

RFID News Roundup

Washington state legislature makes spying on consumers a felony; Sirit to enable NFC, contactless support for Windows Mobile operating system; Canadian privacy commissioner seeking feedback regarding RFID use in the workplace; Xterprise offers its RFID-enabled reusable transport item application to European market; AutoCrib announces RFID portal to track items in storerooms, tool cribs; Siemens adds new functionality to software for linking automation, RFID systems, business processes.

Mar. 13, 2008—The following are news announcements made during the past week.

Washington State Senate Passes Anti-Skimming RFID Bill

The Washington State Senate has joined the state's House of Representatives in banning the use of RFID technology as a means of collecting personal data without an individual's knowledge or consent (see [Washington State House Gives Nod to Privacy Bill](#)). Last month, the House passed a revised version of [House Bill \(HB\) 1031](#), intended to protect the privacy of individuals using RFID tags with "unique personal identifier numbers," in such items as passports, credit cards, groceries, clothing, consumer products and car key fobs. An earlier version of the bill failed to pass a House vote in March 2007 because it was deemed too broad in scope (see [Washington's RFID Bill Halted](#)). The legislative leader on this issue, State Rep. Jeff Morris (D-Mount Vernon), has raised concerns that the technology could lead to identity theft or stolen property since the chips can transmit personal identification or product information, which could be intercepted illegally by criminals using a process known as "skimming." HB 1031 would make such an act a Class C felony. A provision mandating that prior consent be granted before stores or other entities collect personal data was stripped out of the bill, but Morris intends to pursue it as separate legislation. The House previously passed the bill with 69 to 27 votes. The Senate has now passed it unanimously at 47 to 0, and the measure will next be sent to the state's governor, Christine Gregoire, for final approval. If Governor Gregoire signs the bill, Washington could become the first U.S. state to prohibit the gathering of personal data for malicious intent.

Sirit to Enable NFC, Contactless Support for Windows Mobile Operating System

[Sirit](#), a Toronto-based provider of RFID technology, has announced a collaboration with [Microsoft](#) to add near-field communication (NFC) and contactless support to the Windows Mobile operating system. By leveraging Sirit's embedded software and technology, the companies hope to speed the adoption of NFC and contactless technologies in Windows Mobile-powered smart phones, as well as the development of Windows Mobile-powered NFC applications. According to the partners, analysts predict up to a third of all mobile phones will be NFC-equipped within the next three to five years, enabling them to operate as electronic wallets, electronic tickets and access-control devices. Microsoft, a member of the [NFC Forum](#), intends to develop application programming interfaces (APIs) and other native support in the Windows Mobile operating system for NFC and contactless technologies, providing original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) and applications developers with a platform for developing NFC devices and solutions.

Canadian Privacy Commissioner Seeks Feedback Regarding RFID Use in the Workplace

Canada's privacy commissioner, Jennifer Stoddart, has published a paper setting out recommended privacy practices for organizations deploying RFID technologies, and has issued a call for feedback regarding the use

of RFID systems in the workplace. The paper provides a brief overview of the technology, as well as potential privacy and security risks involved in the use of such systems. It explains how federal privacy laws could apply to RFID systems, offers a discussion of reasonable privacy expectations in the workplace and outlines steps organizations should take before proceeding with RFID applications. Commissioner Stoddart has invited public feedback on this paper, particularly from employers, employees, trade unions and developers of RFID technology. The discussion paper is available on the [Office of the Privacy Commissioner's Web site](#); the deadline for submissions is April 30, 2008.

Xterprise Offers Its RFID-Enabled Reusable Transport Item Application to European Market

Xterprise, an RFID solutions provider headquartered in Carrollton, Texas, with European offices in Beverley, U.K., is making available to the European market its Clarity RTI RFID-enabled asset management application, which helps streamline the use of reusable transport items (RTIs) in various supply chain environments. RTIs help ensure the timely, continuous flow of materials and products to production lines, distribution centers and customers. Xterprise reports that more than 50 million RTIs are lost, damaged or otherwise removed from service each year, at a global cost of \$1 billion—much of that in Europe. Without proper asset visibility and management, high levels of stockpiling can occur at critical choke points, resulting in unnecessary replenishment. Clarity RTI is designed to help manage RFID-tagged RTIs as they move between stakeholders in closed-loop environments typically found in retail, third-party logistics and manufacturing organizations, enabling customers to achieve higher RTI asset utilization, lower acquisition costs and greater transaction accuracy. According to Xterprise, the Clarity RTI solution can be utilized in a number of applications, such as managing tagged plastic pallets used by pallet-pooling organizations; managing high-cost RTIs used during production at automakers' assembly facilities; tracking the RTIs containing reagents used in pharmaceutical manufacturing, as well as liquids used in semiconductor manufacturing, and monitoring their exposure to ambient environmental variables to ensure their safe shipment and integrity; and automating the flow of inbound raw materials contained in RTIs for lean manufacturing practices at automotive electronics suppliers. Clarity RTI is built on the [Microsoft BizTalk R2](#) platform.

AutoCrib Announces RFID Portal to Track Items in Storerooms, Tool Cribs

AutoCrib, a Santa Ana, Calif.-based maker of industrial vending and software solutions, has announced its IntelliPort RFID gateway, which can be used at chokepoints to track materials moving in and out of controlled areas. Equipped with an RFID interrogator and multiple RF antennas, IntelliPort utilizes passive Gen 2 RFID technology and can be easily added to existing storerooms and tool cribs. IntelliPort contains magnetic and photo-beam sensors combined with surveillance Web cameras. It connects to the same Ethernet network as existing AutoCrib equipment, and can be controlled over the Internet by [AutoCrib.net](#), or by client-server software. To check out items, a user enters their employee ID number via a touch pad, magnetic swipe, bar-code or proximity card reader, then confirms the ID with a pin number. Once the door opens, that person enters the crib to gather the required items, which have been fitted with RFID labels. The worker then reenters the IntelliPort and selects "Check Out" on the touch screen. The system reads the items' RFID labels, the user confirms the tools and materials being checked out and the door opens once more, enabling the individual to exit. When checking items in, the employee enters the same numbers to access the IntelliPort, then selects "Check In" on the touch screen. The system reads the items' RFID tags, and the user confirms the tools and materials being checked in, receives a receipt and replaces the items in the crib. AutoCrib is now accepting orders for delivery at the end of the first quarter of 2008.

Siemens Adds New Functionality to Software for Linking Automation, RFID Systems, Business Processes

The Industry Automation Division of [Siemens](#), located in Nuremberg, Germany, has added several features to its software package for integrating RFID systems in business processes. Simatic RF-Manager 2008 links RFID with automation data from Simatic S7 controllers—devices that enable companies to automate machinery and factories—and also collects information from mobile Simatic RF610M handheld terminals.

Using the updated software, tasks can be triggered by certain read events. Tasks for a specific RFID interrogator can also be triggered by the controller. The software's engineering functions include the ability to define the parameters of all RFID devices simultaneously, and new simulation functions enable processes and RFID read events to be tested in advance without installed RFID hardware. Siemens says the Simatic RF-Manager 2008 is suitable for a number of logistics and distribution applications, from the labeling of individual products to the automatic recording of commodity flows. The software manages interrogators, collects and compresses their tag data and makes the information available to business applications. Each tag can be accessed individually to read and write data or product identifiers that conform to EPCglobal's Electronic Product Code (EPC) standard.

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