

RFID Adoption Gains Momentum In Singapore

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Industry Players Commit S\$12m in Trial Projects, Technology and Infrastructure Development

The Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore's plan to develop Radio Frequency Identification or RFID technology has taken off, as testified by the industry's commitment to invest some S\$12m in projects, technology and infrastructure development. Mr Lam Chuan Leong, Chairman of IDA, who unveiled a 3-prong RFID developmental strategy in May, shared updates of progress made at an industry seminar today named "RFID for Business Efficiency".

Six months ago, IDA announced a three-year, S\$10 million plan to support the development of five RFID-enabled supply chain clusters by 2006. The plan, which aims to create an environment conducive for RFID adoption in Singapore, covers:

- **Alignment of Frequency Spectrum** for global interoperability
- **Building of Capabilities** to develop new intellectual property
- **Collaboration to Catalyse Adoption** of RFID in key industry sectors

Mr Lam, who opened today's seminar commented, "IDA has laid the foundation for the development of RFID in Singapore. To date, the industry has quickly responded with commitments to invest more than S\$12 million towards RFID projects. We are optimistic that the RFID initiative will generate ICT spending of S\$50 million in the development and adoption of RFID over the course of three years starting from May this year."

RFID Frequency Spectrum

To encourage RFID adoption and interoperability in Singapore, IDA has expanded the frequency bands for RFID applications to 866-869 MHz and 923-925 MHz in the UHF bands, effective immediately. The power limit for both bands has also been increased from 0.01W to 0.5W. In addition, the power limit for the 923-925 MHz band will be increased to 2W for RFID devices only (*Please refer to the table below under **Notes to Editor***). These moves are important as they allow RFID systems developed in Singapore to interoperate with those developed in Europe or the US. Goods tagged in Singapore can also be easily read by RFID readers in these countries.

Building Capabilities

As RFID is a relatively new technology in Singapore, it is necessary to nurture the requisite capabilities now to support its future growth. To this end, the IDA is working closely with local RFID solution providers, leading MNCs and educational institutes to build manpower, technology and infrastructural capabilities in RFID.

An important infrastructural component comes in the form of the RFID Testing & Solutions Centre jointly set up by NOL, APL Logistics (a business unit of NOL) and Sun Microsystems. As the first RFID test and compliance centre in Southeast Asia, it will provide manufacturers with the necessary compliance testing and checks before tagging the goods. For instance, the centre can help companies to pin-point the optimal position to tag their products to ensure accurate reading. With the high volume of goods flowing through Singapore, locating the centre here is a logical move as goods can be tagged before they are shipped out again.

To enhance Singapore's manpower capabilities in this relatively new area, two new RFID courses will be launched by The Logistics Institute Asia Pacific in collaboration with Cambridge AutoID Labs, and Singapore Manufacturers' Federation in collaboration with RFID Focus respectively. Both courses will be available from November.

In the six months since the announcement, several companies have embarked on exciting RFID projects in a bid to improve efficiency of their operations.

In the aviation sector, Airbus will be setting up its first RFID-enabled warehouse outside of Europe in Singapore. It will be using RFID to keep track of aircraft parts and the tools it loans out to aircraft maintenance centres in the region. Every item that is loaned out has an RFID tag embedded so that its location can be tracked and it can be easily recalled when the loan period is over. This makes the receiving and issuing process a lot more efficient. The quicker turnaround time also means that more tools are available for loan at any one point. Tagging its aircraft parts using RFID, Airbus will be able to better monitor maintenance history and ensure the authenticity of the parts.

YCH, the leading home grown logistics company, is using RFID to manage its bonded warehouse to and improve visibility of goods movement and enhance the efficiency of its operations. In the retail space, Grocery Logistics of Singapore (GLS) the central warehouse and distribution arm of NTUC Fairprice, has commenced a pilot project to implement RFID in its distribution centre. Through more effective tracking of goods, RFID helps to reduce wastage from loss of stock, thereby cutting costs for GLS.

Another player which believes in the potential of RFID is Hewlett Packard (HP). It is conducting a trial together with a local supplier and logistics service provider to obtain total visibility of their servers and storage products during the distribution process.

Catalysing Adoption through Collaboration

Riding on the momentum generated by these developments, IDA will issue a Call-For-Collaboration to help the retail, logistics and manufacturing sectors build RFID capabilities in their operations. This marks an important first step towards creating RFID-enabled supply chains which will position Singapore as the logistics nerve centre for the region. The IDA will conduct a briefing on 18 November to provide details on the scope and application process for the CFC.

Mr Lam Chuan Leong's speech and presentation can be found on the [IDA website](#). At the seminar today, speakers from Airbus, Auto-ID Labs of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Hewlett Packard and NOL shared their views on the benefits and challenges of implementing this emerging technology.

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Notes to Editor:

Summary of Spectrum Frequency Changes for RFID			
Frequency Range	Power Limit (ERP)	Usage	Estimated Read Range
866-869 MHz (New)	Up to 0.5W (New)	No restrictions. Licence-exempt.	2 - 3 m
866.1 - 869 MHz (Previous)	0.01W (Previous)	No restrictions. Licence-exempt only if transmission power does not exceed 10mW ERP.	about 0.6m
923 - 925 MHz(New)	Up to 0.5W (New)	No restrictions. Licence-exempt.	2 - 3 m
	Up to 2W (New)	For RFID devices only. Power limits above 0.5W are restricted to use inside or within boundary of user's building or premises. Licence required.	4 - 5 m
924 - 925 MHz (Previous)	0.0.1W (Previous)	No restrictions. Licence-exempt only if transmission power does not exceed 10mW ERP.	about 0.6m

About Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore

The Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore (IDA) is committed to growing Singapore into a dynamic global infocomm hub. IDA uses an integrated approach to developing infocommunications in Singapore. This involves nurturing a competitive telecoms market as well as a conducive business environment with programmes and schemes for both local and international companies. For more information, visit www.idanews.gov.sg

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