

RFID CAPTURES MUCH AT INAUGURAL AIRSHOW

This was the first time A*STAR's low-cost, small form-factor UHF RFID readers were field tested in such a large-scale deployment. They performed well in meeting the objectives of collecting visitors' statistics during the four trade days.

In one of its many efforts to reach out to industry, the National RFID Centre (NRC, whose mission is to drive RFID adoption in Singapore) team, together with staff from Exploit Technologies Pte Ltd (ETPL, the commercialisation arm of A*STAR), approached Singapore Airshow and Events Pte Ltd (SAEPL) in October 2007 to discuss how RFID could benefit SAEPL for the Singapore Airshow held from 19 to 24 February 2008.

NRC quickly helped SAEPL establish the business case for using RFID to track visitors' statistics and helped produce the tender specifications to shorten the process time to get the project started.

To lower the cost of the project, ETPL brought in FeRmi Pte Ltd, an A*STAR spin-off, to provide low-cost UHF RFID readers for the project. FeRmi's low-cost, small form-factor RFID UHF reader uses the UHF RFID IC chip developed by the Institute of Microelectronics.

The team viewed a mock-up of the proposed system on 19 December 2007 during which inputs were given to fine tune the proposed setup. The system integrator worked with the visitor registration vendor to integrate RFID into the registration process such that the time to register a visitor remained the same to prevent registration queues from building up.

On 1 February, Mr Jimmy Lau, Managing Director of SAEPL, signed an Evaluation Licence Agreement with Mr Yap Chew Loong, Executive Vice President and General Manager of ETPL, for the use of 75 low-cost A*STAR UHF RFID readers.

Commenting on the collaboration

with the Singapore Airshow, Mr Boon Swan Foo, Chairman of the Steering Committee of NRC and Executive Chairman of Exploit Technologies Pte Ltd, added: "The use of RFID technologies is starting a global revolution across all industries. This collaboration between Exploit Technologies and Singapore Airshow 2008 is an excellent step forward in Singapore's RFID adoption. It is especially encouraging that A*STAR's spin-off, FeRmi, managed to commercialise A*STAR technology to provide low-cost and small-form RFID readers to boost business intelligence at the airshow."

Mr Lau added: "We are confident that this partnership with NRC to tap the potential of low-cost RFID readers, will add another success story to Singapore's proven track record of hosting large-scale events. With A*STAR's RFID technology, we can offer our exhibitors an enhanced business intelligence capacity and process to better identify the visitors to our airshow."

Strong support and cross-organisation co-operation were evident from IME (Institute of Microelectronics), ETPL, FeRmi, NRC and SIMTech. This was the first time A*STAR's low-cost, small form-factor UHF RFID readers were field tested in such a large-scale deployment. The team worked hard to iron out the bugs and fine tune the performance of the readers without hindering business workflow, particularly registration and the high-security checks. Visitors' convenience was not affected as statistics were collected in a non-intrusive hassle-free way.

"The team worked hard to iron out the bugs and fine tune the performance of the readers without hindering business workflow, particularly registration and the high-security checks."



RFID readers at the entrance to Singapore Airshow 2008

The UHF RFID readers performed well to meet the objectives of collecting visitors' statistics during the four trade days.

For more information, please contact Mr Wong Tack Wai, Industry Development Manager, at Tel: 6793 2717; Email: twong@SIMTech.a-star.edu.sg; or Dr Lee Eng Wah, Director, National RFID Centre, at Tel: 6793 8349; Email: ewlee@SIMTech.a-star.edu.sg