

Zebra Unveils RFID Label Maker

The company has introduced a new product that can embed an RFID transponder in a label while printing and applying the label.

By Jonathan Collins

Sept. 25, 2003 - Label printing specialist [Zebra Technologies](#) last week previewed a new "print engine" that is capable of printing labels with bar codes and an embedded RFID transponder. Typically, companies buy finished RFID labels and then apply them to packaging. The new device, called R110Alchemy, promises to enable suppliers to integrate RFID into labels and print them at the same time.

"This is all about smart labeling and the transition to bar code and RFID on one label," says Clive Hohberger, VP of technology development at Camarillo, Calif.-based Zebra. "Alchemy means bringing RFID to labels on demand and under program control."

The R110Alchemy is not a printer. Rather, it is a module designed to be integrated with high-speed machines that print and apply bar code labels to cartons. So the RFID labels are created and applied in the same step. Zebra says that allowing manufacturers to create their own labels and apply them to their products could reduce the cost of RFID tagging by 30 percent.

That's because creating and applying the label in one step eliminates one process that adds cost to the creation of RFID labels. Normally, a label company buys RFID inlays—RFID chips with antennas mounted on a substrate—and turns them into "smart" labels to sell. The converter has to charge for the conversion process and any profit margin.

With the R110Alchemy, smart labels can be created on demand within the printer. The R110Alchemy tests the transponders, discards those that fail and writes data to the good transponders. Those transponders are then bonded with the printed label, which can contain a matching bar code and/or human-readable characters.

Zebra says that when the R110Alchemy goes on sale early next year, it will be able to support 13.56 MHz and 915 MHz tags based on the Auto-ID Center's Electronic Product Code Class 1 and Class 0 specifications. The unit can print at 12 inches per second. Pricing has not been set.

Zebra also unveiled its first EPC-capable printer/encoder, the R4Mplus. The unit supports Class 0 and Class 1 UHF protocols. The company's existing printer/encoders support 13.56 MHz. The new R4Mplus has a print speed of 10 inches per second.

[RFID Journal Home](#)

Less than two weeks left until RFID Journal University in San Francisco. Only a few seats left. To register please visit [RFID Journal University](#)

Copyright ©2005 RFID Journal, Inc. All Rights Reserved