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HID gets proactive to address RFID concerns
Hires gov't relations guru, works with MIT to create web site

By Martha Entwistle, managing editor - 04.2006 emenail

IRVINE, Calif.--In an effort to be an integral player in the public debate over RFID technology and privacy concerns, HID in February hired government relations expert Kathleen Carroll, and begun work on a new RFID information web site.

HID became aware of concern in some quarters about RFID technology and privacy last winter as the result of an incident at a California public school (see story and editorial in the November 2005 issue of Security Systems News). Unbeknownst to parents, the school issued identification tags in RFID badges to students. Subsequently, state Sen. Joe Simitian proposed legislation to restrict the use of RFID technology in public sector applications.

A potential moratorium on uses of RFID technology is a major concern for smart card companies. "Any limit on technology outright is a limit on everyone in the business," Carroll said.

That bill is currently stalled in committee, but there are similar bills pending in a dozen other states. Carroll said her goal is to become a "trusted source of balanced information about RFID for legislators and the public as well."

She's staying on top of new developments, tracking legislation, and will travel to talk to lawmakers in states considering RFID legislation.

"HID wants to be a leader in ensuring that the public's right to privacy is respected," she said, and wants to help "ensure that public policy is well balanced and fair."

HID is working with staffers from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology on the web site, which will be hosted by the university and is expected to be live this month. MIT's staff and an industry advisory board are developing content. Dan Greenwood, an attorney and MIT lecturer, hired by HID last year to track RFID legislation, said in a written statement MIT will provide a "neutral forum for dialogue" about RFID and privacy with "support from HID, by inviting stakeholders to our campus and hosting [the web site]."

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1 of 2 8/28/10 11:17 PM



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2 of 2 8/28/10 11:17 PM