

RFID News Roundup

Parisian libraries to implement RFID; Rush University Medical Center to track implantable devices; Ontario Information and Privacy Commissioner offers guidance for RFID health-care applications; Axxess International ships RFID-enabled ID card; UPM Raflatac debuts Hammer EPC Gen 2 inlay for metal; Loc8tor shrinks reader, tests car-finding app with Chevrolet U.K.; RSI ID Technologies' antenna for baggage tags.

Feb. 7, 2008—The following are news announcements made during the past week.

Parisian Libraries to Implement RFID

The city of Paris has announced plans to implement RFID at 42 of its library branches, using a solution from [3M Library Systems](#). The libraries intend to use RFID to better manage circulation and inventory, as well as improve security. What's more, at those branches with larger numbers of patrons, the city plans to implement RFID-enabled self-service checkout and return facilities to free up staff. The agreement, according to 3M, calls for the company to provide at least 3 million RFID tags, as well as workstations, interrogators, detection gates and self-checkout systems allowing customers to check out and return items, and in some cases pay fees and fines, without staff assistance. Installations are scheduled to begin later this year. 3M will supply tags incorporating [STMicroelectronics'](#) LR12K chips, which are warranted for the life of the library items to which they are affixed. France is one of four countries that have established a national standard for an RFID data format. There is currently no international standard for an RFID data format for library systems, though libraries around the world are employing RFID. To help libraries overcome the lack of an internationally agreed upon RFID tag data standard, 3M recently debuted new software that supports the various proprietary RFID tag data formats utilized by different RFID-enabled library systems (see [3M Launches Tag Data Manager for Libraries](#)).

Rush University Medical Center to Track Implantable Devices With RFID

This spring, the Center for Congenital and Structural Heart Disease (CCSHD), at Chicago's [Rush University Medical Center](#), plans to install RFID cabinets designed to help manage and track implantable devices used to treat patients with congenital heart problems, such as atrial septal defects, ventricular septal defects, and heart and pulmonary valve replacements. The teaching hospital will use [Mobile Aspects'](#) iRISupply system to manage medical devices and supplies via RFID-enabled storage cabinets. CCSHD will apply 13.56 MHz passive RFID tags, compliant with the ISO 15693 standard, to the medical devices and supplies, then store them in the cabinets. The cabinets' built-in interrogators will scan the tags, recording any items that are removed or returned. The hospital hopes the RFID system will help it ensure implantable devices are in stock when needed, as well as track expiration dates, manage recalls and more accurately capture charges for the devices used.

Ontario Information and Privacy Commissioner Offers Guidance for RFID Health-Care Applications

Ann Cavoukian, [Ontario's Information and Privacy Commissioner](#), in collaboration with [Hewlett Packard \(HP\) Canada](#), has released a joint white paper intended to provide health-care organizations with guidelines for using RFID while keeping a patient's privacy intact. The [report](#), entitled "RFID and Privacy: Guidance for Health-Care Providers," examines a variety of RFID applications for the health-care sector, organizing them into three broad categories based on their potential risk to privacy: RFID technology to track things alone;

RFID technology to track things associated with people; and RFID technology to track people. The Information and Privacy Commissioner is appointed by and reports to the [Legislative Assembly of Ontario](#); the Commissioner's mandate includes overseeing the information access and privacy provisions of a number of laws, including the Personal Health Information Protection Act, as well as helping to educate the public about information access and privacy issues. In a prepared statement, Commissioner Cavoukian said the paper's purpose is to help organizations understand RFID, its benefits and privacy implications, and "the steps that may be taken to mitigate any potential privacy risks." Such steps include identifying all information security and privacy risks throughout the data life-cycle; conducting a comprehensive privacy impact assessment (PIA) of the entire system at the conceptual, logical and physical stages of its development, with a clear plan and timetable for addressing identified risks; and building privacy and security into the RFID system at the outset. Victor Garcia, HP Canada's CTO, coauthored the report.

Access International Ships RFID-enabled Corporate ID Card

RFID tracking-solutions provider [Access International](#) is now shipping iDot Credential, a wireless corporate ID card that leverages its dot-sized ultrahigh-frequency (UHF) RFID chip. The chip, known as Enterprise Dot, provides dual active-passive capabilities—as either a passive EPC Gen 2 tag operating at 860 to 960 MHz, or as an active tag operating at 433 MHz (see [New Access Chip Can Be Active or Operate as Passive Gen 2](#)). This allows the tag to switch to the appropriate protocol, while also providing greater options for data storage and sensor input. The iDot Credential, which costs \$7.95 per card, is designed to provide hands-free building access control. The standard-size card has a small battery, antenna and Enterprise Dot chip embedded into it.

UPM Raflatac Debuts Hammer EPC Gen 2 Inlay for Metal

[UPM Raflatac](#) has announced a new EPC Gen 2 UHF inlay designed to work on metal. The Hammer inlay is available in three formats: wet (with a layer of adhesive), dry and paper-faced. According to the company, Hammer has a die-cut size of 80 by 25 millimeter (3.15 by 0.98 inches) and a read range of up to 4 meters (12 feet). The Hammer inlay can also be inserted into plastic hard tags that can be affixed to metal containers, roll cages and trolleys. A spacer of 6 to 9 millimeters (0.24 to 0.35 inches) is required for optimal read rates. UPM Raflatac already has one customer leveraging the new inlay: [Siemens](#) is using the inlay in its Simatic RF620T rugged tag, designed for use on metal, conductive plastic and wood.

Loc8tor Shrinks Reader, Tests Car-Finding App With Chevrolet U.K.

[Loc8tor](#), a U.K. firm that sells an asset-tracking system to consumers who want to track possessions or monitor the whereabouts of children or pets, has shrunk the size of its handheld interrogator to roughly the size of a credit card, says the company's CEO, Anthony Richards. Like the original Loc8tor product, Loc8tor Lite uses the firm's proprietary air-interface protocol to communicate with battery-powered 2.45 MHz RFID tags. The smaller reader form factor makes the Loc8tor Lite considerably more portable, Richards says—and at \$80, it's also more affordable. But unlike the bulkier Loc8tor product, Lite lacks an alert function that can be used to give the user a heads up if, say, a tag-bearing child or pet wanders too far. Next up, the company says, could be a version of Loc8tor specifically designed for finding a car in an uber-sized parking lot. [Chevrolet U.K.](#) is currently testing the concept with British consumers.

RSI ID Technologies' Antenna for Baggage Tags

San Diego-based RFID company [RSI ID Technologies](#) (RSI) has unveiled RSI Blade, an RFID antenna created specifically for use in baggage-tracking applications. The antenna is designed to work with [NXP Semiconductors'](#) Ucode Gen 2 G2XL and G2XM chips. Both NXP ICs have 240 bits for encoding an EPC, and the G2XM provides 512 bits of programmable user memory (see link [NXP Boosts EPC Gen 2 Tag Memory, Performance](#)). The RSI Blade isn't sensitive to tag orientation, the company says, making it ideal for tracking luggage and baggage. The Blade follows recent RSI ID announcements of four other new tag designs: the Corkscrew, Interval, KAT2 and Cube2.