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# Answering the RFID Skills Question

As companies around the world look to deploy UHF RFID technology to track goods through the global supply chain, who will install all the readers at dock doors and receiving bays from Seattle to Shanghai? It's an important question because today there are few technicians with the skills to install UHF

RFID systems. But it's an issue that the RFID industry has begun to address.

In December, representatives from training companies, RFID vendors and the Association for Automatic Identification and Mobility (AIM), an industry trade association, met at the headquarters of the Computing Technology Industry Association (CompTIA), a nonprofit organization that does certification testing. The group was there to explore the possibility of developing a standardized test that could be used to certify that someone has the basic skills needed to install RFID hardware.



The group didn't make a firm commitment to create a standardized test, but it did reach a broad consensus on what skills would need to be addressed by the certification process. Another meeting will take place in February, and it's likely that the process will move forward under the joint direction of CompTIA and AIM. Expect to see the first training programs geared toward certification established before year's end.

There are two groups of workers that could fill the skills gap by taking training courses and getting certified. The first is systems integrators who currently install bar code or 13.56 MHz RFID systems. They could quickly learn the basics of how radio waves behave in the UHF spectrum and how to install and

configure readers. The second group is RF engineers and technicians from the struggling telecommunications sector. They understand radio frequency technology and could apply their skills to RFID systems.

The real challenge over the next several years will be finding RFID system architects—people who understand auto-ID systems, RFID technology, IT systems and business process and can design and oversee the construction of a system that can deliver real business value.



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