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EPC's European Accent

The Electronic Product Code was conceived back in 1999 as a means of tracking goods around the globe using a single radio frequency identification protocol and the Internet. rfid journal was conceived three years later as a global media company covering this global technology. We've recently added a full-time Europe editor and launched a major executive conference in Europe. But it would be a mistake for us or

anyone else to believe that a global technology can be applied the same way in every location. When deploying RFID in the supply chain, companies need to follow the old maxim: “Think global, act local.”

Our cover story looks at how European companies are deploying RFID in ways that differ dramatically from those in the United States (see *Europe Finds Its Own Path to ROI*). The different approach being taken in Europe is dictated by the different regulatory environment, business practices and structure of European supply chains.



European retailers are moving quickly to tag individual items. That’s where they see the biggest return on investment. You could debate whether Europe is ahead of the United States or behind, but it’s more interesting to look at how companies in Europe are benefiting from RFID today. And companies around the world would do well to learn from how European retailers are navigating the minefield of consumer privacy.

Environmental regulations in Europe are also a lot different from those in the United States. Our story *Sudden Impact: RFID and the Environment* examines the potential effects on recycling caused by putting millions-or billions-of RFID tags with metal or printed ink antennas onto packaging and products.

Elsewhere in this issue, we take you inside the RFID “dirty” lab built by Kimberly-Clark to develop and test RFID

applications (see Lab-Powered Innovation). The company has assembled a team of experts from different functional areas and is setting up procedures for rolling out the technology in the most cost-effective way. The big benefit: Kimberly-Clark is developing intellectual capital and improving its relationships with its largest retail customers.

In contrast to the retail and consumer packaged goods industries, chemical producers haven't been on the cutting edge of RFID adoption. But companies in the United States, Europe and even Russia are facing pressure from government agencies to secure potentially dangerous chemicals that could be used in a terrorist attack. The industry is now exploring the use of RFID to help secure the chemical supply chain and provide supply chain efficiencies (see Finding the Right RFID Formula).

It's clear that different industries and regions will deploy RFID in their own way and at their own pace. But RFID is a global technology, and it will impact most multinational companies, the world's environment and the safety and privacy of people from Beijing to Brussels to Baltimore. rfid journal will cover all the issues everywhere.

Mark Roberti

Founder and Editor



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