

IBM Takes RFID to the Next Level

June 14 2005

Delivering on its \$250 million investment in sensor technology announced last fall, IBM today unveiled new services, software and technology to accelerate Radio Frequency identification (RFID) adoption.

[RFID](#) uses electronic tags for storing data and identifying items. For businesses, RFID can streamline the supply chain by accurately tracking goods from manufacturer to distribution centers and retailers. RFID tags are also used for public safety, since they can help ensure proper handling of shipping containers and hazardous products.

Announced today is IBM's move into the RFID tag printer business with an RFID-capable printer designed to help customers reduce costs and improve operational efficiencies. The RFID printer can produce both traditional bar codes and RFID tags,* helping customers -- including smaller and mid-sized companies -- make the transition from bar codes to RFID.

Supported by maintenance and help desk services, the printer can transmit supply chain information to a company's network to update the status of inventory, shipping and tracking details. To help customers ensure information is quickly and accurately processed for the supply chain, the Infoprint 6700 R40 employs an IBM POWER microprocessor to deliver the robust performance necessary to rapidly transfer information to each RFID tag. This technology also identifies unreliable RFID labels and marks them faulty, helping prevent costly shipping errors.

IBM announced an RFID privacy consulting practice that helps companies protect their customers' trust while using RFID technology to best advantage. Practitioners provide information on local and international privacy laws, as well as Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) principles, which underpin much privacy legislation.

The privacy engagement includes assessment, design and implementation of privacy-optimized RFID solutions, as well as development of policies, design principles, communication, employee education and awareness programs. Through this consulting engagement, managers better understand what data they are collecting, how it will be handled and who will have access. A two-day consulting workshop advises clients on best practices and "opt-in" policies and procedures for protecting consumer, employee and partner privacy. Privacy services also can be scaled for larger installations.

IBM also is incorporating industry-specific starter kits into the IBM RFID Solution for the Consumer Driven Supply Chain. These kits help consumer product manufacturers and retailers more easily reconcile orders, generate shipping reports and provide pallet verification and inventory status.

These capabilities, essential for a fast, responsive and flexible supply chain, help retailers and their manufacturing partners reduce inventory and logistics costs while, simultaneously, enhancing service levels and sales. The IBM Websphere RFID middleware is based on a services-oriented architecture which provides a robust, scalable, standards based platform for RFID solutions. Customers can accelerate their RFID deployments through IBM's unique combination of industry leading services, middleware and, now, starter kits.

"IBM continues to lead the RFID charge with comprehensive products

and services," said Eric Gabrielson, worldwide director of RFID Solutions, IBM Global Services. "With today's announcement we are moving the RFID marketplace out to more businesses that can harness the benefits of RFID, and we are extending IBM's RFID expertise with our breadth and depth of capabilities combined with a strong partner ecosystem."

Citation: IBM Takes RFID to the Next Level (2005, June 14) retrieved 5 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2005-06-ibm-rfid.html>

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