

ConnecTerra Releases RFTagAware

Middleware provider has brought out the first version of its EPC Savant and reader management software.

By Jonathan Collins

March 11, 2004—ConnecTerra, a middleware specialist based in Cambridge, Mass., has launched the first version of its EPC Savant and reader management software. The new RFTagAware Version 1.0 is available immediately and comprises three defined software layers: software deployed on servers at the edge of the network (near the RFID readers); application servers to integrate that data; and centralized control servers that allow monitoring, management and security access across the system to be controlled from a central point. Pricing for RFTagAware will be related to the numbers of antennas deployed by RFTagAware customers. According to the company, that pricing starts around \$30,000 for a 100-antenna deployment. "Charging by antenna is another way to ease complexity for customers deploying RFID. That way there is no confusion or complexity for customers regarding which readers they deploy and how many antennas each supports," says David Douglas, ConnecTerra's senior VP for products and strategy.

The company maintains its offering cuts the work and cost of deploying EPC networks, by eliminating the need for much of the custom-made programming usually required when using a Savant to link readers and enterprise middleware with already developed code and application programming interfaces (APIs) for connecting to existing enterprise systems.

Initially, ConnecTerra's RFTagAware 1.0 will support readers from ThingMagic, Alien Technology and Matrics. Readers from AWID and SAMSys Technologies will be added within a few weeks, those from Symbol Technologies and Intermec Technologies will be supported further down the line. All of the above mentioned readers, with the exception of the Matrics model, are capable of reading EPC Class 1 tags. The Matrics model reads EPC Class 0.

"The industry is moving so fast we will always have to keep updating our software to support new developments. As a small company, we believe we can get changes in quickly and get them out to our customers," says Douglas.

The company says it has a dozen pilots running: three with potential CPG customers, the others with systems integrators and software partners. ConnecTerra has already worked to link its software with offerings from enterprise application integration vendor TIBCO Software, automation equipment maker Rockwell Automation, systems integrator HK Systems and supply chain software maker Yantra and business and technology services provider Cap Gemini Ernst and Young.

A member of EPCglobal, ConnecTerra designed its RFTagAware to manage Savants, a core EPC technology, is geared to managing multiple site RFID EPC deployments across the supply chain. Nonetheless, the company says it also sees potential for its RFTagAware software in the many non-EPC RFID systems that are already deployed. It says it is already preparing to support some non-EPC tags and readers such as those from Escort Memory Systems.

RFTagAware 1.0 runs on Sun Solaris, Linux or Microsoft's Windows NT servers and has to compete in an increasingly crowded field with GlobeRanger, OATSystems, Sun Microsystems and others are marketing Savant-like software to manage RFID networks.

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