



RFID supplier Intermec comes to Malaysia

In.Tech, by H. Amir Khalid (Tuesday, March 22, 2005)

A LEADING radio frequency identification technology (RFID) supplier Intermec Technologies Corp is establishing a presence in this country, intent on promoting the use of RFID in the public and private sectors, especially in manufacturing, retailing and logistics.

Clapper Technology Sdn Bhd chief executive George Gan said his company, which is teamed up with Intermec here, will be working with local software houses to develop customised RFID application interfaces where these were needed.

Gan said Clapper is currently involved in three pilot projects, but these are under nondisclosure agreements with the prospective customers.

Having established itself in the United States and Europe, Intermec is seeking to establish itself in Asia, particularly South Asia, according to Intermec's Asia Pacific managing director Henri Juvanon.

The Seattle-based company, which began in 1966 by making barcode printers, has supplied RFID solutions to help US vehicle makers Ford Motor Co and Mack Trucks keep track of their parts inventories in factories.

Intermec (www.intermec.com) has also supplied RFID-based technology to the US Department of Homeland Security for use in the issuing of border passes, to retailers in the United States and Europe for tracking goods, and to Federal Express for tracking transported items.

The difference between barcodes and RFID tags is that the former involve static data, whereas the latter provide a small but moving database that stays with the asset being tagged, said Kevin Moore, senior director at Intermec.

Juvanon added that for many applications barcodes will remain perfectly suitable, and should be able to exist alongside RFID tagging.

Moore said Intermec only provides solutions for RFID tagging of goods, rather than people or livestock.

It is certainly feasible to put RFID tags on people in special situations, such as hospital patients or military personnel. But Intermec does not address that sector of the market. "There's just too much on our plate" he said.

He also said that in some applications, concerns about personal privacy will have to be addressed before the general public will consent to the use of such tags.

A primary school in the United States recently put RFID tags on its pupils for administrative and security reasons, but the project was called off after parents and civil liberties groups objected on privacy grounds (see In.Tech, Feb 22). - **C H. AMIR KHALID**