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## **RFID News Roundup**

Presented here are news announcements made during the past week by the following organizations:

Smartrac, Compass Marketing;

China Eastern Airlines;

Swift Sensors, Zebra Technologies;

iDTRONIC;

MachNation;

Element Materials Technology, the Zigbee Alliance; Ericsson, and Telia.

## **Smartrac, Compass Marketing Partner on Smart Retail Labeling**

Smartrac Technology Group, a provider of RFID and Internet of Things (IoT) solutions, and Compass Marketing, a provider of marketing and technology solutions in the consumer packaged goods (CPG) industry, have announced a partnership to accelerate Compass's Smart Retail Label (SRL) Network globally. As part of this collaboration, Smartrac will provide its Near Field Communication (NFC) inlays as the basis for Compass's physical SRL tags, which have been integrated by numerous brands, retailers and CPG companies.

Throughout the past five years, Compass has built up its SRL Network in partnership with large companies such as Microsoft, enabling retailers and branded product manufacturers to improve operational efficiency, reduce out-of-stock incidents and communicate directly with consumers via their NFC-enabled smartphones. Now, the SRL Network's customer base will establish a direct-to-consumer communications channel to provide product transparency to brick-and-mortar stores and enhance the customer experience. Consumers can simply tap their phones on the SRL tags attached to branded products and packaged goods, without having to download or use an app.

"This isn't only an exciting step forward for our organizations, it's also an exciting step forward for hundreds of millions of customers across the world in terms of the daily buying decisions they are making," said John White, Compass Marketing's CEO, in a prepared statement. "Smartrac is a pivotal partner, allowing us to offer this level of transparency to consumers at a price that will not affect product costs. This is a change that is overdue for brick-and-mortar businesses, and we are thrilled to help usher in the future of retail."

“It’s an honor for us to partner with Compass Marketing to further strengthen the SRL Network,” said Amir Mobayen, Smartrac’s chief revenue officer and the president of its Transponder Division, in the prepared statement. “The opportunity to be part of this transformative system to link brands, retailers and consumers by providing a whole new degree of transparency and interaction between all players is a great motivation for us. It also confirms that the rapidly evolving RFID ecosystem is an integral part of today’s trailblazing solutions, and that Smartrac’s outstanding RFID and NFC product portfolio positions us well as the leading supplier.”

## **China Eastern Airlines Adds RFID for Tracking Luggage at Shanghai Airports**

China Eastern Airlines has announced that it has deployed radio frequency identification devices for luggage tracking at two civil airports in Shanghai. This month, the airline put the RFID solution into operation at Shanghai Hongqiao International Airport and Shanghai Pudong International Airport.

RFID technology is gaining traction throughout the global civil aviation industry. Compared with other baggage tag scanning technologies, the airline reports, RFID provides air passengers with faster and more efficient service, while providing real-time information regarding their luggage.

Beijing Daxing International Airport is scheduled to deploy the RFID-based baggage-tracking system in September of this year as well, according to China Eastern Airlines. China’s civil aviation authorities are currently working to create safe, green, smart and human-oriented airports, the airline adds, including the facilitation of easy, efficient luggage management.

## **Swift Sensors Joins Zebra's PartnerConnect Program**

Swift Sensors, a supplier of cloud wireless sensors systems for the Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT), has partnered with Zebra Technologies under its program for independent software vendors (ISVs). Swift Sensors' customers will now have immediate mobile access to the Swift Sensors Wireless Sensor System with Zebra's mobile computing devices and rugged tablets.

Swift Sensors chose Zebra for its enterprise mobility products, including handhelds and tablets used in manufacturing, transportation, logistics and other industries. Customers can now leverage Zebra tablets, such as the XSLATE L10, XSLATE R12 and ET5x models, for access to Swift Sensors' Cloud Console. This enables industrial plants, food manufacturers and other businesses to protect and monitor equipment and processes for predictive maintenance, as well as improve operational efficiency and increase machine utilization.

"Swift Sensors is excited to join the Zebra PartnerConnect program to strengthen its engagement with customers and other Zebra partners, especially as an increasing number of manufacturers look for a way to quickly and efficiently implement IoT solutions and deploy wireless sensor systems," said Sam Cece, Swift Sensors' founder and CEO, in a prepared statement. "Swift Sensors customers often require the enterprise security and ruggedness that Zebra mobile computing devices provide that are not available with typical consumer devices."

The PartnerConnect Program is designed to grow Zebra's channel ecosystem, and to address the needs of distributors, ISVs and resellers by providing opportunities for growth and meeting customer and market demands. By participating in PartnerConnect, the companies report, Swift Sensors gains access to a portfolio of mobile computing devices and tablets,

along with training, marketing, sales and technical benefits.

## **iDTRONIC Releases RFID Solution for Forklifts**

iDTRONIC has announced that its BLUEBOX Micro IA RFID Industrial Reader, with an integrated antenna, is designed for industrial applications within intralogistical processes involving forklifts. The reading device is equipped with an M12 plug connection and has a power supply of 10 to 36 volts; the output line is up to 27 dBm / 500 mW and can be regulated from 10 dBm forward, in 1-dBm steps.

The BLUEBOX Micro IA has pre-drilled holes and can be screwed onto a forklift. The reader possesses a RS-232 COM interface; this serial alignment is intended for a connection to a monitor in the operators cab of a forklift, the company notes. The device is also equipped with an RS-485 interface; this asynchronous serial alignment allows for data communication to a warehouse over long distances.



The reader is optionally available with CANbus (SAE J1939 or

CANopen), which enables data exchange between several ECUs. Long cable lines are avoided by this interface, the company indicates. The SAE J1939 network protocol is used for the transmission of diagnostic data and control information. The CANopen connection is a communication protocol suitable for automation processes within warehouse processes, and complex devices can be networked with it.

The device supports the global UHF RFID frequencies: 865 to 868 MHz (ETSI) and 902 to 928 MHz (FCC). Due to its integrated antenna and 3-meter (9.8-foot) reading distance, the firm reports, it is suitable for high-rise racks and large storehouses. Pallets and goods can be safely identified, either by mounted RFID transponders or from RFID tags, via the BLUEBOX Micro IA, and can then be assigned to shelves. The reader transfers the data to the monitor inside the forklift and displays information about the content and storage location.

## **MachNation Publishes IoT Device-Management ScoreCard**

MachNation has announced the availability of its “2019 IoT Device Management (DM) ScoreCard,” an in-depth rating of 15 Internet of Things device-management platform vendors.

In order to capture the key trends in the ecosystem, the firm analyzed the following vendors: Amplia, AVSystem, Amazon, Ayla Networks, Blynk IoT, Bosch, Harman, Microsoft, Nokia, Particle, PTC, Software AG, Telit, VMWare and Zededa. This is MachNation’s third year producing its “IoT Device Management ScoreCard.” According to the company’s forecasts, worldwide IoT application enablement and device management revenue was \$3.3 billion in 2018 and is expected to grow to \$64.6 billion by 2026 at a compound annual growth rate of 45 percent.

“As more industries look to incorporate IoT into their business models, the ecosystem will continue to increase in

complexity and diversity,” said Josh Taubenheim, an IT analyst with MachNation, in a prepared statement. “Taking a deep look at device management capabilities within IoT platforms is an excellent way to gain insight into how platform vendors are reacting to developing trends in the IoT world.”

MachNation is an independent testing and benchmarking company for IoT platforms. Its “IoT Device Management ScoreCard” offers a technical review of relevant vendors, providing a detailed review of product capabilities, software development kits, applying programming interfaces and documentation to help businesses and service providers manage IoT sensors, devices and gateways at scale.

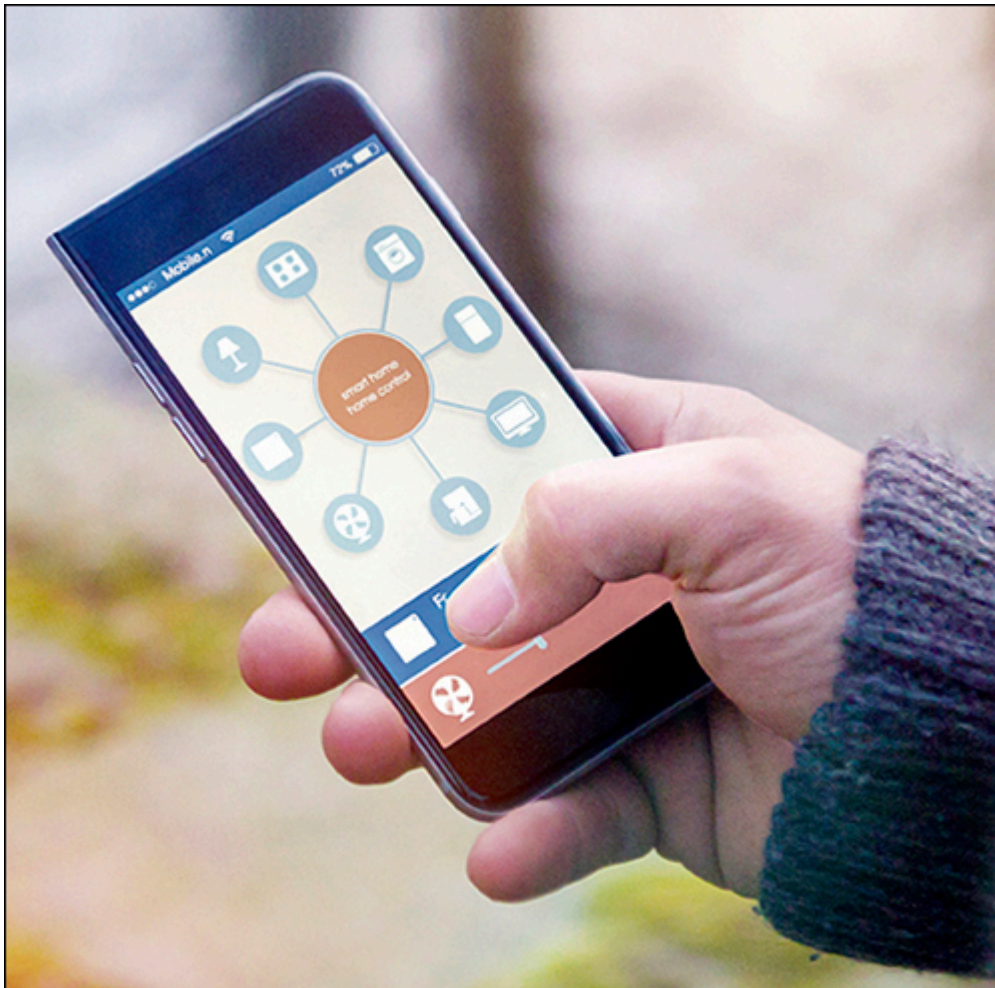
“For the third year, MachNation has focused on the nuances of IoT device management to help enterprises, service providers, systems integrators and distributors understand the strengths and weaknesses of platform microservices,” said Sam Hale, an analyst and IoT implementation specialist at MachNation, in the prepared statement. “Our recommendations are based on technical reference materials, extensive developer documentation review and countless live demos.”

## **Element Materials Technology to Provide Zigbee Alliance Certification Testing**

Element Materials Technology has expanded its testing services at its laboratory in Irvine, Calif., to provide formal certification testing to member companies of the Zigbee Alliance. The organization comprises hundreds of companies creating, maintaining and delivering open, global standards for the IoT. Element is a longstanding member of the Zigbee Alliance and is an existing authorized testing provider.

The new Zigbee certification testing service will enable members to combine their usual FCC and NRTL mark testing with Zigbee certification testing in a single location. Element will provide Zigbee pre-testing, protocol testing and

certification testing, complementing existing EMC and safety test services already offered by the laboratory. The service will use the Element-developed Zigbee Tracer variant, a USB dongle that allows manufacturers of Zigbee products to assess those products throughout their development.



“Stringent testing is a critical step in ensuring interoperability,” said Tobin Richardson, the Zigbee Alliance’s president and CEO, in a prepared statement. “We are excited that Element will be expanding and providing these services and helping developers and manufacturers to create new innovative products for the North American smart-home market.”

“This new addition of services in our Irvine laboratory demonstrates the growth of the smart-home market,” added Rick Sluifers, Element’s EVP of aerospace, in the prepared statement. “Element plays a key role in the certification



process for Alliance members by facilitating testing services and assisting members through the process. The service will be delivered by our engaged experts who have extensive experience with testing Zigbee products, and will make use of the official Zigbee Alliance ZTT tool, which was originally developed by the Zigbee team within Element.”

## **Ericsson, Telia Pilot Dedicated Cellular Network for Internet of Things**

Communications company Ericsson and Nordic-based service provider Telia have brought automated guided vehicles (AGVs), augmented reality (AR) and sensors together at Ericsson’s manufacturing facility in Tallinn, Estonia, via a dedicated cellular network. The resulting mobile communication, the companies report, provides the capacity, customization and control required to scale and secure the connected factory and improve manufacturing operations.

Measuring 25,000 square meters (269,000 square feet), the Tallinn supply site is one of Ericsson’s largest manufacturing units, incorporating R&D activities and volume production. To increase production efficiency and sustainability, Telia and Ericsson have jointly piloted a new dedicated cellular network for the IoT at the factory. Testing was finalized last month.

The first solution to benefit from the dedicated cellular network involves AGVs, which deliver product components from the warehouse to production lines. The AGVs can communicate with the control system, provide a live stream of data and video, and use the dedicated network to open doors. Transporting components is a labor-intensive, costly and repetitive task, according to the two companies, but AGVs can save time, reduce the risk of damaging components and decrease waste.

The second solution is AR troubleshooting, which provides an interactive method for the quality control and testing of

electronics components. By using AR glasses or terminals, troubleshooters gain an overlay with all manuals, instructions and collective knowledge of other troubleshooters, allowing them to quickly identify potential problems. Field tests have shown a 50 percent reduction in time spent on troubleshooting circuit boards when AR is utilized, the companies indicate.

The third solution enables the Tallinn factory to monitor the environment using mobile sensors to measure moisture, temperature, noise, light and carbon dioxide levels. The goal, the firms explain, is to provide employees with a safe and healthy work environment, while minimizing the risk of production defects. The dedicated cellular network has the capacity to handle thousands of sensors within a factory, enabling them to be relocated as the layout of the factory evolves.

“The Ericsson factory becomes the first in Estonia to implement these innovative solutions using private networks and industry connect for cellular IoT,” said Robert Pajos, Telia’s CEO for Estonia, in a prepared statement. “Companies have a need to connect everything in their production environment, including sensors, tools, robots, vehicles and the goods they handle or produce. As the demand to connect more things increases, the need for high-quality networks grows with it. 4G and 5G mobile communications is the best option for secure, reliable connectivity with high throughput and low latency. Our cooperation with Ericsson shows our joint capacity to create these network solutions for the future.”

“Mobile networks meet the requirements to support diverse smart manufacturing use cases, making it possible to securely and efficiently optimize manufacturing processes,” added Lars Ottoson, Ericsson’s head of supply at the Tallinn site, in the prepared statement. “They allow massive real-time data collection and analytics and intelligent automation on the factory floor, solving operational challenges and creating a more sustainable, efficient and safer production environment.”



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