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**Textile Service Companies  
Employ New RFID Reader  
Management Tool**

## **Datamars' new Storm managing and monitoring solution allows users to view and analyze the operation of RFID devices remotely.**

Companies that use RFID technology to manage textiles' movement – such as laundry services for hospitals or hotels – can have a complex network of readers that are challenging to monitor. To address this problem, Datamars has released a web-based software platform, Storm, that allows companies to remotely manage and monitor their UHF RFID devices, often installed in multiple locations, from a central location.



Julien Buros, Product and Services Director for Datamars' Textile ID Division

The Switzerland-based company serves the textile services industry by offering technology to uniquely identify and manage textiles through laundry, use, or maintenance. Its customer applications include laundry services for healthcare, industrial businesses, hospitality, and senior homes, says Julien Buros, Product and Services Director for Datamars'

Textile ID Division.

Datamars' Laundry Chip, UHF RFID tags, are used for tracking and tracing inventory for improved efficiency and reduced risk of lost products. The new Storm platform is Datamars' latest addition to its solutions portfolio that aims to make RFID more reliable and easier to use, Buros says. The company also offers Cloudburst, an application for RFID integration.

## **Bringing Visibility to RFID Functions**

The solution is designed to provide metrics, configuration management, preventive maintenance, and remote support. The Storm solution works with <http://www.impinj.com> Impinj readers, such as the R700 commonly used by Datamars customers.

The responsibility of RFID technology operations in the laundry world is often spread between the IT department, operators, or company management. Even though the proper collection of RFID data is essential for many of these businesses, no one may be specifically charged with ensuring the system operates correctly. Usually, the problem is worse when these devices are installed and used in multiple locations.

When RFID read data is not correctly received, the causes can vary. Users require good tags, a sound reading system, a reliable connection for communication with the server, and proper application software. Problems could arise from a failure in an antenna, or a lack of tag reads could be an operator error. In addition, the placement of tags can create reading failures, such as a transmission being blocked by soiled or wet linen.

Holistically, companies with large networks of RFID readers may lack an overview of performance, the system's performance,

and a lack of consistency across readers.

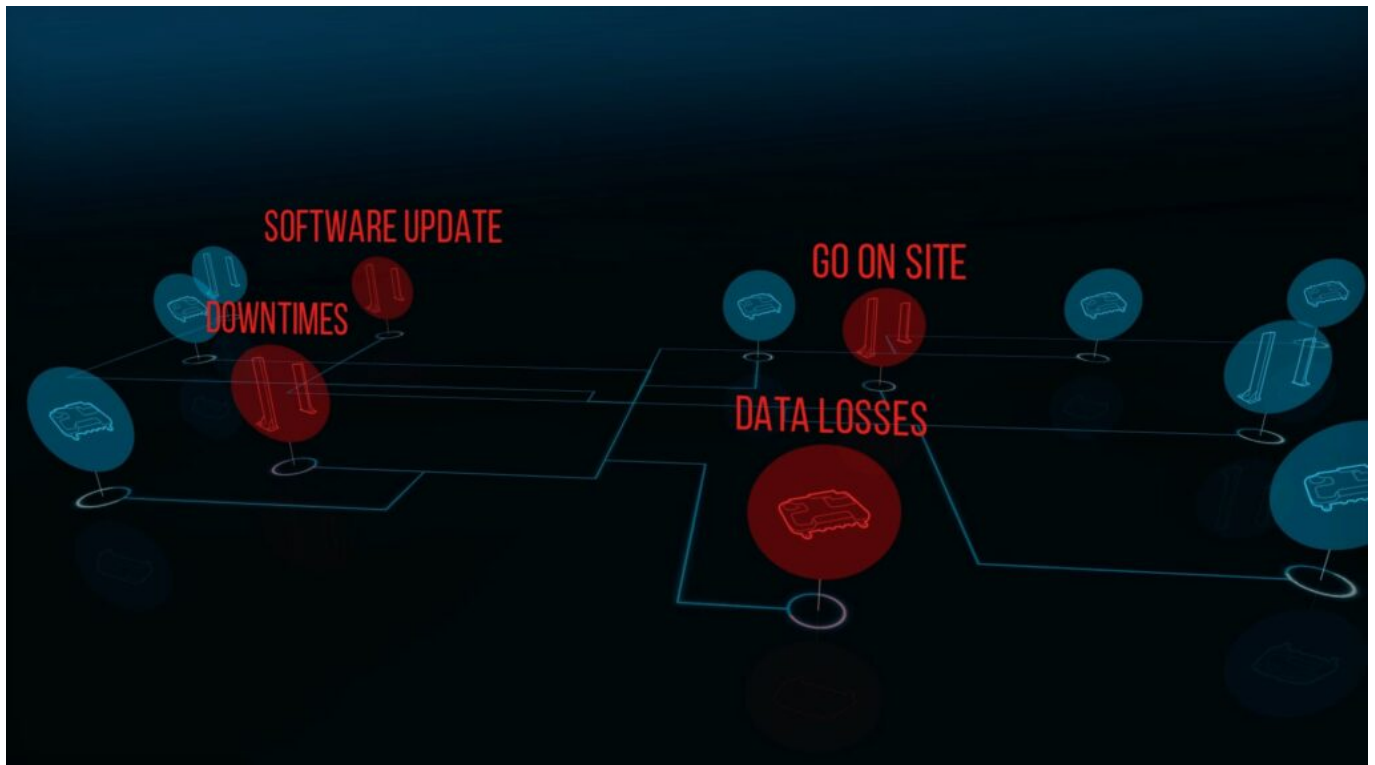
“At the end of the day, when something doesn’t work in the middle of the chain, you can see that the whole system doesn’t work,” says Buros, “but it’s quite difficult to debug – to understand what’s going wrong.” Storm was released as a tool that serves these companies to help monitor and understand if the system works as it should.

## **How the System is Used**

With Storm, users or solution providers first provision a new RFID reader by adding it to an account. Then, they assign each device to a location, such as a building or section within a large facility.

They next set up alerts in the Storm system specific to their requirements. That can be receiving notifications when a reader is not meeting the expected number of read events (which could signal a problem) or a wide disparity of read volume between two readers or two times during the day.

Settings can be applied to multiple RFID readers at the same time. The “parameters view” can be customized and saved as a user’s favorite, while configuration pre-sets can be created for quick set-up of multiple RFID readers.



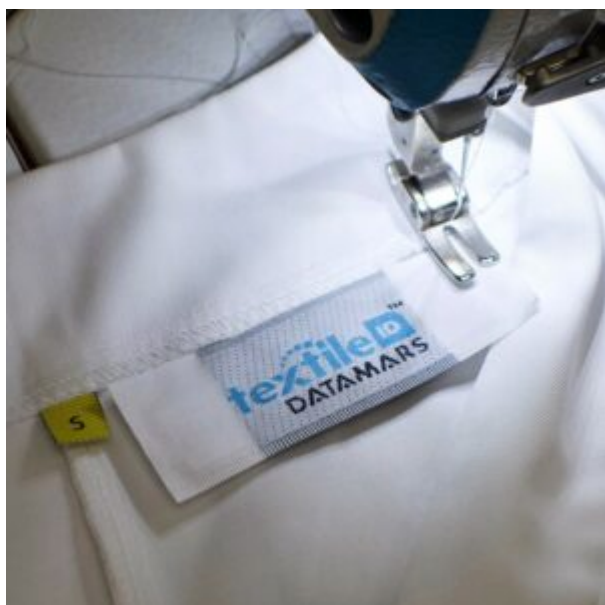
The alarm is displayed on the Storm web user interface (UI). The readers can be reset remotely, or users could increase the power level of their antennas without physically going to the read site. If additional help is needed, STORM allows the user to send a request to the Datamars service and support team, enabling temporary access to the specific RFID readers only for the time needed to fix the issue.

“Storm opens a kind of window on the reading system, allowing users to do some debugging remotely,” says Buros. The system also leverages machine learning to improve the reading system and software performance over time.

The Storm solution also works for RFID reader infrastructure in other applications and business sectors, says Buros. For instance, companies that use RFID readers to manage the movement of tools or other assets throughout their site could employ Datamars’ Storm reader management to ensure the system operates properly.

Datamars hopes that Storm will help reinforce the functionality and success of RFID systems, Buros says, by

assisting users in ensuring readers capture data the way they expect to. “We have realized that people were installing RFID and then finding that the technology was not working,” Buros says. Still, once the company examined the installation and operation of the readers, it became apparent that they were losing data due to a network or software problem. “From the outside, it looked like the RFID was not working. It was working very well, but they didn’t know where the problem was,” he says.



One example of such a failure occurred at the entrance of a warehouse, Buros says, when a company was able to use Storm to discover that they were missing RFID tag read data. The assumption was that the reader was not reading correctly. Still, the Storm system found that one of the optical sensors that triggered RFID tag reads had not been set up correctly,

“and we could see that because we have this deep access to the reader and the photocell was connected directly to the reader. We could see that nothing was triggering tag reads.”

In another case in which RFID read data was lost, the Storm system found that the reads were taking place, and the data were sent correctly, but the output layer software was not processing it correctly.

Although the company is announcing the new offering this summer, several customers already use it. Most companies adopting the Storm solution already use the RFID tags and solutions from Datamars and can then apply the additional layer for reader management. Storm is available via monthly service fees, for \$5 to \$8 per month per reading point.

“Implementing a highly functioning RFID system requires more than a quick purchase of tags and management software,” Buros says. “We are confident that the Storm platform will provide our customers with a dependable, holistic solution that considers every step of the implementation process – from installing tags to tracking stock and providing around-the-clock technical support—to meet their textile management needs.”

### **Key Takeaways:**

- Storm enables companies using Datamars tags and software with Impinj readers to track the functionality of their entire RFID network for troubleshooting and system oversight.
- Companies deploying the system have been able to identify and then correct problems that weren't always related to the RFID infrastructure itself.



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