

About *The Competitive Edge*

The Competitive Edge is the monthly, quick-read e-newsletter of AIM North America. It provides you access to information that will help you maintain your competitive edge and grow your business. This communiqué highlights current **reseller**, **integrator**, and **distributor** issues and market trends—a feature titled *Headline AIM*—along with member-specific news and information. Comments and suggestions are welcome. [E-mail <info@aim-na.org>](mailto:info@aim-na.org) or call +1 724 934 5688.

AIM North America Launches New Website

AIM North America (NA) is proud to announce the availability of its new website located at www.aim-na.org. The new website features intuitive navigation, crisper content, and a user-friendly interface for site visitors.

The development of the website has been in the planning stages for the past year. AIM NA is committed to ensuring its continuing success and development as an online resource and marketing tool for the membership. *“I would encourage members and nonmembers alike to have a look at the site and provide feedback as to how we can further develop it to meet their needs,”* said AIM NA Web Committee Chairman Jack Tinsley.

AIM NA Chairman Tee Migliori couldn't agree more *“Providing our members the tools and solutions to grow their business is our first priority,”* adds Migliori.

The website provides information about the Association, its structure, activities, and available services. Information about publications (including an archive of the AIM North America newsletter), web links, upcoming industry news services, and events are all among the materials on the site.

AIM Web Conference Series Begins on March 22

We are pleased to introduce the *AIM NA Web Conference Series*. This quarterly series will cover such topics as the state of the industry, vertical market opportunities, bar code, POS, healthcare, UID, RFID, and other mobile computing technologies. Members can access this live, interactive, 60-minute session free of charge. Non-members may participate, but are charged a nominal fee.

Robert W. Baird & Co. a proud supporter of the March 22nd session titled **An Analyst's Perspective of RFID** and will feature Reik Read, Senior Analyst leading Baird's Supply Chain Technology and RFID coverage.

Mark your calendars now. Complete registration details will be distributed soon.



An Analyst's Perspective of RFID
Thursday, March 22
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. EST

Headline—AIM
Headline AIM: Time to Take It Outside—Demand is strong, opportunities are open for field mobility solutions

By John Burnell, Principal, Burnell Reports



The market for mobile computing and data capture solutions used outside the four walls of an enterprise is full of contradictions: sales have grown significantly for years, but penetration remains low; field mobility is one of the largest markets for mobile computing, software and wireless communications, but the competitive climate still leaves room for plenty of solution providers; wireless carriers may be formidable competitors, but they are also market catalysts that create opportunities for resellers. Field mobility remains a picture of opportunity, but the picture is a mosaic, with places for hundreds of individual solution providers.

“We’re in a perfect wave period right now,” says Bruce Krohn, director of the field mobility team of Motorola’s business unit that includes the former Symbol Technologies. “We’re seeing big mobility growth in all areas. The ROI has always been out there, but now it is much more compelling because wireless carrier rates and equipment costs have dropped, and solution providers have become much more adept at integrating software.”

Two words frequently come up when veteran observers discuss the field mobility market: “strong” and “fractured.” With lots of demand in both mature and emerging market segments, and few dominant leaders in any of the technology categories, there are outstanding opportunities for resellers to differentiate and be successful.

“There are a lot of home-grown and one-off applications used in field mobility, but no really big packaged software leader,” says David Krebs, mobile & wireless practice director for market research firm Venture Development Corp. (VDC).

Nor is there consensus on the form field mobility software will take or the device it will run on. Pocket PC and other Windows-based operating systems are dominant for mobile computers used in factories and warehouses, but outside the four walls, smart phones, pagers, PDAs and laptops come into play. The Palm OS remains the leader in available business applications with more than 29,000 according to a January article in *Information Week*, followed by Windows Mobile with 20,000. There are approximately 1,500 enterprise applications for Blackberry® wireless e-mail devices. If that’s not enough, a mobile Linux operating system is due out this year.



There were 38.5 million smart phones sold last year, a 75 percent increase, so demand for phone-based enterprise applications is sure to follow. Wireless carriers have now certified a few rugged handheld computers for voice communication, which will help pave the way for greater adoption in environments that require durable devices that can collect data, run applications and serve as cell phones.

Wireless carriers are actively involved in making that happen. They are recruiting solution providers and software developers into their partner programs so their large, nationwide sales forces can offer more complete solutions. Carriers can be competitors, but there are more opportunities for them to be collaborators. “There’s a wealth of opportunity for those who work with carriers,” says Jeff Sibio, Intermec’s strategic vertical marketing director for transportation and logistics. “Carriers are looking for partners who can provide a shrink-wrapped solution that requires minimal design and configuration, so there can be a short sales cycle.”

Krebs notes traditional AIDC resellers may face some challenges when they start to develop field mobility solutions. “There’s a lot more witchcraft and magic involved to creating mobility solutions for outside the four walls. Software development is much more complex,” he says. “Connectivity and coverage issues are always big. Do you design the application for constant connectivity, or occasional connectivity? There are also more equipment and network reliability concerns.”

Where to Start

Motorola’s Krohn recommends resellers get involved in the field mobility market by looking for opportunities within their current customer bases. “Focus on areas you’re comfortable with and stay close to your customers. A service vehicle stocked with parts can be thought of as a mobile warehouse. If you have expertise with that kind of solution, it will translate.”

“The players who are going to be most successful understand mobile resource optimization – it’s not just about dispatch,” says Sibio.

“Optimized solutions help make sure there’s the proper inventory on a truck so a technician has the parts he needs to complete a job, and support dynamic work orders, so jobs can be reassigned to someone with the proper skill set. Applications also need to be integrated with the back office system. All this helps service companies complete more one-call repairs. It’s hard for companies to hire and retain skilled field service workers, so resource availability is a nearly constant driver of mobile automation.”



It is one of the few constants in a market where new technologies – and new solution providers – routinely break through competitive barriers to find success. The big picture for field mobility solutions looks good, as usual. And there's still room in that picture for solution providers who can put together all the smaller pieces.

For more information:

Download VDC's analysis of the changing role wireless carriers play in the channel at:
www.vdc-corp.com/PressCenter.asp?viewtype=detail&id=1308

Aberdeen Group released preliminary results of a study on what's driving technology adoption in field service and the outlook for 2007. For a free preview go to:
www.aberdeen.com/launch/report/research_briefs/RB_MFSUpdate_MVSD_3668.asp

The *Information Week* feature on smart phones and related data cited in this article is available online at:
www.informationweek.com/showArticle.jhtml;jsessionid=2FZKKNY2EUEUYSQSNLQCKH0CJUNN2JV N?articleID=196902226

John Burnell is principal of Burnell Reports, which provides communications, consulting and research services to organizations in the automatic identification and mobility industry. Contact [John <john@burnell.com>](mailto:john@burnell.com) or 216.571.2319, or visit www.BurnellReports.com for more information.

Industry Events

The Channel Forum—Come for the Day and Save!

Don't have time to be away from the office? Then plan to attend the Channel Forum only held on Monday, February 26. **With rates starting at \$795**—which includes all educational sessions, materials, exhibits, and meals—this is an event you can't afford to miss. [Learn more.](#)

http://www.aimglobal.org/events/anmgt07/AIM_Showcase_bro_form.pdf



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| February 13 – 15 | WESTPACK | Anaheim, CA |
| | http://www.devicelink.com/expo/wpac07/ | |
| February 21 – 22 | Asset Management Conference | San Diego, CA |
| | http://www.assetexpo.com/ | |
| February 25 – 27 | AIM Channel Forum at the AIM Showcase | Tampa FL |
| | http://showcase.aimglobal.org | |
| March 22 | AIM NA Web Conference Series—
An Analyst's Perspective of RFID
Featured Speaker: Reik Read, R.W. Baird & Co.
<i>Information coming soon!</i> | |
| April 30 – May 2 | RFID Journal Live | Orlando, FL |
| | http://www.rfidjournal.com/live2007/ | |

Member Press

Tharo Systems, Inc. introduces the new PA1200fa Front Apply Label Printer/Applicator. [Learn more](http://www.tharo.com/news.htm) < <http://www.tharo.com/news.htm>>

Dynic USA Corporation announced today a new resin ribbon formulation, NK45. [Learn more](http://www.dynic.com/pressreleases.php?cid=238) < <http://www.dynic.com/pressreleases.php?cid=238>>

AIM NA Welcomes

Deister Electronics USA

Join Date: 12/06/2006

Deister Electronics manufacturers RFID and biometric components and holds many patents in RFID. Technologies range from 8 KHz up to 2.45 GHz with markets in supply chain, logistics, security, agriculture, AVI, and. . . <http://www.aim-na.org/script/aimmembers.asp?mid=54087>



FEIG Electronics, Inc.

Join Date: 01/15/2007

FEIG ELECTRONICS is a leading provider of RFID reader systems. FEIGs OBID® readers are developed, manufactured and produced by FEIG. OBID® readers are developed according to. . . <http://www.aim-na.org/script/aimmembers.asp?mid=54165>.

Academia RFID

Join Date: 01/25/2007

Academia RFID is Canada's first RFID training, research, development, and recruitment center offering bilingual services to public and private organizations. Whether its the CompTIA RFID. . . <http://www.aim-na.org/script/aimmembers.asp?mid=54417>.

The AIM NA Advantage

AIM Global Publishes Direct Part Mark (DPM) Quality Guideline.

Direct part mark technology is an instrumental part of opportunities to support the DoD's Unique Identification (UID) initiative. This publication details methods to assess the quality of direct marks. [Learn more.](#)

<<http://www.aimglobal.org/members/news/templates/aimpress.asp?articleid=2078&zoneid=1>>

Academia RFID Offers Members 20% Discount

Academia RFID, a new AIM NA member, is pleased to extend to all AIM members a 20% discount on its RFID course offerings. For additional information on these course offerings, visit [Academia RFID](http://www.academiarfid.ca/eng/academia.htm). <<http://www.academiarfid.ca/eng/academia.htm>>

Recent AIM RFP Postings—Did you know there were 6 recent inquiries posted on the AIM RFP services from individuals seeking your advice? If not, you could be missing out on valuable sales leads. Here's just a glimpse of those postings.

- I need to put UID (MIL Std 103M) labels and nameplates on LRUs and SRUs. I need a source for label equipment and for label materials. . .

- I need to track parts coming off of a pharmaceutical packaging line (e.g. a bottle filler). Send info. to wash room so they can prepare to get ready to wash parts. Simple, low cost, communication system preferred. . .
- The overall objective of this research is to determine the available technology that would be suited to uniquely marking surgical instruments in a manner that is durable and can be reliably and accurately read by a scanner linked to a computer. . .
- I'm currently looking for card technology that will be suitable for beta membership cards for a new system that is being built for a home grown video game cafe/lounge. . .

For complete details and how to respond, members can [login](#)
<<http://www.aimglobal.org/members/auth/logon.asp?zone=members&file=http://www.aimglobal.org/members/protectedfiles/RFPSearch.asp>>

Not a member? For the cost of a mere cup of coffee per day, your company can take advantage of these and other leading-edge benefits geared to keeping you on the forefront of the AIM industry. [Learn more.](#) <<http://www.aim-na.org/benefits.html>>

THE FINE PRINT

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