



RFID tracking saves government time and money

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Access International, a provider of wireless monitoring systems, and Vector Networks, a desktop asset management firm, have announced the implementation of an RFID system to automate a large government agency's process of tracking thousands of assets while also providing real-time reports.

Vector's government client asked the company to identify the best solution to address an official mandate that they should conduct monthly inventories of all owned and leased assets valued at more than US\$500.

Manual inventory not practical

The department realised that it was not feasible to try to manually inventory its large number of assets, especially with laptops and other portable equipment moving between floors on a regular basis. The department therefore needed an automated solution that could track and report on the physical location of tagged devices.

According to Allan Griebenow, Access' president and CEO, "According to the 2007 CSI Computer Crime and Security Survey, 50% of respondents admitted laptop thefts had occurred. Those that had laptop or mobile devices stolen in 2007 reported a cumulative loss of US\$8.43 million (US\$43,500 per company). By automating the process of tracking assets and reporting their location in real time, we can ensure the security of those assets, some of which contain sensitive information."

Technology requirements

Most wireless systems determine location on distance without differentiating between up, down or across directions. But Vector needed a wireless partner that could identify the location of assets by floor. After seeing the solution presented by Access and Vector, the department agreed that it offered all the features it needed, and more.

Based on industry standards, the government can therefore be expected to save a great deal of money each year as the system automates what was a time-intensive process, and also helps prevent the loss of assets, and locates any leased equipment needed for replacement or renewal.

How the system works

Access' RFID asset protection solution, which is part of the overall software and hardware system implemented by Vector, enables assets to be located, tracked and protected automatically using small, low-cost, RFID tags that activate on-demand at specific control points positioned around a perimeter in order to determine movement and precise location. Tags, either embedded into or attached to assets, securely transmit their location ID and unique identifying number.

The tag information is sent via a reliable wireless signal supported by battery power on the tags to ensure robust communication. The system can be tied directly into existing security and access control systems for seamless system operation. Tags approaching an unauthorized area trigger an alarm and automatically send wireless messages to security and first responders to prevent asset loss and enable immediate recovery.

