



## RFID Device Management: The Dilemma Is Getting Solutions

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Dennis Gaughan

One of the most pressing concerns of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) early adopters is that current technology and deployment topology will not scale to support an enterprise rollout. Companies are fairly comfortable that the current configuration will manage the existing pilots that are supporting customer compliance. However, moving from one Distribution Center (DC) and a few stores to 20 DCs and 1,000 stores requires a completely different level of scalability, reliability, and manageability.

**The Bottom Line:** New technologies are emerging to support these new requirements in proven ways, and larger, strategic vendors are more heavily invested in RFID to support their customers' plans for broader deployment.

**Reva Systems**, a relatively new entrant to the RFID market, is taking that first approach and applying tried-and-true network management techniques to RFID. It recently released its *Tag Acquisition Processor (TAP)*, an appliance designed to manage large and heterogeneous RFID reader environments in a centralized way. The *TAP* is a rack-mounted device that provides RFID administrators with some important functionality: reader management, location management, data management, and operations management.

The product is designed to manage RFID readers in a similar way to how network management software manages network elements like hubs, routers, and switches. It also provides some core middleware to make it easy to connect large numbers of readers to enterprise applications through common standards like the recently approved Application-Level Events (ALE). New approaches to distributed RFID management will make it more cost effective for companies to grow their deployments.

The second trend is also influencing the RFID landscape. The big players are moving fast to support their customer requirements, much of it through acquisition. See the AMR Research *Alert* article "Will Flurry of RFID Vendor Activity Accelerate the Pace to Gen2?" for more details on this approach.

**Conclusions:** No single technology is going to magically address the ROI challenges that face many of the early adopters of RFID technology. However, new approaches like the one from Reva, continued reduction of RFID infrastructure costs, and a more pragmatic approach to picking where RFID makes sense will all start to contribute to a more realistic future for RFID technology.