

Search for:

- [Subscribe](#)
- [Search](#)

- [Subscribe](#)
- [Search](#)

- [News](#)
- [Insights](#)
 - [Editor's Notes](#)
 - [Expert View](#)
 - [Trends](#)
 - [White Papers](#)
 - [Ask The Experts](#)
- [Industries/Topics](#)
- [Events & Resources](#)
 - [Events](#)
 - [Event Recordings & Videos](#)
 - [Get Started](#)
 - [RFID Journal Glossary](#)
 - [RFID Journal Awards](#)
 - [Magazine Archive](#)
 - [FAQs](#)

Select Page

Something Happened Last Week in Orlando

Something unexpected happened in Orlando, Fla., last week. The level of buzz at RFID Journal LIVE! 2011 surprised everyone. Beforehand, of course, I knew that preregistration was up by more than 15 percent over last year's numbers, and I knew we had an outstanding list of end users attending. But we also

had great companies attend last year, so I was expecting the show to be a healthy but relatively modest improvement on our 2010 conference. What I heard from everyone, though—end users and vendors alike—was that it was our best event ever.

There was a level of energy and excitement at LIVE! 2011 that I really haven't seen since Wal-Mart Stores first announced its plans to track pallets and cases in the supply chain (see [Wal-Mart Draws Line in the Sand](#), [Wal-Mart Expands RFID Mandate](#), [Wal-Mart Details RFID Requirement](#) and [Wal-Mart Begins RFID Rollout](#)). I've written, over the past six months or so, that many end users now accept how well radio frequency identification works, but what surprised me was how much those in attendance have embraced the technology. "We've looked at other technologies, and we've looked at RFID," one executive from a Fortune 500 company told me. "No other technology can do for us what RFID can do."



Many vendors reported that those stopping by their booths were from companies knowledgeable about RFID. Some end users were ready to move forward with new projects, while others were expanding existing deployments. Numerous visitors indicated that they received verbal—and signed—end-user commitments for tags, readers or software. One chip provider, in fact, told me that while he was in the restroom, one of his partners came in and announced, "Just landed you a big order."

One measure of success is whether exhibitors re-sign for the following year's conference. At LIVE! 2011, we had a 90 percent re-sign rate, and many firms even upgraded their

booths. In fact, all of our large booths are already booked for the 2012 event. That tells me that vendors felt they were getting enough real business to commit now instead of waiting.

All of this is great news for an industry practically given up for dead some two years ago. I don't think this means RFID adoption will suddenly explode, and that everyone will begin using it. According to Geoffrey Moore, who discusses technology adoption life cycles in his books *Crossing the Chasm* and *Inside the Tornado* (see Geoffrey Moore's *Strategies for RFID Adoption* and *Moore Has Spoken—Were RFID Vendors Listening?*), the number of "early adopters" (mainstream companies deploying a technology that is mature, even if it has yet to reach a broad level of adoption) expands slowly until a critical mass is reached. But it *does* mean that a small but growing number of early adopters are now moving from pilots to rollouts more quickly than in the past, while others are expanding their deployments to new areas and applications.

It also means that vendors will continue to invest in new products in an effort to gain new customers and grow their market share. This investment in technology, even during the economic recession of the past two years, has been impressive, as evidenced by some great products unveiled this year (next week, I'll write about some of them). With technology companies growing more rapidly, these firms will continue to invest in new products. So things are only going to get better for end users looking to leverage RFID going forward.

It feels to me that RFID's long incubation is, at last, paying off. There is still a long way to go before large numbers of businesses leverage the technology, of course, particularly in any kind of enterprise-wide strategic way. But what we saw last week in Orlando is a clear sign that the projects launched by early adopters are finally earning a return on their investment. It's very exciting for me, and for the many others—end users, vendors and academics—who have long believed RFID would deliver huge business benefits, and who have worked

so hard to make that happen.

Mark Roberti is the founder and editor of RFID Journal. If you would like to comment on this article, click on the link below. To read more of Mark's opinions, visit the RFID Journal Blog, the Editor's Note archive or RFID Connect.



- [ABOUT](#)
- [ADVERTISE](#)
- [CONTACT](#)

FOLLOW US ON

- [Follow](#)
- [Follow](#)
- [Follow](#)
- [Follow](#)



© 2024 Emerald X, LLC. All Rights Reserved
[ABOUT](#) [CAREERS](#) [AUTHORIZED SERVICE PROVIDERS](#) [Your Privacy Choices](#) [TERMS OF USE](#) [PRIVACY POLICY](#)