

Alien announces EPC Gen 2 reader for EMEA market; ClearCount Medical Solutions closes Series B financing round; ASK unveils new contactless USB reader; Arcontia launches new smart card reader for e-ticketing, e-payment; MTI Wireless Edge introduces UHF forklift antennas; William Frick redesigns its Web site.

Oct. 22, 2009—The following are news announcements made during the past week.

Alien Announces EPC Gen 2 Reader for EMEA Market

Morgan Hill, Calif., RFID hardware manufacturer [Alien Technology](#) is now offering a new UHF EPC Gen 2 RFID interrogator—the ALR-9900-EMA reader—that meets [European Telecommunications Standards Institute](#) (ETSI) regulations and is available for markets in Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA). Specifically, the device is designed to comply with ETSI's EN 302-208-2 regulations, more commonly known as "the four-channel-plan." The ALR-9900 measures 18 by 20 centimeters (7 by 8 inches) and supports four independent read zones, with a monostatic design (a single antenna per zone) and dense-reader mode technology. It also features what Alien calls a "Sniff-'n-Read" feature, to activate the interrogator only when tags are detected within the RF field, which the company says is designed to help reduce ambient noise and reader power. The reader has a general-purpose input and output interface, masking and notification filtering to streamline network traffic, and data-streaming options, and also supports received signal strength indication (RSSI), a technology that measures the strength of a signal.

ClearCount Medical Solutions Closes Series B Financing Round

[ClearCount Medical Solutions](#), a Pittsburgh-based company focused on improving surgical safety, has announced it has closed a round of Series B financing, raising \$3.4 million, which the company says will help fund its sales and product-development efforts. ClearCount has developed SmartSponge, which incorporates RFID tags into surgical sponges to help prevent medical teams from inadvertently leaving sponges inside surgical patients. First unveiled in mid-2006, the system leverages [Texas Instruments'](#) Tag-it HF-I passive 13.56 MHz RFID tags, which support the ISO 15693 and 18000-3 standards. In June 2007, SmartSponge received market clearance from the [U.S. Food and Drug Administration](#) (see [RFID-enabled Surgical Sponges a Step Closer to OR](#)). The financing round was led by [Draper Triangle Ventures](#), the Midwestern-based partner of early-stage venture capital firm [Draper Fisher Jurvetson](#) (DFJ). The SmartSponge System has a built-in RFID interrogator that, at the start of an operation, records the number of tagged sponges in pre-packs as workers set them on a tray fitted with an interrogator antenna. After an operation, used sponges are then discarded into a bucket, also fitted with an interrogator antenna, which records the quantity of discarded sponges. A small LCD screen displays the counts, confirming whether there's a match. The SmartSponge System also comes with an RFID interrogator in the form of a wand, enabling surgical teams to scan a patient during postoperative safety checks, and to locate any sponges mistakenly left behind. "The investment team, and the industry in general, have been impressed with the achievements of ClearCount Medical Solutions," said Mike Stubler, Draper Triangle's managing director, in a prepared statement. "The company has landed marquis hospital clients, developed new product offerings, gained national attention, won awards and continued to develop important relationships. We are excited to expand our support of ClearCount."

ASK Unveils New Contactless USB Reader

ASK, a French provider of contactless products including smart cards, smart tickets, smart adhesive labels, readers and inlays, has announced the availability of LoGO, a new contactless USB reader designed for use in a home or office. The desktop interrogator complies with the ISO 14443 standard, the Near Field Communication (NFC) specification, and **NXP Semiconductors'** Mifare and **Sony's** FeliCa technologies. With the LoGO reader, ASK reports, consumers can perform various transactions for their transport or multi-application cards at home or office. Specific features include high-speed RF communication at 106 to 848 kilobits per second for ISO 14443 A/B-compliant cards, and 212 to 424 kilobits per second for FeliCa-compliant cards. The reader measures 106 by 83 by 23 millimeters (4.2 by 3.3 by 0.9 inches) and offers an operating distance of up to 6 centimeters (2.4 inches), depending on the card. It can operate in a temperature range of -15 degrees to +55 degrees Celsius (5 degrees to 131 degrees Fahrenheit), according to the company. ASK is also offering a development kit that includes one LoGO reader, a range of contactless cards and the C.ticket smart ticket, as well as an ASK USB stick loaded with evaluation applications and technical documentation.

Arcontia Launches New Smart Card Reader for E-ticketing, E-payment

Arcontia, a supplier of smart card readers and terminals, has launched a new USB smart card reader, the Optivo 1300. This 13.56 MHz interrogator is compliant with the ISO 14443 A/B, ISO 18092 and EMV contactless standards (EMV comes from the initial letters of Europay, **MasterCard** and **Visa**—the three companies that originally cooperated to develop the standard). Optivo supports the Near Field Communication (NFC) specifications for mobile applications, smart posters and tickets, including both passive reader mode and active peer-to-peer (P2P) mode, Arcontia reports. Optivo is also designed for EMV contactless smart card payments, and houses four programmable LEDs and a buzzer for card confirmation. According to Arcontia, the new reader also complies with the latest e-ticketing requirements, and supports a range of contactless standards, including the entire Mifare family. Optivo 1300 includes four ISO 7816 slots for secure access module (SAM) chips, which can work in parallel or independently of each other. For added security, the reader also includes a built-in tamper switch designed to detect unauthorized modifications to the device.

MTI Wireless Edge Introduces UHF Forklift Antennas

MTI Wireless Edge Ltd., an Israeli manufacturer of antennas and antenna systems, including flat-panel antennas for RFID applications, has introduced two new UHF forklift antennas. The two circular polarized antenna models are the MT-242042/NLH, for 902-928 MHz applications, and the MT-242057/NRH, for 856-965 MHz applications. Both models measure 190 by 190 millimeters (7.5 by 7.5 inches), and are designed for indoor and outdoor use. The antennas provide 7 dBic gain (referring to electrical strength), and the bodies are constructed of die-cast aluminum that the company says can sustain a load stress of 250 pounds and has a strong impact resistance to withstand almost any type of damage. The new forklift antennas join MTI Wireless Edge's family of RFID antennas that comprise more than 100 models of linear and circular, wide- and narrow-band, and single and dual polarized antennas for active and passive RFID systems.

William Frick & Co. Redesigns Its Web Site

Label and RFID tag manufacturer [William Frick & Co.](#), headquartered in Libertyville, Ill., has redesigned its Web site, [FrickNet.com](#), to highlight the company's newer RFID products. The upgraded site features user stories, white papers and online chat functions with William Frick's associates. "FrickNet.com will include our 'latest and greatest' innovations and solutions alongside more traditional labeling and marking products," said the firm's president, Jeff Brandt, in a prepared statement. The site offers the ability to read detailed specifications, as well as request a free sample or instant quote.