

RFID News Roundup

Gemalto, NXP collaborating on NFC for SIM cards; China certifies UHF RFID hardware from Intermec; Impinj joining software vendors on RFID solutions; Media Recovery partnering with Intelligentz on tape tracking; Baird report says users want learning, vendors seeing more funding, applications.

Aug. 31, 2007—The following are news announcements made during the week of Aug. 27.

Gemalto, NXP, Collaborating on NFC for SIM Cards

Gemalto, a digital security company based in Amsterdam, and chip maker NXP Semiconductors, are codeveloping Near Field Communication (NFC) solutions for payment and data-transfer applications based on SIM (Subscriber Identity Module) cards for mobile phones. SIM cards are used to store a phone customer's account information and other data. NFC technology enables consumers to employ cell phones and other small mobile devices to make electronic payments and share data with other such devices. The two companies are building the NFC applications for the SIM card based on a Single Wire Protocol (SWP), a specification for a one-wire connection between the SIM card and NFC chip. SWP is under final review for standardization by the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI). This product development, the companies say, should help the industry rapidly address the demand for NFC-based applications among telecom operators, service providers and consumers. Gemalto worked with NFC chip maker Inside Contactless on a SIM-based NFC application for a technology trial in 2006 (see Consumers Test NFC-enabled Mobile Phones Using EMV Protocol).

China Certifies UHF RFID Hardware from Intermec

Intermec has announced that its passive UHF (860 to 960 MHz) RFID interrogators are now certified for operation in China, through approval by the country's State Radio Regulation Committee (SRRC), a division of its Ministry of Information Industry (CNII). This committee ensures that products sold for use in China meet the country's standards for radio frequency devices. The CNII requires compliance testing for RFID devices before granting certification. Test results must conclude that RFID hardware meets China's RFID bandwidth and standards requirements. Last year, the country approved 433 MHz active tags and interrogators made by Savi Technology, using the ISO 18000-7 protocol (see China Endorses ISO 18000-7 433 MHz Standard), but the country's regulators had did not set rules for the use of UHF RFID systems until last May (see China Approves Requirements for UHF Bandwidth). These rules approved the use of RFID systems occupying bandwidth in the 840.25 to 844.75 MHz and 920.25 to 924.75 MHz ranges. The specific Intermec interrogators certified include its vehicle-mounted IV7, the fixed-position IF4 and IF30, and the portable IP4 reader. According to Intermec, however, companies in China have been using its RFID products on a large scale in asset-tracking, warehouse, and transport and logistics applications since 2005, under temporary UHF licenses granted by the government.

Impinj Joining Software Vendors on RFID Solutions

Impinj, a Seattle-based supplier of EPC Gen 2 RFID chips and interrogators, says it has formed alliances with a group of independent software vendors (ISVs) to deliver packaged RFID solutions designed to help end users more easily get RFID systems up and running. The ISVs will provide optimized solutions for pharmaceutical, media/entertainment, apparel, food safety and other vertical market applications. Companies

contributing software products and services to the solutions include epcSolutions, GlobeRanger, InSync Software, OATSystems, Omnitrol Networks, Scout Software, Systech International, Tacit Solutions, Vue Technology and RFID network infrastructure provider Reva Systems. Impinj says these products and services have been optimized to function seamlessly with tags made with its EPC Gen 2 chips and Speedway Gen 2 reader.

Media Recovery Partnering with Intelligentz on Tape Tracking

Systems integrator and asset-tracking platform provider Intelligentz says it is partnering with Media Recovery, a provider of data memory and recovery products, to sell Intelligentz's RFID Asset and Tracking solutions to companies in the financial industry. Intelligentz's RFID hardware is now part of Media Recovery's DatacenterTrak asset-tracking platform, developed to provide financial services companies better track tapes and other valuable media. DatacenterTrak combines Media Recovery customers' asset-, personnel- and tape-tracking management systems into a common platform, using both active and passive RFID technology. Media Recovery plans to sell the DatacenterTrak platform as a consolidated solution into datacenters on a global basis, the company reports. In 2006, Media Recovery announced a partnership with RFID-based asset-tracking solution provider Access International (see Access Offers Data Security App for Banks).

Baird Report Says Users Seek More Info About RFID

In its monthly analysis of the RFID industry and its leading public firms, international financial firm Robert W. Baird & Co. says the sector is looking up in a number of areas. Results from a survey the firm conducted in July show end-user companies to be hungry for information about RFID. "The majority of end users," the report notes, "view increasing their RFID knowledge as very important to critical, and 80% believe it will be important to increase their knowledge in the next 12 months." The report also chronicles the many product and earnings announcements made by public firms in the RFID industry, citing an uptick in "new and unique" RFID applications, many of them in closed-loop applications (versus those involving multiple business partners) and focusing on asset tracking. The analysts conclude that funding of RFID firms is up in 2007, noting that RF Code, SkyeTek and Innovision Research & Technology received \$36.5 million in total funding this year, while Precision Dynamics netted \$75 million in funding.

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