

**Microsoft releases BizTalk Server 2006 R2; Container Centralen RFID-enabling its dollies; VDC foresees strong growth in handheld interrogator market; ODIN evaluates smart medical cabinets; RF Code debuts wearable, portable active RFID reader; Wavetrend, Tech Data sign distribution agreement.**

Sept. 14, 2007—The following are news announcements made during the week of Sept. 10.

### **Microsoft Releases BizTalk Server 2006 R2**

Microsoft has announced the availability of BizTalk Server 2006 R2. This software incorporates enhancements for RFID and electronic data interchange (EDI), with Enterprise Service Bus (ESB) Guidance and Line of Business Adapters, enabling customers to operate across different applications, partners and platforms, independent of vendor, age, platform, protocol or geography. BizTalk Server is designed to help companies connect infrastructure, implement human-centric processes and automate systems globally. Microsoft has also announced two other offerings: ESB Guidance (now available) and BizTalk Server Adapter Pack Beta 2 (to be released at an undisclosed date). ESB Guidance, downloadable for free at the [CodePlex! Web site](#), provides architectural guidance, patterns and practices, as well as BizTalk Server and .NET Framework components intended to simplify ESB development on the Microsoft platform. BizTalk Adapter Pack Beta 2 will include adapters for SAP, Siebel and Oracle DB, as well as ADO.NET Data Providers for SAP and Siebel. The Adapter Pack will enable users to connect to data from any .NET Framework application, and will be incorporated into BizTalk Server 2006 R2 once it becomes available. Microsoft and its partners will demonstrate several RFID-enabled applications built on the BizTalk platform at [EPC Connection 2007](#) (see [Microsoft to Showcase RFID-Enabled Applications at EPC Connection 2007](#)), to be held on Oct. 2-4, at Chicago's Donald E. Stephens Convention Center. Pricing information for BizTalk Server 2006 R2 is available at the [Microsoft Web site](#).

### **Container Centralen RFID-enabling Its Dollies**

In the second half of 2006, [Container Centralen](#), a provider of returnable transport items (RTIs) and pooling services, began testing the use of EPC Gen 2 RFID to track the movement of containers used by its customers (see [Container Centralen to Monitor Millions of Crates](#)). Expanding on its RFID plans, the company recently accepted delivery of 300,000 custom-designed encapsulated EPC Gen 2 tags made by [Confidex](#), an RFID systems designer and manufacturer headquartered in Tampere, Finland. Container Centralen will use the tags for its CC Euro Dolly product. Confidex designed the tags specifically for this application, subjected them to a series of laboratory and field tests, and developed a quality-control system to automatically encode and validate the tags during application. Two RTI tags are attached to each Euro Dolly during manufacturing. The tags are made with [Impinj Monza/ID](#) RFID chips, designed to perform in environments where large numbers of products are stored in close proximity, such as RTI applications. In addition to a standard 96-bit Electronic Product Code (EPC), each chip has a permanently locked, factory-programmed secure ID number that can associate a specific Euro Dolly to its owner. This should enable automatic data collection as the Euro Dollies are transported across the retail logistics chain, as well as authenticate those rented to Container Centralen's customers.

**VDC Foresees Strong Growth in Handheld Interrogator Market**

[Venture Development Corp.](#) (VDC), a technology market research firm in Natick, Mass., reports that nearly 250,000 handheld RFID interrogators were shipped in 2006—almost 20 percent of all readers shipped last year. Handheld shipments increased by nearly 385 percent, compared to 2005, and VDC predicts annual growth rates of more than 30 percent over the next five years. The firm says the global market for RFID readers exceeded \$430 million in 2006, with growth through 2011 expected at a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 23 percent. Nearly two-thirds of all reader revenues came from stationary units, but VDC expects handheld and module form factors will have the highest growth rates. This growth will be driven, the firm predicts, by an increasing requirement for smaller footprint devices in all form factors; enhanced device functionality, such as integrated bar-code scanning, embedded middleware and compatibility with legacy infrastructure; improved basic interrogation performance, including ruggedization, read/write rate and power; and reduced pricing, which is expected to fall below \$350 per unit by 2011. According to VDC, most handhelds deployed support HF or UHF frequencies and operate in a range of applications involving supply-chain management and transportation-management systems. Much of last year's handheld reader revenues, the company notes, resulted from expanding pilots, small-scale implementations or larger RFID rollouts—including those by French retailer [Carrefour](#), French national railway operator [SNCF](#) and the Saudi Post Service—necessitating integration into existing AIDC infrastructure.

**RF Code Debuts Wearable, Portable Active RFID Reader**

[RF Code](#) has unveiled a battery-powered, portable active-tag RFID reader that can be worn on a belt clip, stowed in a pocket, mounted in a vehicle or used in a variety of other applications to track assets and capture inventory information. The Bluetooth-enabled M220 Mobile Reader operates in the 433 MHz frequency range and weighs 5.2 ounces. The interrogator can interpret RF messages emitted by RF Code's M100-series active RFID tags (including motion sensors, panic buttons and infrared location sensors) at a distance of up to 70 meters, and it can also report each tag's signal strength. The M220 can record and save more than 4,000 unique tag IDs in Tag Collection mode.

**ODIN Evaluates Smart Medical Cabinets**

[ODIN Technologies](#), an RFID research and systems integration firm, has announced a new benchmark report—the 10th in its RFID Benchmark Series—that evaluates and compares the performance of RFID-enabled medical cabinets available for use in hospitals, universities and health-care environments. The "RFID Medical Smart Cabinet Benchmark" report covers a variety of topics, including important performance characteristics to look for in RFID medical cabinets, user application types supported by commercial cabinets and differences among vendors. Testing was restricted to the three vendors currently able to provide products in production quantities: [Mobile Aspects](#), [Tagsys](#) and [Terso Solutions](#). ODIN performed six scientific tests—material dependency, orientation sensitivity, null-spot testing, product density, RF leakage and product proximity—as well as use-case tests such as stocking, invoicing and security. The report is available for download at ODIN's [online store](#), at a cost of \$1,500 for an enterprise-use business license, or \$750 for a single-user academic license.

### **Wavetrend, Tech Data Sign Distribution Agreement**

[Wavetrend](#), a U.K.-based provider of active RFID solutions, has announced a strategic partnership with [Tech Data Corp.](#), a distributor of IT products, designed to meet the increasing demand for active RFID products in the United States, Mexico and Canada. The partnership grants Tech Data the right to assume all order fulfillment processes for Wavetrend's portfolio of active RFID products within that territory. The agreement will enable Wavetrend to provide its accredited channel partners (ACPs) access to its active RFID solutions via Tech Data's six U.S. distribution centers, and to offer competitive pricing and standardized contracts. The joint venture will leverage Wavetrend's more than 2,500 worldwide customer installations and Tech Data's reseller customer network, enabling expansion into new markets and application areas. It will also allow Wavetrend to supply pre- and post-sales support to its ACPs and their end-user customers.