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# The Electronics Industry Discovers RFID—At Last

It's always puzzled me that electronics manufacturers have yet to jump on the radio frequency identification bandwagon. RFID technology seems a natural fit. Their products and operations have many of the characteristics that could benefit from the visibility that RFID provides—a long, complex supply chain,

demand volatility, high rates of theft (both in the supply chain and in stores) and a fairly high out-of-stock rate. Now, it seems, electronics companies are finally discovering RFID's value.

One of the most important sessions at this year's RFID Journal LIVE! conference and exhibition, being held on Apr. 3-5, 2012, in Orlando, Fla., will be delivered by Shahrokh Shahidzadeh, Intel's senior principal technologist. Intel has been working with electronics manufacturers on a platform for embedding RFID transponders into Microsoft Windows 8 tablets and other electronic devices, enabling new capabilities and benefits for the device manufacturer, as well as retailers, corporate IT departments and service providers.



As part of our Coolest Demo Contest (see RFID Journal Introduces 'Coolest RFID Demo' Contest), Impinj will demonstrate the Lock-in-Transit capability that the Intel platform enables. The system allows electronics manufacturers to utilize embedded RFID transponders to lock tablets, PCs and other devices, when traveling through the supply chain. If an item is stolen, it cannot be used, which should dramatically reduce theft.

For one of its Coolest Demo entries, NXP Semiconductors will show how its new UCode I2C chip achieves wireless connectivity to the microprocessor of an electronics device via a serial communication link (see NXP to Unveil New UHF, HF Chips). This capability allows for better inventory management, and also lets the device manufacturer provision generic units within

factory-sealed boxes with regional settings, preferred languages and other optional features. Additionally, customers can customize an electronics gift within a factory-sealed box, by sending commands via RFID to include an e-card backdrop or wallpaper tailored to a specific occasion (such as Mother's Day, Christmas or a birthday), as well as a personalized e-card message. This is pretty cool stuff, and it's only the tip of the virtual iceberg.

Another important presentation at LIVE! will be delivered by B.J. Favaro, Cisco Systems' supply chain manager, and Bill Hajje, the global process manager of global electronics manufacturer Jabil. Cisco and Jabil teamed up to employ embedded RFID tags on printed circuit board assemblies (PCBAs) for board identification and work-in-process (WIP) tracking. The project was implemented in October 2011 at Jabil's Shanghai manufacturing facility. WIP tracking with RFID provides Jabil with a more accurate, real-time method of capturing serial numbers for use in its shop-floor control system. By reducing the number of bar codes that workers need to scan, the RFID system increased productivity by roughly 80 percent, and improved visibility into the location of work in process.

At LIVE!, electronics manufacturers and retailers can learn about the technology solutions designed to improve manufacturing productivity, reduce theft, improve inventory accuracy and enhance the consumer experience. Murata Electronics, for example, will exhibit its ultrahigh-frequency (UHF) RFID chip designed for placement on a printed circuit board, or for embedding into products for the purpose of tracking and authentication. And they can hear how and why electronics companies are now joining other manufacturers and retailers on the RFID bandwagon.

*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*

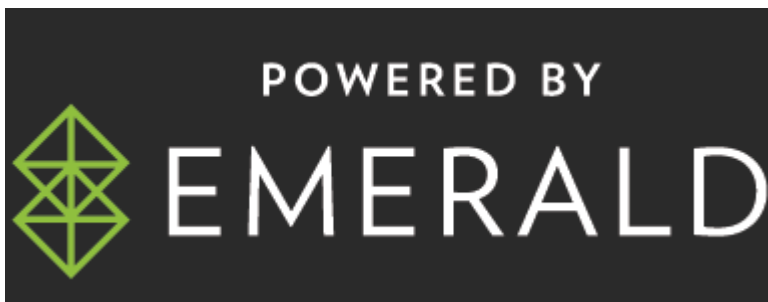
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