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Reva Launches RFID Network Device

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By Rhonda Ascierio

RFID startup Reva Systems Corp yesterday announced its first product, a network device that acts as a data console for enterprises that are ready to deploy an RFID system.

Essentially, Reva is taking an enterprise network approach to the rollout and scale-up of RFID systems and claims to be the first company to launch an RFID networking device of its kind. The combination hardware-software package would compete with RFID middleware from various vendors, including IBM.

"We're bringing network sensitivity to the RFID system," said Reva chief executive Ashley Stephenson.

Hewlett-Packard Co has been trialing the device and console for the past couple of months for its internal RFID operations, he said.

Reva's Tag Acquisition Processor, or TAP, is a rack-mountable device that brings together data from multiple RFID readers into a software console, which can be run from a headquarters or remote site.

TAP creates an RFID infrastructure layer that resides above the reader and promises predictable operation of an RFID-enabled facility, Stephenson said. The benefit to enterprises includes select redundancy to avoid emergency breaks and reduced time to integrate data with applications.

Specifically, the device and console enables RFID reader management, including initial configuration and on-going operation, enabling enterprises to decide when a reader should read and re-read tags, which readers should be operating at any given time in order to make the most of the RF spectrum and when and how data from those readers would be collected and fed into specific applications.

The device also enables location management, including being able to determine specific information about a tag, such as the location within a facility that a type of RFID tag was read. For example, it can determine that a certain type of tag, or product, showed up for the first time in a retailer's specialty department. That information is then reported back to an enterprise application.

The product acts as a data management tool and can capture and store all tag data within a facility and then make it available through RFID data services to various applications at an enterprises' headquarters, for instance. "We're almost like a neutral exchange if

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you will for RFID data," Stephenson said.

TAP and its console also enable operations management such as being able to configure redundant RFID devices, such as readers, so the system is fault tolerant. You're not really controlling the applications rather than decide how the data is supplied to the applications," Stephenson said.

The device supports EPCglobal's new software standard, called ALE, as well as various enterprise application interfaces, including those from SAP and Accenture, as well as SQL for database-style interfaces and JMS for Java-streaming interfaces. The device also supports all EPCglobal hardware standards, including Gen 2, and is upgradable for future standards, Stephenson said.

The TAP and Management Console are shipping at a base unit price that starts at \$9,995 per device.

Previously, Chelmsford, Massachusetts-based Reva announced its Tag Acquisition Architecture, which aims to simplify RFID implementation by dovetailing it into existing enterprise networks using its architecture.

Reva, which has about 25 employees, emerged from stealth mode in June after having garnered \$6m in venture capital last year.

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