HP Creates RFID Technology for Tracking Data Center Assets

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HP Labs scientist Cyril Brignone shows how new RFID technology created by the company's central research facility can track IT assets in data centers, even identifying when a component is moved from one location to another. Keeping track of assets could enable better accuracy of inventory, increase security and reduce data center operational and auditing costs.

HP today announced its researchers have created a radio frequency identification (RFID) asset tracking technology for data centers and successfully tested it at a major retailer.

The technology was developed by HP Labs, the company's central research facility, and tested at Meijer Inc., a retailer with more than 170 grocery and specialty stores in the midwestern United States. The solution could automatically monitor data center assets, providing real-time tracking and auditing of servers, networking equipment, server and storage enclosures and other technology using RFID.

“Physical inventory of IT assets is critical in data centers, especially those with thousands of devices,” said Frank Lanza, worldwide director, RFID Program, HP. “HP RFID technology could enable better accuracy of inventory, increase security and reduce data center operational and auditing costs.”

The technology uses RFID readers and RFID tags to monitor the location of individual components within the data center, including the addition of new devices and device movement to other areas. The sensing infrastructure creates a high-resolution view of devices throughout the data center. The system also can provide historical data related to additions, changes and moves of servers and server-related equipment.

“Meijer’s long-term competitiveness hinges on cost control and efficiency, and the RFID model from HP has potential cost-savings benefits,” said Tim Osbeck, manager, Operations and Technical Support, Meijer, Inc. “This test exceeded our expectations and is invaluable as we explore new possibilities around RFID.”

Meijer Inc., which has grown from a corner grocery store in the midst of the Depression to one of the largest privately held retailers today, is the first HP customer to test the solution.

HP regards RFID as a key technology to help retailers, manufacturers and other users reduce supply chain costs while speeding the flow of merchandise from the factory, through the distribution center and to the retail store, ultimately providing consumers with better product availability. RFID also has evolved to include other uses such as inventory auditing and asset tracking.

Source: HP

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