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RFID News Roundup

The following are news announcements made during the week of June 21.

EMS Introduces New HF RFID Tags

Escort Memory Systems has added several new high-frequency

(13.56 MHz) RFID tags to its product line. The HMS-P150, HMS-P125 and HMS-P108 are designed for embedding in pallets, totes or small containers. The HMS-P108 has a diameter



EMS's new tags

of just 8mm (0.32 inch), which means it can be fixed to the bottom of vials or pill cases for use in the pharmaceutical and biotech industries. All three of the new HMS tags have 736 bytes of read-write memory and a data transfer rate of 1,000 bytes per second. The tags are significantly thinner than EMS's existing HMS125, HMS108 and HMS150 tags and are designed for less extreme conditions than those high-temperature models. EMS has also introduced the LRP125V tags to its FastTrack product line. The tag, which was designed for applications in the laundry and dry cleaning industries, can withstand temperatures of up to 100 °C). The tag uses a Phillips I-Code microchip with 48 bytes of read-write memory and a data transfer rate of 1,200 bytes per second.

Study Says RFID No Threat to Privacy

In a study published by the Competitive Enterprise Institute, privacy advocate James Harper says competitive pressures and consumer demands will solve potential problems surrounding the use of RFID tags far better than the government intervention

some privacy advocates have called for. "Vendors employing RFID tags face economic incentives and consumer preferences that will tend to direct the technology's evolution in harmony with consumer interests," Harper says. "Meanwhile, consumers' easy access to defensive techniques and counter-technologies will compliment existing laws that already protect privacy." The study, "RFID Tags and Privacy: How Bar-Codes-on-Steroids are a 98-Pound Weakling," concludes that consumers will see significant benefits from RFID in the form of lower prices for the goods they buy and added convenience, particularly at the checkout counter.

STMicro Launches Class 1 UHF RFID Chip

STMicroelectronics has announced the availability of a UHF RFID microchip based on EPCglobal's Class 1 EPC specification. The Geneva-based semiconductor manufacturer says the new XRA00 chip is a one-time programmable (users can write an EPC to the tag) integrated circuit that is suitable for both the 902-928 MHz band used in the United States and the 866-868 MHz band used in Europe. It has 128 bits of memory organized as eight blocks of 16 bits. The first block is used to store the 16-bit CRC (Cyclic Redundancy Check), as defined by the EPC specification, and the next six blocks store the 96-bit product code itself that is used during the inventory sequence. The last block is shared between 8 lock bits used to protect the memory contents, and an 8-bit kill code. ST says RFID transponders using the XRA00 microchip can achieve a read range of up to 10 meters (32.8 feet). The company did not disclose pricing.

WebMethods and VeriSign Join Forces

WebMethods, a Fairfax, Va.-based Web services infrastructure company, announced that its RFID Starter Pack will enable

direct connectivity to the EPC Network so that customers can better access and use supply chain data stored within the EPC Network. VeriSign, a Mountain View, Calif.-based provider of security and network services, and webMethods will work together to market VeriSign's EPC Network Services offerings with webMethods' software that lets companies integrate RFID data with their enterprise resource planning applications, warehouse management systems and databases to begin to take advantage of EPC technologies.

Rockwell Opens RFID Test Lab

Rockwell Automation, a Milwaukee-based industrial automation company, has opened an RFID test lab designed to help manufacturers that are facing RFID tagging mandates from retailers. The company says the lab uses a simulated factory environment to allow accurate testing and evaluation of a wide variety of RFID products. Engineers at Rockwell Automation's test lab can provide advice on the best methods for leveraging RFID-gathered data to improve factory efficiency and productivity. The lab uses Rockwell's own RFID products as well as RFID hardware and software from other companies, including Alien Technology, FKI Logistex, SAMSys Technologies, ConnecTerra, and Zebra Technologies to help test and integrate RFID technology in distribution centers and factories.

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