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Savi Adds EPC Support

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Apr. 8, 2004—Cargo-tracking solutions provider Savi Technology has announced a new version of its key Savi SmartChain supply chain event engine and network management platform.

“The future of RFID will be about getting real value from collected data and making that useful. That is why middleware is such a focus for us,” says Mark Nelson, the director of corporate communications at Savi Technology, which is based in Sunnyvale, Calif.

According to the company, its new Savi SmartChain software Version 4.3 enables its network of supply chain shipping nodes (ports, distribution centers and other points along a shipping route where RFID readers are deployed) to connect to a broader range of data collection and process transactions more quickly. While earlier versions of Savi’s SmartChain software had the ability to connect to a range of automatic identification and data collection (AIDC) systems, including bar codes and active RFID tags, and to cellular and satellite communication systems, Version 4.3 also supports EPC-compliant tags and readers.

Savi claims that Version 4.3 also has more than twice the processing power than its predecessors and can handle several thousand transactions per second. The additional processing power, according to the company, was achieved through a number of software enhancements, including the caching of non-critical supporting data, further decentralization of processing business logic and focusing processing resources on the most important information.

As does earlier versions of Savi SmartChain, Version 4.3 automatically collects data, filters it according to business rules and disseminates important information to Savi’s supply chain customers. Savi SmartChain performs a number of functions, including synthesizing secure information from trading partners participating in its distributed but federated network. That federated structure allows important data from different supply chain partners to be shared while other data is kept secure from those without permission to access the data

SmartChain supply chain nodes are deployed at data collection points such as seaports, airports, railheads, distribution and warehouse facilities or border crossings. Data captured at the node can be processed using defined local business rules so that raw data can be filtered before being communicated to the network.

The Savi SmartChain software at each node can be configured by Savi or its supply chain customers to send automated alerts to suppliers about key supply chain developments or exceptions and to trigger actions based on detected events at the node.

The SmartChain upgrade comes less than a week after Savi announced that the Headquarters of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT) has contracted with Savi Technology to deliver a pilot project using its RFID technology and the SmartChain platform to manage and track multi-national consignments between Europe and Afghanistan. The project, to be evaluated for possible future expansion, will help determine whether NATO and its member countries can leverage Savi's real-time platform and RFID Technology to enhance pan-NATO logistic collaboration.

"There are 19 countries in NATO, and we are optimistic this type of RFID deployment could be extended to other members," says Nelson.

The contract calls for the installation of the network along the International Security Assistance Force Afghanistan (ISAF) supply chain. That will mean Savi fixed readers and Savi SmartChain Site Manager software (the Savi SmartChain component that captures data from AIDC devices and incorporates local business rules at supply chain nodes) will be deployed at nine checkpoints and four countries – Netherlands, Germany, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan.

Containers equipped with Savi's active SaviTag ST-654, which can communicate with the fixed readers at a distance of 100

meters or more, will track consignments through the supply chain. The tags will have a code identifying the shipment that will also include which country supplied the container contents.

“The system will be up and running this summer and undergoing evaluation for the rest of the year,” says Nelson.

The formula for SmartChain pricing is based on a number of factors, most prominently the scope and complexity of the supply chain with such factors as the number of nodes, volume of transactions and value of the tracked shipment. As a result, the range is very wide from a low of about \$30,000 for a simple application up to several million dollars for large and complex supply chains. This is a one-time license fee, with additional fees for upgrades.

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