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“Let us be alert to the season in which we are living. It is the season of the Blessed Hope, calling for us to cut our ties with the world and build ourselves on this One who will soon appear. He is our hope—a Blessed Hope enabling us to rise above our times and fix our gaze upon Him.” Tozer

RFID Is the First Step Toward Digital Transformation

Companies that want to be truly digital—and truly efficient and effective, and take advantage of advances in artificial intelligence—need to deploy radio frequency identification technologies. Here's why.

By Mark Roberti rfidjournal.com

May 06, 2018—In my column last week, I described what I believe the term "digital transformation" means, and why it is not simply applying technology to various aspects of a business. Digital transformation means breaking down the barrier between the real and digital worlds, so that computer applications and artificial intelligence (AI) can be used to create new and unprecedented efficiencies, as well as a competitive advantage. Radio frequency identification (RFID) technology is the foundation on which most successful digital transformations will be built.

Why? Because RFID enables companies to collect vast amounts of information in digital form regarding what is happening in the real world. It's not the only way to collect information without human involvement and at a low cost—video, robots, wired sensors and other systems will clearly play a role—but low-cost RFID tags can be placed on the vast majority of things companies own that have no power source and move around. That allows businesses to vastly improve the way in which they do business.

Let's take Delta Air Lines as an example. Delta has installed more than 240,000 RFID tags on oxygen generators, life vests and cabin emergency equipment on all of its more than 800 aircraft (see [RFID Reduces Oxygen-Generator Waste for Delta Air Lines](#)). The Result: the airline can now check the expiration dates on oxygen generators aboard a 757 in fewer than two minutes, whereas it used to take approximately eight man-hours. This marks a step toward digital transformation.

Eventually, Delta will be able to install RFID readers on aircraft (after receiving approval from the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration, of course) and know, in real time, when oxygen generators will expire and need to be replaced. The company can already better plan for replacing those generators, ordering them well in advance and having them at airports where planes with expiring generators will soon land.

That information can easily be shared—since it's digital—with the suppliers of oxygen generators, so that those firms can order materials well in advance to meet Delta's needs. Delta will eventually be able to use artificial intelligence to order oxygen generators and have them delivered and installed in the most efficient way possible, based on where planes with expiring generators are flying.

Macy's has also used RFID to break down the wall between the physical and digital worlds. The retailer

is utilizing the technology on many of the items in its stores, so it has a high degree of confidence in its inventory data. Most other retailers do not. Whereas most retailers will not show inventory in nearby stores to customers shopping online unless they have sufficient safety stocks, Macy's is willing to expose all of its inventory because it knows that if its systems say there is one item left, then there really is (see Macy's to RFID-Tag 100 Percent of Items).

Breaking down the wall between the real and digital worlds means Macy's can easily carry out "buy online, pick up in store" (BOPIS) or ship from store. It's one of the first true omnichannel retailers. But with the data it collects, it can also use information related to the number of times a given item was tried on in a fitting room versus how many were sold, and thus make better merchandising decisions. Eventually, it might be able to utilize AI to more effectively adjust store merchandising strategies based on local demographics or weather patterns, or some other sources of data.

Video could help Macy's to understand what customers are doing at physical stores, the way clicks do online. By combining these technologies, and perhaps others, retailers will be able to obtain the kind of data at physical stores that they collect online, and they will then be able to optimize their stores in a way that was never before possible.

In most cases, low-cost RFID will be the tool that will allow companies to collect data cheaply and in near-real time about everything happening in the real world. That, in turn, will enable them to apply digital technologies and AI to those operations and achieve big benefits. In next week's column, I will examine how various technologies, including Internet of Things (IoT) technologies, video and AI, will come together to enable true digital transformation.

Mark Roberti is the founder and editor of RFID Journal.

Russia 'deeply disappointed' at Trump's withdrawal from Iran deal

Moscow says US rejection of accord 'trampling on the norms of international law'; Erdogan warns it will 'cause instability and new conflicts'

Times of Israel staff

Russia's foreign ministry on Tuesday said Moscow was "deeply disappointed" by US President Donald Trump's decision to abandon the Iran nuclear deal, a move it called a blatant violation of international law.

In a statement, the ministry lamented the move "to unilaterally refuse to carry out commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action," adding that Washington's actions were "trampling on the norms of international law."

Trump announced the US was withdrawing from the Iran nuclear deal, following through on a campaign promise and defying European allies who implored him to maintain the agreement that international agencies have said Tehran is honoring.

Following the announcement, the Turkish presidency it feared Trump's decision could open up "new conflicts."

"The unilateral withdrawal of the United States from the nuclear deal is a decision that will cause instability and new conflicts," said Ibrahim Kalin, spokesman for President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, on Twitter. "Turkey will continue to resolutely oppose all types of nuclear arms."

Turkey and Iran are striving to develop pragmatic relations with each other, particularly over Syria which borders both countries, despite a long-standing, reciprocal distrust.

In a highly anticipated address from the White House's Diplomatic Reception Room, Trump cast the landmark agreement forged under predecessor Barack Obama as "defective" and unable to rein in Iranian behavior or halt the Islamic Republic's quest to develop a nuclear program.

"I'm announcing today that the United States will withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal," he said while adding that his administration "will be instituting the highest level of economic sanction."

Trump said the US would restore punitive sanctions on Tehran, after he concluded "that we cannot prevent an Iranian nuclear bomb under the decaying and rotten structure of the current agreement."

The European signatories of the Iran nuclear deal expressed regret over the withdrawal, but remained committed to preserving the accord.

"France, Germany, and the UK regret the US decision to leave the JCPOA [Iran deal]. The nuclear non-proliferation regime is at stake," French President Emmanuel Macron posted on Twitter.

"We will work collectively on a broader framework, covering nuclear activity, the post-2025 period, ballistic activity, and stability in the Middle-East, notably Syria, Yemen, and Iraq," he added.

European powers Britain, France, and Germany led a campaign to persuade Trump to stick with the deal negotiated by his predecessor Barack Obama, arguing that it was the most effective way of stopping Iran developing nuclear weapons.

In a Tuesday press conference, EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini said the EU was "determined to preserve" the pact.

Mogherini, who was one of the architects of the deal, said it was "delivering on its goals which guarantees that Iran will never develop nuclear weapons."

Meanwhile, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urged the other signatories of the Iran nuclear deal to stick to their commitments, despite the US withdrawal.

"I call on other JCPOA participants to abide fully by their respective commitments under the JCPOA and on all other member-states to support this agreement," Guterres said in a statement, referring to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the formal name of the nuclear deal.

After Trump's announcement, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said there was a only "short time" to negotiate with the countries remaining in the nuclear deal, and warned that Tehran could start enriching uranium more than ever in the near future.

"I have ordered Iran's atomic organization that whenever it is needed, we will start enriching uranium more than before," Rouhani said in a nationally televised address.

He said Iran would start this "in the next weeks."

Critics have warned that ending the sanction waivers would unravel the carefully constructed deal, plunge Iran's already struggling economy into crisis, spur a Middle East arms race, and expose the biggest transatlantic rift since the Iraq War.

Macron, Merkel Call for 'Full Force' EU Integration, Vow Brussels Won't Tolerate Resistance to Migrant Quotas

by VIRGINIA HALE May 12 breitbart.com

Emmanuel Macron has demanded closer and faster EU integration towards a superstate, in a speech where he vowed to “yield nothing” to conservative eastern members which believe in a Europe of strong nations.

Speaking in Aachen, where he received this year’s pro-EU Charlemagne prize “in recognition of his vision of a new Europe” and his “decisive stance” against nationalism, the French president urged Brussels to move full speed ahead on monetary union and creating a single foreign policy and defence strategy for the whole bloc.

Condemning the “music of nationalism [that] is resounding everywhere in Europe”, Macron called on Europhiles who want to see more power concentrated in Brussels to “move forward with full force and as quickly as possible” with plans for integration so as to drown out the “clear [voices] of nationalists and demagogues”.

“Barbed wire reappears everywhere in Europe, including in the minds,” the French leader cautioned, declaring that he would “yield nothing” in the fight with Hungary and Poland over so-called EU values, Politico reports.

Presenting Macron with this year’s prize, Angela Merkel endorsed the former investment banker’s vision for Europe, declaring: “We come from different political pasts but we find common ground, and that is the magic of Europe.”

The German Chancellor also repeated previous calls for a new EU migration policy based on “solidarity” across the bloc, insisting that closing the border to people from the third world was “not a solution”.

Demanding EU leaders protect “the European system of values ... the dignity of each individual, in short everything that constitutes European identity,” Merkel warned the bloc should do everything to guard against “narrow-minded, backward-looking nationalisms and authoritarian temptations.”

On the same day, Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orbán used his inaugural speech in Budapest to denounce the EU superstate envisioned by France and Germany as a “nightmare”.

“The [European] Union must function as an alliance of free nations and give up on its delusional nightmares of a United States of Europe,” he said, vowing to oppose mass migration — the goal of which he warned was the disintegration of nation-states and the creation of a single “open society” ruled from Brussels.

Previous winners of the Charlemagne prize, which is awarded for efforts to advance EU integration, include Tony Blair, Henry Kissinger, Bill Clinton, and Angela Merkel herself.

Receiving the award in 2016, Pope Francis used his acceptance speech to outline his vision of a borderless Europe which would welcome and embrace unlimited numbers of third world migrants.

Declaring the founding fathers of the bloc to have been “heralds of peace and prophets of the future” he asserted that their vision of Europe should inspire the continent “to build bridges and tear down walls.”