

# The Importance of Good Journalism

Honest coverage of RFID and other new technologies is important—but, unfortunately, all too rare.

By Mark Roberti

May 12, 2008—This week, [AIM Global](#) announced that it had awarded yours truly its Excellence in Journalism Award, "in recognition of his journalistic excellence and media representation of the RFID industry." (See [AIM Global Honors Industry Leaders at 2008 Summit](#).)

AIM Global's Education and Public Policy committee established the award to recognize a journalist or media representative covering the automatic identification industry whose work exemplifies the qualities of honest, educational and unbiased reporting of the auto-ID and mobility industry.

I'm honored to receive the award and feel privileged to cover the automatic data capture industry, which has brought efficiencies to so many businesses. I'm sure those opposing RFID will see the award as proof that I am the industry's tool, but RFID Journal's work truly does exemplify honest, educational and unbiased reporting. And I'm very proud of that.

In six years of publishing RFID Journal, we have made a few factual errors here and there, which were corrected once they were pointed out to us. But we have never knowingly published anything we knew to be false, nor have we ever covered up information or misled our readers. Even those who strongly oppose RFID technology have never accused us of printing bogus information. We have always been honest about the potential abuses of RFID technologies, and have sought ways to prevent them. (AIM, to its credit, has been equally responsible.)

Sadly, journalists who see RFID as a tool Big Business plans to use in order to invade consumers' privacy can't say the same thing. Back in March, for instance, I wrote a blog in response to a "Consumer Confidential" column in the *Los Angeles Times* (see [Fact-Checking the Los Angeles Times](#)). The column raised unnecessary fears of privacy abuse by grossly distorting the facts regarding RFID technology and its use in cell phones.

At the time, I wrote to the editor and copied the writer, David Lazarus, pointing out numerous factual errors in the article, but the *Times* never printed my letter. I have no first-hand knowledge of why they would choose to keep the facts, or even my opinions, from their readers—but they apparently did.

I would like to note and congratulate my three fellow award winners. Craig Maddox, retired director of product management and new business development for [NCR's](#) Retail Solutions Division, received the Richard R. Dilling Award in recognition of his contributions to the development and growth of the auto-ID and mobility industry. "Mr. Maddox was instrumental in NCR's retail point-of-sale scanning developments and was a long-term and tireless contributor to many of today's bar-code standards," AIM said.

Robert Leibrandt, deputy program manager for the Unique Identification (UID) Policy Office in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, received the Don Percival Award, which recognizes an individual from the user community for outstanding contributions to the application of automatic identification and mobility

technologies. Leibrandt serves as the U.S. Department of Defense's primary advocate for UID and automatic identification for all item marking.

RELATED\_ARTICLES Finally, Victor Vega, director of tag product marketing for Alien Technology, received the Ted Williams Award, in recognition of an educator's and entrepreneur's innovative and exceptional contributions that further the growth of the industry. Vega trained more than 2,000 RFID professionals—including me—at the Alien RFID Academy between 2002 and 2007, and holds 19 RFID-related patents.

I've always been very proud to be a journalist, and I've always believed every member of my field has a responsibility to print the truth as he or she knows it, and to correct any mistakes that might be made. I'm proud that RFID Journal lives up the highest standards of journalism, even if newspapers like the *L.A. Times* do not. So thank you, AIM Global, for recognizing my work over the past six years. I'm extremely proud to accept the award.

*Mark Roberti is the founder and editor of RFID Journal. If you would like to comment on this article, click on the link below. To read more of Mark's opinions, visit the [RFID Journal Blog](#) or click [here](#).*

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