

# Paris-based Law Firm Adopts RFID to Track Documents

Lhermet, La Bigne & Remy, a firm specializing in IP and trademark law, is deploying passive HF tags to track the more than 30,000 files and books in its library.

By Claire Swedberg

July 4, 2007—Parisian law firm Lhermet, La Bigne & Remy (LLR) is using an RFID tracking system to manage its books and client files as they circulate throughout its office. After a one-year trial, during which LLR tagged approximately 10,000 files, the law firm is now working toward tagging all its books and files.

The RFID system was provided by Cambridge, Mass., RFID provider Tagsys and French RFID integration company Ident. The system is designed to allow lawyers to locate a file or book missing from a firm's library, saving time otherwise spent trying to find the item.

LLR specializes in patent and intellectual property law, and manages about 30,000 archived files each year, as well as 5,000 to 6,000 new files. On an average day, the firm's 40 lawyers and their staff remove 80 files from the library. Using a pen-and-paper method to track which personnel checked out particular items made finding them a hardship. In many cases, no one wrote down who had a certain file or book, preventing staff from knowing who had taken it off the shelf and when. The radio frequency identification system reduces that search time, says Olivier Burah, Tagsys' vice president of sales, by automating file location.

When a file is created, an LLR staff member attaches a passive 13.56 MHz RFID tag complying with the ISO 15693 standard. The employee uses a Tagsys tabletop RFID interrogator to capture the tag's unique ID number, inputting information about that file into the firm's computer system. The tag ID number and file information are then associated with each other in LLR's office management software.

As the file is shelved in the library, it passes through a fixed Tagsys reader installed in a gate at the door. The interrogator captures the file's tag ID number, as well as the ID of the tag (also ISO 15693-compliant) embedded in the badge of the employee carrying the file. This keeps the software system updated as to which files are in the library, as well as who brought them there.

A lawyer looking to read a file or book presents an ID badge and the desired item at the checkout station, then presses a prompt on a display screen to either check out the item, or to read it in the room. When the lawyer passes through the exit gate with a file in hand, the fixed reader captures those numbers and either approves that person's departure or flashes a warning, indicating the item must first be checked out.

The firm also has a handheld Tagsys interrogator, which office staff can use for inventory checks. Data from the handheld reader is transmitted via Wi-Fi connection to the database, where the software compares the inventory search with its own records and lists any missing files or other discrepancies.

Tagsys provided the hardware and software for the solution, while Ident provided integration with its

Pocket-Filetrak and Filetrak-Web software, running on Windows Mobile 5.0. Since installing the system, Burah says, LLR has seen the time required to conduct daily inventories decrease from one hour to a few minutes.

RELATED\_ARTICLES "The greatest learning process," Burah recalls, "was about making the software match with lawyers' activities." The software is designed to provide lawyers with simple prompts when they check out files or books. "At the beginning," he says, "[the lawyers] may have found it less flexible because they had to go through the self-checkout process." However, he adds, since discovering the benefit—easier location of checked-out files—they have been happy with the system.

Although Burah declines to reveal LLR's deployment cost, he notes that similar Tagsys systems typically cost between €40,000 (\$54,500) and €100,000 (\$136,000), including hardware, software and integration.

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