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RFID News Roundup

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

Checkpoint Systems;

Holland 1916, Holland RFID, InfoChip Systems, InfoChip LP;

BeSpoon;

Precision Dynamics Corp.; and

Turck.

Checkpoint Systems' Check-Net System Can Now Print, Encode, Test a Million RFID Labels in 24 Hours

Checkpoint Systems has announced that its Check-Net print shops have implemented new printing capabilities enabling them to more quickly print, encode and test RFID labels for apparel retailers and manufacturers employing Checkpoint's source-tagging capabilities.

The company reports that its newly upgraded Check-Net system is eight times faster than industry-standard thermal transfer printers, and can print and encode one million RFID labels within 24 hours.

The Check-Net service produces and delivers retailer-ordered bar-coded tags and RFID tags to item manufacturing sites worldwide, and also includes installation and maintenance services, to facilitate the complete ordering process and ensure that the correct products are delivered at the proper time. Along with the new printing systems, Check-Net offers new processes and quality controls, including individual re-serialization of Electronic Product Codes (EPCs). EPC testers are attached to printers, and Checkpoint follows strict manufacturing processes to ensure that the RFID labels not used are destroyed. In addition, Checkpoint indicates that it uses anti-static packing to avoid RFID chips being damaged.

Check-Net also features an improved online ordering system the company claims is easier to user, enabling retailers and manufacturers to order tickets in only four clicks. Other enhancements include live ticket previews and full order and data visibility, including orders and invoices for all brands for each store worldwide. The new printing systems are already deployed at several of Checkpoint's 19 global @source locations, and are being rolled out to print shops in Asia, Europe and North America.

Holland RFID Merges With InfoChip Systems

Holland 1916 has announced that its Holland RFID division has merged with InfoChip Systems Inc., to form InfoChip LP. The two companies joined forces to offer customers a more complete RFID product lineup consisting of software, tags and readers, according to Mike Stradinger, Holland 1916's CEO. Stradinger is now also the CEO of the newly formed InfoChip LP, which will operate as a partially owned subsidiary of Holland 1916. The other three Holland 1916 Inc. subsidiaries—Holland Nameplate, Holland Interface Solutions and Holland Integrated Metal Solutions—are not part of the deal (and do not sell RFID products to third parties).



Holland RFID had offered rugged RFID tagging solutions for industrial applications, while InfoChip Systems Inc. was a long-time provider of durable RFID tags and readers, as well as asset-tracking and compliance software under the eEquip brand, with more than 35,000 users. Together, Stradinger says, the two companies have deployed more than 5 million RFID tags. According to Stradinger, the merger will enable the two firms to increase their investment in software and tag development, as well as “improve our understanding of the end-user experience by bringing in a former eEquip user as an investor, and leverage our mutual relationships in the oil and gas industry.” The new InfoChip LP has offices in Houston, Texas; Lethbridge, AB, Canada; and Liberty, Mo. The merger also enables InfoChip to hire additional software developers to speed up the implementation of its product roadmap, according to the company.

Chris Gelowitz, formerly the president and CEO of InfoChip Systems, is now the CTO of InfoChip LP, while Jim Stradinger, Holland RFID's former president, is now InfoChip LP's VP of sales. Stradinger says that the newly formed firm has an international portfolio of customers in the oil and gas, lifting and rigging, drill pipe, construction, valve, mining, and hose industries. Its product lineup includes a variety of ultrahigh-frequency (UHF) and high-frequency (HF) passive RFID tags for on-, in-, or near-metal applications and other harsh environments.

BeSpoon Unveils 3D RTLS Development Kits

French fabless semiconductor company BeSpoon has unveiled three turnkey, system-level development packages designed to enable companies to integrate 3-D real-time location system (RTLS) technology into industrial and consumer products, including applications for the Internet of Things (IoT), manufacturing, health care, home automation, gaming and emergency management. BeSpoon's technology portfolio features BeSpoon's active RFID chips that operate in the 6 MHz ultra-wideband (UWB) band, as well as the SpoonPhone smartphone, which contains an RFID reader designed to interrogate tags made with BeSpoon's RFID chip. In addition, the company offers the UPosition module (featuring the BeSpoon chip) that a business can integrate with its electronic products devices in order to add RTLS and RFID functionality.



BeSpoon phone and tags

BeSpoon's chips are radio transceivers capable of functioning

as both a reader and a tag. This enables what the company calls two-way ranging, so that the distance between two transceivers can be determined by computing the amount of time it takes for a signal to perform a round trip. A simple network of fixed tags-readers can apply basic triangulation to pinpoint a tag's location accurately in three dimensions, the company reports, enabling the tracking of virtually any object to within a few centimeters of its location, indoors or out.

The new packages are known as Precise Inverted 3D, Precise Indoor GPS and Precise RTLS. The Precise Inverted 3D design package comes with a SpoonPhone (featuring an Android application programming interface to access the location data) and the inverted 3D software. The software is capable of computing its 3D location based on the positions of six fixed tags, which allows rapid testing and requires minimal hardware configuration, according to BeSpoon. The Precise Indoor GPS enables a SpoonPhone to locate itself simply by listening to the tags, which the company says enables the deploying of an unlimited number of self-locating devices. Using these packages allows the development of a device-centric application, in which a moving device constantly computes its location and orientation within a 3D space. According to BeSpoon, this approach could be used in a set of goggles to create a virtual-reality environment, for instance, or in a navigation system for a campus or mall.

The Precise Location RTLS tracks, in real time, a set of tags whose locations are made available via a simple server connection. Using this package enables the development of a server-centric solution, in which a central infrastructure tracks the locations of many individual items. This model, according to BeSpoon, could be used for tracking products in factories or on luggage conveyors in airports, among many applications.

"BeSpoon's RTLS system offers that capability today, and we are making it easy for system engineers to experiment with it,

because we're confident they'll come up with hundreds of great ideas," said Jean-Marie André, BeSpoon's CEO, in a prepared statement. "The huge range of today's GPS-enabled applications shows what can be done with a combination of human creativity and reliable positioning data. Our technology enables something similar, but with full indoor compatibility, much greater location accuracy, and a level of robustness not found in any previously available solution."

PDC Announces Two New RFID Wristbands, Partnership for Squamish Valley Music Festival

Precision Dynamics Corp. (PDC) will unveil two new lines of RFID wristbands on Oct. 28, including rewearable wristbands made of polyester material that stretches to comfortably fit varying wrist sizes, as well as a new one-time-use wristband with a tamper-evident adhesive closure.



PDC Smart Stretch Wristbands

The PDC Smart Stretch Wristbands are waterproof, removable and reusable, which make them suitable for multi-day use or season passes, according to PDC. The band can be customized with full-color, dye-sublimation printing inside and outside the band. Available in two sizes—185 millimeters by 25 millimeters (7.3 inches by 1 inch) and 160 millimeters by 25 millimeters (6.3 inches by 1 inch)—the wristband is made of a special mix of nylon and cotton materials, with an embedded RFID chip that can store and transfer data. Chips available include an ISO 15693-3-compliant NXP Semiconductors ICode SLIX, as well as ISO 14443A-compliant NXP Mifare 1K and

Ultralight chips. The wristbands can be laser-engraved with up to eight-digit variable data or tag IDs.

The PDC Smart SureImage Wristband contains an RFID tag laminated between tear-resistant polypropylene material that includes a tamper-evident adhesive closure, which the company says makes it suitable for single-use applications. The wristband is available with a high-frequency (HF) passive RFID tag (made with the ISO 15693-3-compliant NXP ICode SLIX, the ISO 14443A-compliant NXP Mifare Ultralight, or the NXP NTAG), as well as with an ultrahigh-frequency (UHF) passive tag. Custom full-color printing and variable data printing capabilities add additional security, PDC reports, thereby ensuring that these wristbands are counterfeit-proof. What's more, the PDC Smart SureImage will be available in glossy laminate and non-laminate versions.

PDC has also announced it had teamed with Intellitix, a provider of RFID access-control and cashless-payment solutions, to provide its PDC Smart Band wristbands, which leverage 13.56 MHz passive RFID tags embedded in them, at the Squamish Valley Music Festival, held in late August 2014 in Squamish, British Columbia. Approximately 100,000 attendees were equipped with PDC Smart Band RFID wristbands instead of paper tickets.

The wristbands were used as multi-tasking devices for patron access control, cashless payments, and social networking—all without the use of a wallet or a smartphone. Attendees' wristbands were read and validated as they passed through Intellitix portals, which can validate more than 2,000 RFID wristbands per hour. PDC and Intellitix partnered with brand.LIVE and Live Nation Canada, the producers of the Squamish Valley Music Festival, to implement the IntelliPay RFID system. Guests were able to pre-load money onto their Smart Band wristbands and use them to purchase food, alcohol and merchandise at more than 160 cashless point-of-sale terminals set up throughout the festival. Attendees could also

link their Smart Band wristbands to their Facebook accounts and use check-in and photo stations positioned throughout the event to share their experiences in real time, without requiring a smartphone.

Turck's Q120 Compact UHF Read-Write Head Now Broadly Available



Turck's_Q120 compact UHF read-write head

Turck has announced the commercial availability of its ultrahigh-frequency (UHF) Q120 compact UHF read-write head. The Q120 improves identification in close- and medium-range UHF applications, according to Turck, and can read Turck's 50-millimeter (2-inch) passive UHF RFID tag at a distance of up to 3 meters (9.8 feet) in an industrial environment. The Q120 supports the ISO 18000-6C and EPC Gen 2 RFID standards, and combines antenna and electronics in an IP67-rated aluminum housing that measures 130 millimeters by 120 millimeters by 60 millimeters (5.1 inches by 4.7 inches by 2.4 inches). In addition, paired with Turck's UHF tag selection, the Q120 can be directly mounted on metal, and be used at high temperatures or in autoclaves. It can also be operated simultaneously with high-frequency (HF) solutions.

The Q120 UHF read-write head leverages Turck's BL ident technology, consisting of RFID tags, software and IP67-rated readers. A dozen companies began testing the Q120 last April

(see Turck Releases Small, Low-Cost, Short-Range UHF Reader for Industrial Use); other products that employ the BL ident technology for tracking goods within a manufacturing environment include the Q175 reader.



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