



Radio Talk: A RFID Primer

An *interrogator* reads signals from RFID tags.

Active tags are self-powered and have longer range, while *passive tags* are driven by the interrogator's signal. *Read-only tags* are programmed forever, but data on *read-write tags* can be changed.

Electronic product code (EPC) is the leading convention for RFID communication, used by both Wal-Mart and the Defense Department. EPC standards cover everything from unit-level serial numbers to an RFID device on a tanker's hull.

Smartlabels are labels with RFID chips. When RFID and bar codes are combined, for example, they add supply-chain flexibility.

Slap-and-ship is what many suppliers do: They apply RFID tags for one or another customer, but don't use them internally.