

IBM adds analytic app for container tracking to InfoSphere Traceability Server; Inside Contactless works on new NFC application development platform, provides tags for Taggo universal loyalty cards; ABI Research sees bright spots in RFID market; G&D rolls out cell phone sticker for contactless payments; U.S. Marine Corps taps SRA for RFID implementation; Atlantic City's Trump Plaza Hotel and Casino wins big with RFID; IPS ships new thin-film, single cell battery.

Nov. 19, 2009—The following are news announcements made during the past week.

IBM Adds Analytic App for Container Tracking to InfoSphere Traceability Server

[IBM](#) has unveiled new software that it says strengthens its IBM InfoSphere Traceability Server, designed to allow organizations to use data from RFID readers and other sensors to gather and share intelligence on items as they move through the supply chain. The new software, known as Returnable Container Management, was specifically designed for governments, automotive manufacturers, parts suppliers and other businesses to track the exact locations of containers and other reusable assets used to move parts and products. According to Daniel G. Hernandez, IBM's product manager for InfoSphere Traceability Server, the software—which complements the previous real-time reporting and analysis functionality available in InfoSphere Traceability Server—is a packaged analytic application that includes out-of-the-box reports, dashboards and alerts that, combined, represent industry best practices. "By taking this extra step, we are helping companies achieve a faster return by wringing out the costs of customization and long development lead times," Hernandez says. "Customers can use the out-of-the-box functionality to understand current and historical performance relative to inventory and cycle time benchmarks." Customers can affix RFID tags to their reusable containers, use fixed and mobile interrogators to read those tags, and feed the tag reads into the system, then use the analytic application to track the exact location of a particular container as it moves along the supply chain. Returnable Container Management is Web-based, so organizations and their trading partners can use a Web browser to determine where each container is located at any given point. If a container reaches the wrong site, the system will alert management. According to IBM, the new software is being utilized in a pilot project launched by the Vietnamese State Agency for Technological Innovation and the Vietnam Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers to track the country's seafood exports—a market worth more than \$4.25 billion in 2008 (see [Vietnamese Seafood Producers Look to RFID](#)). Returnable Container Management was developed at IBM's Silicon Valley Lab, drawing on the analytics capabilities of IBM Cognos.

Inside Contactless Works on New NFC Application Development Platform, Provides Tags for Taggo Universal Loyalty Cards

[Inside Contactless](#), a provider of contactless chip technologies, has partnered with [Mobile Distillery](#), a software maker and specialist in mobile technologies and handsets, to create a new Near Field Communication (NFC) mobile application development platform. The two companies indicate their partnership will help boost the development of NFC applications for the Wave-Me NFC services platform—an end-to-end solution enabling carriers and third-party service providers to offer subscribers access to a range of consumer services and applications through their mobile phones. The new NFC

mobile application development platform, called "Celsius for Wave-Me," combines Mobile Distillery's Celsius mobile application production framework with Inside Contactless' Wave-Me Service Engine, a key component of the Wave-Me NFC services platform. Celsius for Wave-Me will also include deeply integrated connectivity to Inside Contactless' MicroRead NFC chip, and software that is designed to optimize the performance of an NFC mobile phone by providing access to the NFC chip's advanced proprietary features. "Along with our Wave-Me services platform for carriers and third-party service providers, Celsius for Wave-Me will be a key component of the NFC ecosystem, providing a platform NFC application developers can use to efficiently address the diversity of handsets on the market today and in the future," said Loic Hamon, VP of marketing for Inside Contactless' NFC business line, in a prepared statement. Celsius for Wave-Me enables developers to use its patented Parametric Development feature to automatically adapt their source code at compilation time to create applications that, according to Inside Contactless, can read either QR Code (visual 2-D bar code tags) or traditional NFC tags, depending on the capabilities of the target handset. A beta-release Celsius NFC for Wave-me for selected partners is expected to be available in the first quarter of 2010. The Celsius for Wave-Me license will be free for the development stage of any project, and will be updated to include new NFC phones and additional NFC stickers and add-ons as they become available.

Inside Contactless has also announced that it is providing RFID infrastructure components to [Taggo](#), a membership card aggregator, to enable a service Taggo expects to launch in Singapore and in other parts of southeast Asia. The service will include RFID stickers leveraging Inside Contactless' PicoPass 2KS RFID chip, as well as RFID readers based on the company's M210-2G proximity coupler. Inside Contactless is also providing integration and adoption services. Taggo's platform-as-a-service model, Inside Contactless reports, will let companies that provide customer-relationship management (CRM) systems and services offer retailers the ability to add their card programs to the Taggo system, with little or no capital expenditure. Shoppers can add a small PicoPass-based Taggo sticker to their mobile phone and join programs through a simple SMS text message, or by browsing Taggo's Web site, and all enrollment details are automatically sent to the retailer as if the customer had filled out an enrollment form. Customers can tap their phones at the point of sale to enjoy the same benefits as when presenting a plastic card. CRM suppliers can integrate Taggo into their systems and offer the Taggo service as value-added resellers (VARs). Taggo's first VARs currently serve retailers in countries across the region, including Singapore, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand. The service is designed to let customers subscribe to as many loyalty and customer subscription programs as they want, using only one sticker on their mobile phone. According to Aneace Haddad, Taggo's CEO and founder, the fundamental problem with current membership programs is that people don't want to carry multiple cards. "By adding mobile tap-and-go convenience and one-step enrollment to membership card programs in a very simple and cost-effective way," Haddad said in a prepared statement, "Taggo presents a very compelling value proposition to consumers and retailers: no more fat wallets." The initial Taggo deployment is expected to begin in Singapore in time for the holiday shopping season, with full rollout of the service scheduled for early next year.

ABI Research Sees Bright Spots in RFID Market

Despite the economic crisis that has put a damper on technology across the board, market research

firm [ABI Research](#) reports that RFID technology sales are strong for retail apparel and asset-management applications, and for applications that use active RFID tags. These three sectors are expected to outpace RFID's overall market growth, according to ABI's [RFID Annual Market Overview](#) report. "All three of these RFID application and technology areas have shown strong growth, and today account for 9.3 percent of the total RFID market, with combined revenues of more than half a billion dollars," said Michael Liard, ABI's RFID practice director, in a prepared statement. "We expect the trend to continue in 2010 and beyond: apparel, asset management and active RFID should show a 12.7 percent combined compound annual growth rate through 2014, outpacing the overall RFID market growth. This is considered strong growth, given the level of maturity of many RFID-based asset-management applications." Adoption of item-level RFID in the fashion apparel market is graduating from pilot testing to full-scale deployment, and according to ABI Research, many retailers are now in various stages of implementation. The use of RFID for asset tracking and management, the firm notes, shows particular applicability to work-in-process tracking, including spare parts and tools; returnable transport items (RTIs); IT asset management; medical assets; rental item management (for example, library books, media and laundry); and yard management. Finally, active RFID solutions, including real-time location systems (RTLS), are expected to experience solid growth in a number of vertical industries, such as health care, manufacturing, aerospace and defense, transportation, and commercial services, in support of asset tagging, people tracking and other applications.

G&D Rolls Out Cell Phone Sticker for Contactless Payments

Smart card maker [Giesecke & Devrient](#) (G&D) has unveiled its Convego Air Mobile, an RFID-enabled sticker that, according to the company, offers the full functionality of a credit or debit card. Once the thin, pliable foil sticker has been affixed to a cell phone or PDA, the device can be used to pay bills at all cash terminals and ticket machines that support [MasterCard](#) PayPass contactless payments. The Convego Air Mobile payment sticker measures 43 by 33 millimeters (1.7 by 1.3 inches) and can be affixed to any recent cell phone, smart phone or PDA. The sticker's surface provides sufficient space for customer-specific designs and optical personalization by laser engraving. Convego Air Mobile is currently being used in several pilot projects by various banks in Europe and North America. G&D sees the pay sticker as an important transitional technology on the way to contactless payment transactions by cell phone.

U.S. Marine Corps Taps SRA for RFID Implementation

[SRA International](#), a provider of technology and consulting services and solutions to government organizations and commercial clients, has announced that it has won a \$4.4 million contract from [Marine Corps Systems Command](#) (MARCORSYSCOM), which serves as the principal agent for equipping U.S. operating forces to accomplish their war-fighting mission. The [U.S. Marine Corps's](#) (USMC) Passive Radio Frequency Identification (pRFID) Infrastructure Support and Sustainment contract includes commercial, off-the-shelf readers, antennas and middleware that support the [U.S. Department of Defense's](#) (DOD) pRFID specifications, and covers one base year, plus four option years. SRA will also provide project management, system maintenance support and sustainment services, system engineering and enhancements, and training. The SRA team includes [GlobeRanger](#) and [RFID Global Solution](#). The USMC will employ pRFID as a part of a comprehensive suite of

automatic identification technologies (AIT), to facilitate accurate, automatic data capture of assets and goods traversing the Marine Corps' supply chains. The Marine Corps will leverage pRFID in the supply chain to improve the management and execution of operational logistics processes within the Marine Expeditionary Forces (MEFs) at Camp Lejeune and Camp Pendleton in the United States, and at USMC camps on the Japanese island of Okinawa. In the first phase of the project, SRA will conduct site assessments. Following completion of these assessments, SRA reports, the schedule for establishing the initial capability will be determined, and the first site may be up and running by January 2010. Supplies will be tagged by the [U.S. Defense Logistics Agency](#) (DLA), as well as by other military services or vendors.

Atlantic City's Trump Plaza Hotel and Casino Wins Big With RFID

Thanks to an RFID-enabled system from [Capton](#), the [Trump Plaza Hotel and Casino](#) in Atlantic City, N.J., has saved more than \$130,000 in liquor costs versus the previous year's performance. The Trump Plaza is using Capton's Beverage Tracker at its Beach Bar, and at Liquids, the main bar at the casino's boardwalk entrance. The Beach Bar rings up \$21,000 per day in liquor sales, and is rebuilt from scratch on the beach every year. Beverage Tracker consists of RFID-enabled liquor spouts that can be fitted into liquor bottles, as well as an RFID interrogator and software. The spouts contain a battery-powered 418 MHz RFID tag and a measuring device. Whenever a bartender pours a drink, the tipping of the bottle activates both the tag and the measuring device, thereby allowing the spout to measure the volume of liquor poured (in ounces) before the employee tips the bottle back up. The tag then transmits that information (and the microchip's unique identification number, as well as the brand and size of liquor bottle to which it is attached) to the interrogator's antenna. The spout's tag has a maximum read range of up to 100 feet from the antenna. According to Capton, the Trump Plaza decided to implement the Beverage Tracker system to more effectively deal with the level of unaccounted-for pours and over-pouring. The system quickly paid for itself, according to Tony Sanza, Trump Plaza's director of food and beverage. "Over the course of three months, we saved over \$130,000 in liquor costs versus our previous year performance in the Beach Bar," Sanza said in a prepared statement. "The numbers improvement in Liquids was just as impressive. By our calculations, a six-point drop in liquor costs in the Beach Bar paid for the system within three weeks. Even with the relatively low-volume free-pour operation in Liquids, the system was paid for within five months." Other hotels using Capton's Beverage Tracker include the [Vendue Inn](#), in Charleston, S.C. (see [Charleston Inn Using Capton's Liquor-Monitoring System](#)), Treasure Island, a Las Vegas hotel and casino (see [Vegas Hotel-Casino Uses Tags to Keep Tabs on Liquor](#)) and Harry Denton's Starlight Room, in San Francisco's Sir Francis Drake Hotel (see [To Teach Bartenders How to Make Cocktails, Just Add RFID](#)).

IPS Ships New Thin-Film, Single Cell Battery

[Infinite Power Solutions](#) (IPS), a manufacturer of rechargeable, thin-film energy storage devices, is now shipping its new thin-film, single cell battery, the Thinergy MEC102. The MEC102 has an expected lifetime of up to 20 years, provides a nominal 4-volt output and features a patented flexible package design that, according to the company, maximizes the cell's active area and minimizes the device's footprint to deliver high energy and power density. The MEC102, IPS reports, is ideal for wireless sensors and semi-active RFID tags, as well as for a number of other micro-electronic devices, including

those involving energy harvesting. Specific features include multiple capacity options up to 2.5 milliampere-hours, and up to 10 milliwatt-hours (36 Joules) of energy; a high discharge rate capability of 100 milliamperes (continuous), and 300 milliwatts (continuous); an ultra-thin form factor of 170 micrometers (total package thickness); an all-inorganic, solid-state construction; and an ultra-low self-discharge rate of less than 1 percent charge loss per year. The batteries can be stacked vertically in a series, or in a parallel configuration for greater power and capacity, without consuming additional system footprint. A five-cell stack remains less than 1 millimeter (0.04 inch) in total height, and delivers 500 milliamperes of continuous discharge current (approximately 1.5 watts of power). The Thinergy MEC102 is available now to qualified customers in production quantities, and can be ordered directly from IPS' manufacturing factory in Littleton, Colo.