase quality and gain a competitive advantage. Airbus first announced its intention to add RFID tags to aircraft parts in 2003, but until now, the airplane manufacturer has not given any further indications of its interest in using the technology to track parts—though it claims it has been using RFID to track aircraft tools since 1999.

Because of problems involving electrical wiring, Airbus has been struggling to get its 550-passenger jumbo jet, the A380, into production. It has also undergone changes in leadership during the past year. Meanwhile, [Boeing](#) has seen strong interest in its upcoming Dreamliner aircraft. But on Monday, Airbus surprised analysts attending [Paris Air Show 2007](#) by announcing a total of 219 plane orders, including 114 for the A350, which will compete with Boeing's Dreamliner.

Despite the competition between Boeing and Airbus in attracting plane orders from the world's airlines, the two manufacturers have collaborated extensively on standards regarding the use of RFID technology in aerospace applications. Furthermore, to keep their suppliers and customers from having to follow separate specifications, the firms are working together to create a common specification for the RFID tags they'd like to use for tracking and maintaining maintenance records on aircraft parts (see [Boeing Outlines Tagging Timetable](#)).

RELATED\_ARTICLES In 2005, Boeing announced that many of the parts used in the first Dreamliner airplanes, due in 2008, would carry RFID tags (see [Boeing Selects Chipmaker for Parts Tags](#)). However, the customized, 64-kilobit RFID chip Boeing commissioned from [Intelleflex](#) is a year overdue, according to Jon Andresen, president of [Technology Solutions](#). Andresen has worked as a consultant on Boeing's RFID

initiative for parts identification.

Intelleflex has started shipping chips to tag makers, according to Suresh Palliparambil, the company's director of business development. Kevin Donahue, North American business development director for tag maker Confidex, confirms that his company has received sample quantities of the 64-kilobit chips from Intelleflex, but claims that the chip does not fully comply with the EPC Gen 2 air-interface protocol, which he says both Boeing and Airbus require.

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