The University of Kansas and a Kansas City company have reached an agreement to provide a long-needed solution in the radio frequency identification (RFID) industry.

Researchers at KU's Information and Telecommunication Technology Center (ITTC) have partnered with Kansas City-based Starport Technologies LLC to manufacture and market the KU-Tag, a thin RFID tag designed to work on metal and objects containing liquid.

"Anything with metal or water has issues (with RFID tracking)," said Toby Rush, president of Lenexa-based Rush Tracking Systems, an RFID consulting company. "It is a significant problem that hasn't been solved very well so far. (ITTC has) solved those issues much more elegantly than anyone else and made the tag feasible."

RFID technology identifies items using radio communication between an electronic reader and a tag containing data on microchips. Companies use the technology to track inventory.

Objects that contain metal or liquid, such as a foil bag of potato chips or a bottle of dishwasher detergent, distort communication between RFID tags and the devices that read them.

So far, the solution has been to take an ordinary RFID tag and place it away from the container with a half-inch thick piece of foam. That design is problematic because moving the containers can shear off the tags, Rush said.

The KU-Tag improves the situation, said Keith Braman, associate director for ITTC's office of applied technology. The tag is about as thin as a credit card and can be placed directly on metal or a container with liquid. It performs 20 percent to 80 percent better than any other tag purported to work near metal or water and tested by KU's RFID Alliance Lab, the ITTC said in a recent report about the tag.

ITTC has applied for four patents for the technology.

Jeff Nedblake, managing partner of Starport Technologies, said the company will produce two new RFID tags that leverage the KU-Tag technology. Starport will market the tags to RFID distributors for use on everything from hospital equipment shipments to chemical storage and oil barrels.

The tags will cost $2 to $4, compared with about 10 cents for a simple RFID tag and about 1 cent for bar coding. Still, there is plenty of demand from companies that inventory expensive metal and liquid items, Nedblake said.

Starport has received about 10 inquiries for about 30 million of the tags, he said. The company plans to begin manufacturing the tags in June.
Montgomery

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Bobbi McClellan and Florence Babcock were hostesses to five members and two guests of Nu Chapter of Alpha Delta Kappa Sorority Sunday at Grace Fellowship Church for a scholarship tea.

McClellan presided and Alexis Liddell, scholarship recipient, and her mother, Lora Liddell were the guests.

Alexis Liddell plans on attending Coffeyville Community College in the fall.

Ginny Barrett read "Keep A Dream In the Making" for the thought of the day; she then presented the Kansas Alpha Delta Kappa stating that Kansas has 24 chapters, two of which are in Coffeyville. Kansas is in the South Central Region and has had three members serve as regional vice-president. They are Lois Jacobs, Greta Sauer and Babcock. Babcock has served as Grand Historian and was Kansas Woman of Distinction in 1988.

There are scholarships at University of Kansas, Lawrence; Emporia University, Emporia; and Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg.

Widyasari Listyowulan of Indonesia is studying education at KU on a Alpha Delta Kappa scholarship.

A $100 donation was given to the Grace Fellowship Relay for Life Team who served refreshments.

The next meeting will be Sept. 8 at Sirloin Stockade, Coffeyville, at 8:30 a.m.
INTELLECTUAL VIOLENCE — Sara Paretsky has written 12 novels about fictional detective V.I. Warshawski, but “Writing in an Age of Silence” is her first memoir. Writing in the Chicago Sun-Times April 22, Cheryl Reed says: “It’s the first time Paretsky has been so personal with readers, detailing an oppressive childhood in rural Kansas where she was raised in a violent, hyper-intellectual Jewish family. Her mother was an alcoholic, her father a sexist who saw the young Sara as his caretaker. Paretsky spent much of her childhood cleaning house and looking after two of her four brothers. Her parents refused to pay for her college education or let her attend anywhere other than the University of Kansas, where her father taught.”
Israeli band Ramnoar performed at the University of Kansas for a Yom HaAtzmaut celebration. Students came together in the Kansas Union for free falafel, Israeli snacks and great music as part of Israel Week, which was planned by KU Hillel students. ‘I’m really excited that Ramnoar was able to come to KU. I loved the concert and it was great meeting Israelis from our sister city,’ said Taly Yeyni, Grinspoon Israel intern at KU Hillel. Ramnoar was funded by Jim and Fern Badzin and Family.
The Cultural Arts Department of the Jewish Community Center invites the community to explore the connection between Jerusalem and the Land of Oz during its “Schmoozing Broadway” lecture series at 7 p.m. Tuesday, May 8, at the Jewish Community Center.

Special guest lecturer will be Jonathan Boyarin, Beren Distinguished Professor of Jewish Studies, the University of Kansas.

This lecture is free and open to the public. No tickets are necessary. For more information, contact Dawn Herbet, JCC Cultural Arts coordinator, (913) 327-8073 or e-mail dawnph@jewishkc.org.
Wyandotte

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work together, they can achieve something very significant. I think Wyandotte County is on the move. These are some good homes here.

KCK: How closely do you work with Mayor Joe Reardon and the Unified Government on redevelopment issues?

PR: I know the mayor very well and I'm happy to enter into a partnership. Five hundred thousand dollars [Roberts helped secure that funding for Mission Cliffs] is not a huge investment, but it is an infrastructure and something the federal government can do. As we work with the local government and local organizations we can get something done. We hope to continue working with them.

KCK: Do you think the Unified Government has done a satisfactory job in the eastern part of the county?

PR: I don't think anyone is ever completely satisfied, but there is more to come. There's a lot of work to do. Hopefully this is a sign for the future, and I don't think anyone is resting on their laurels. They have a lot of things to continue to do. City Vision Ministries has done Turtle Hill, Rosedale, Rainbow Park, the Historic City Hall lofts, the Downtown Shareholders, downtown city murals and now the Mission Cliffs.

KCK: Let's talk a little about the changes you've seen in Congress, especially since the midterm election. Now that Republicans are in the minority, how has your job changed?

PR: I've been in both the majority and minority party. The majority party determines what the agenda is. On the other side, I am on the Agricultural Committee and it historically works together in a bipartisan manner. We have more differences of opinion based on regional or commodity differences. As chairman, we are trying to forge ahead with the farm bill. We have some trade challenges, but most of the farm groups are unified. I don't think the current farm bill is working at all for our part of the country. When a farmer loses his crops and they do not have a farm bill that helps them, something is wrong, and we know we have to fix that. We work together on the finance committee. Our finance committee has amazing jurisdiction. They believe they are in charge of everything. We have our differences, but it is a committee that works together. We do a lot of talking before we get to the production. I think in the Senate, we are a little less partisan, or at least it's easier to navigate. One of the cardinal rules is there may be someone you disagree with on one thing, but understand you may work with them later on a separate issue. Being chairman of the Intelligence Committee was a large responsibility I still maintain an interest in intelligence. (But) It's different. I think the Democrats have come forward with their campaign promises, like Newt Gingrich did with the Contract for America. I don't happen to agree with it. They tend to dominate the legislative calendar. They also borrowed a page from the House Republicans of some time ago. We're not allowed to have amendments and we have to vote for closure. If you can't get over 60 votes, you can't move a bill. We're at a virtual standoff here.
Another development is 2007, an odd year, is normally a year where we understand there are several issues we don’t agree on but a few we can work together on. This year, 2007 is 2008. I have never seen an election cycle start so early. I have never seen a presidential campaign start so quickly. I have never seen that much money which has been raised so far. Over $300 million is an estimate, and it’s over $100 million so far. There isn’t any transparency of where the money is coming from. I think that’s wrong. It has changed the whole political climate and is a decline of our two-party system and our entire political system. Democrats and Republicans disagreed, but each understood the “Mutually Assured Destruction” theory and understood you need a degree of commonly.

The whole political climate is different. The decline and discipline. The war is a cloud over everything. Our friends from (across) the aisle may be making the same mistake we did in 1994 or 1996 – overreaching. I don’t see much reaching across the aisle on their part, but we did pass the Competitiveness Act in a bipartisan manner and hopefully we can work on some more of the problems.

**KCK: You’re a journalist by trade. What are your thoughts on the state of the media today?**

**PR:** Hometown newspapers play an important role, but 42 million people watch YouTube. Most people who campaign for office hope they are not on it. Most college students polled get news from Jon Stewart. The blogosphere and all these blogs are part of the whole Howard Dean approach. My staff is mad at me because I did not get my introduction filmed [for his Web site] for 2007. I know if I’m not very aggressive and I don’t start the campaign now, I am taking a big risk. You can buy all the time in Kansas for five or six million dollars. We went zero for six last time, and Conrad Burns raised $9 million in Montana. His opponent raised six or seven million, but outside spending was 12 or 13 million. He was outspent by double.

In the past, it was absolutely mandatory for people seeking public office to go by a local editorial board and pay homage. That’s just what you did. Today, a lot of candidates just don’t do that, and if you do, you have to drag them in. This is widespread. In the whole age of information, there is an explosion of places where you can get information. You can have a big interest group and they will read and get information. The state’s editors don’t carry the weight they used to. It’s such a rich tradition. There have been some great editors in Kansas. F.H. Roberts, my great grandfather, founded the second oldest newspaper in Kansas. I’m worried about the print media. Networks have also seen their numbers slide. The computer age is definitely off the charts.

**KCK:** The No Child Left Behind Act is up for renewal this year: How do you think No Child Left Behind has done so far in trying to improve student achievement across the nation?

**PR:** I initially worried about the federal involvement. I have always said local control is the best control. But, we have seen generations of young people cheated by the system and it simply passed them through without the basic skills they needed. I voted for it, and I think it’s important, and I think we have seen more success than it’s been credited for.

Like (U.S. Rep.) Dennis (Moore), I have been going around and meeting with different schools and involving myself in the Reading is Fundamental program. I don’t want to stop the bill.

I want to measure performance better. It’s like moving the ball down the field and not scoring a touchdown, but being credited with a field goal. A lot of schools have made tremendous progress but do not meet (benchmarks)... then you get in No Child Left Behind purgatory.

There’s two major areas we need to look at. The area of special education schools, and they have all those responsibilities. It’s very difficult when factoring that in to reach the area of achievement. We have to do a better job at that.

Everyone agrees with that. Special education, or IDEA, it’s a good program, but it’s the granddaddy of all under funded programs. If there is anything that gets the attention of educators and officials it’s the lack of response on part of Congress to fully fund IDEA for special education.

We would not have had the Supreme Court fuss if we fully funded special education. It’s a tremendous program. It would have been far easier. I think if federal government mandates a program, we need to fully fund it. That would relieve school districts in Kansas and across the country. (But) we won’t do it because of the budget situation.

The other thing is the immigration challenge. Every school I go to, whether it’s in Wichita, or a small school in southeast Kansas or Kansas City, Kan., or in Olathe. I do want to talk about second and third grade because it’s in that level where there’s going to be assimilation by the immigrant population. That’s where you have to start and why that ESL [English as a Second Language] program is so important.
was in a classroom at Frank Rushton Elementary School, and I asked the teacher to point out the students to point out the students who speak some language other than English at home. Twenty-two students were in the classroom. There were two Arabic speakers, two Vietnamese and then you had seven Hispanic. You are already over half of the class that does not speak the language at home that you need to know to understand and have proficiency with to succeed.

I’m not sure if the American public or average citizen realizes the diversity we have in our elementary schools and the challenge people have learning English and learning the language needed to succeed.

KCK: What is being done to increase the number of technology-based jobs available in Kansas?

PR: In 1996 when I first arrived (in the Senate), we had people from KU and K-State and so on and listed our priorities for the Kansas economy based on technology. We have to be able to be competitive. The most important issue was the availability, and how you bring technology capabilities to average small business owners, and allow them to compete. As a result, we did a lot of things different.

Since that time, KU had done a lot with life sciences and K-State with agricultural bioscience security investment. You have Wichita with aviation research. They have done it step by step. You have Pitt State with polymer research. This is starting, and we are growing. We have marvelous opportunities.

If we are able to pry loose any federal involvement, it does allow you to say we can do this. All money should not go to four states. You have to have collaboration involved with everyone. We have more requests for appropriations that we have ever had. Each one of them is right – but you can’t do all of it.

KCK: Mayor Reardon in his recent State of the Government speech put a number of environment-based initiatives into his action plan for the year. What is congress doing to help address environmental issues?

PR: It isn’t whether or not we have global warming. I went with Ted Stephens (Senator, R-Alaska) to the Antarctic to see what is going on, and I talked with a Colorado State scientist who I think is the best in the business. You can tell in our different times where there has been global warming. It is happening. Instead of saying “If there’s a problem,” we should be saying, “What can we do to address the problem?” I think what the mayor is doing and we could do is based on sound science.

If the United States does not sit down with China or India, there is not going to be any difference if you ride a bicycle from here to Tonganoxie (instead of driving). It may strengthen your legs, but it will not make a significant difference with getting carbon emissions out of the atmosphere. It would be nice if we could everything we can and get the auto industry – which is moving pretty darn fast – to market (more efficient vehicles), and we have seen an explosion in bio-fuel. We have some exciting things going on at Pitt State. We have are talking about not only a renewable resource, but also corn.

You have to do this in a step-by-step process. This has to be a world solution in regards to CO2 admissions. The Kyoto Treaty would require us to go back to 1990 levels of energy usage. You can’t do that. You can’t expect a businessman or farmer to do that. The scientist from Colorado State said it would make a .0153 percent difference in emissions under the Kyoto Treaty. Do you stop an economic engine and put developing countries in position to create more starvation because of a feel-good issue? I don’t think so.

It has to be based on sound science and economic reality. The market will drive it. That’s the answer and I don’t think we should labor under the impression that this is a one-for-one thing. This is a step-by-step process, but we will make the step.

KCK: Let’s talk a little bit more about the 2008 presidential race. The other Kansas senator, Sam Brownback, has thrown his hat in the ring. What are your thoughts about his candidacy and what do you make of the rest of the Republican field?

PR: On Sam’s race, I always remind people that Jimmy Carter didn’t have a lot of national support at the beginning of his campaign... People who vote in primaries tend to be in the right or left fields and others are in the bleachers. The vast middle of the playing field tends to not vote in the primaries. You have people trying to find approval to the Republican and Democratic bases.

Sam’s base is very emotional. Sam’s campaign, as I understand it, is to bring moral clarity to America. That is an immense challenge, but that is what he believes in. I would not underestimate him. His support does not show up in polls, but it shows up on election days. He could do better than anticipated.

If he goes third in Iowa, fourth or fifth in New Hampshire and goes to South Carolina – South Carolina would be the state key to him. All of a sudden, you get attention, and it catches on. I
wouldn’t dismiss his campaign by any means. He spoke to an issue that is very troubling to Americans, and that’s the decline of our society.

**KCK: What are your thoughts on the Democratic field?**

**PR:** I think most people on our side assumed Hillary Clinton (Senator, New York – D) had the organization and backing of the folks who backed her husband. Then, out of nowhere, comes Barack Obama (Senator, Illinois – D), a very personable chap with not a lot of experience, which may or may not catch up with him. This is an era where experience may not be the most important. In my eyes, it’s important. He has been polling about even. I don’t know how long that will last.

**KCK:** So look into your crystal ball. Who wins the presidency in 2008?

**PR:** It’s too early to even be talking about it. The Oklahoma Republicans met and had a straw poll. They had quite a lineup of candidates. Somebody out of the blue said, “Do you know who would make a good candidate? Fred Thompson.” He hasn’t even declared his candidacy yet. Guess who won? Fred Thompson won with 32 percent. What do people know about Fred Thompson? He was on “Law and Order.” I know because I was on the ethics commission that approved his contract. I asked for a role and never got it. Fred Thompson is from the South, but not the Far South, and is popular, conservative and on Law and Order. Newt (Gingrich) was second and he is not even a candidate yet. I don’t think that’s really reflective of where we are today.

**KCK:** Senator, thank you for visiting with us today, and thanks for your work in Wyandotte County.

**PR:** I am really excited about this area. Bless the people involved, and I’m really happy to be a part of it.
It is not exactly clear why there is a constant stream of consultant-driven studies about this metropolitan area. But every year or two, another is commissioned, and we are dissected, and the conclusions are similar. They always tell us at least three major things. One, we do not have a research university; two, we sprawl too much; and three, we are one of the most segregated metropolitan areas in the country.

The latest study is from the Brookings Institute, called "Organizing for Success: A Call for Action for the Kansas City Region."

We have read this just-released report, just as we have read all the others, including the "Citistates Report" and the "Time to Get It Right" analysis. And what is amazingly clear is that all of them reach, basically, the same depressing conclusions.

We have heard it so many times before. We have only one major university, University of Missouri at Kansas City, which is a third-tier educational institution that turns out about 60 doctoral degrees a year, compared to about 250 at Washington University in St. Louis. There is extraordinarily little research conducted at UMKC. This impedes our economic growth.

But no consultant has come up with a solution, except for a challenge to raise more local money to support UMKC, given that the higher education funding in Missouri is bleak.

(Consultants do not recognize the University of Kansas in Lawrence as part of this metropolitan area.)

No study has really given us a clue as to how to go about bringing a research university to our town, or how to realistically make UMKC one. So, let's stop re-inventing that study over and over. We get the point.

As to land planning, that, too, is an issue without resolution. With abundant, inexpensive land, we will continue to sprawl, until it becomes too expensive. We do not need a consultant to tell us what we already know.

This report, like many past studies, also cannot help but identify our greatest social weakness, a glaring blemish on this community.

"Race relations may be the region's most significant factor affecting the future, by undermining our competitiveness," says the study.

Among the nation's 272 metropolitan areas, the study states, "Kansas City's metro ranks among the worst for its segregation, manifested in the severe physical separation of the area's black and non-black residents."

What is missing in all the reports of our shameful segregation are two things.

One, no one has ever adequately explained why this is so. Are we more bigoted in Kansas City? (I doubt it.) Is it our history? (Could it be worse than in the Dixie states?)

Clearly, people are free to move wherever they choose, yet they do not move. Why does Kansas City remain so segregated? Let's do a study just on that.

And what can we do about our stifling segregation? Even if we understand why we are so segregated, what is the action plan for attacking this problem? I have never seen a study on that.

I think we would all be better served if we stopped repeating the same type of studies, leading to the same conclusions.

Next time, let's tell the consultants to skip the exhaustive parts about our lack of a research university, our sprawl and our segregation.
KATRINA SEGERS  
STAFF WRITER

Christina Yuen, 14, Olathe, performed with the Kansas City Chamber Orchestra on April 20. 
Christina, a pianist, played the first movement of the Saint-Saens Concerto in G Minor, Op. 22, No. 2.

“I knew the first day she walked through the door that she had talent,” Christina’s piano teacher, Christy Dolan, said.

Christina won the Kansas City Music Teachers Concerto competition Jan. 27, a $300 scholarship from Schmitt Music and the right to perform with the orchestra.

Christina, a pupil at California Trail Junior High School, 13775 W. 133rd St., Olathe, has been playing since age 8.

“My whole family is really good at singing and I couldn’t sing so my mom wanted me to start piano lessons,” Christina said.

Christina said she chose piano because of the tonal quality.

“She always practices and does what she’s told and more,” Dolan said. “She’s just totally consistent and this is what has contributed to her success.”

Christina said her two teachers, Dolan and Jack Winerock, a University of Kansas professor, encouraged her to participate in competitions that led to her performance with the orchestra.

She said she felt prepared, but could not practice too much.

“When you’re practicing, sometimes you like it and sometimes you don’t,” Christina said. “Sometimes you really like it because playing music just helps you think about stuff and you can get better and better. And when I perform I feel really different and I play better every time I perform.”

Dolan said Christina has a flare for performance and passion for music, which helped her in the competition.

“It was amazing because we never ever thought I would be able to (perform with an orchestra) because of my age,” Christina said. “It was a really wonderful opportunity.”

She said she learned how to work with a group of people instead of solo and how to follow a conductor.

“Playing with an orchestra is inspiring,” Dolan said. “She will want to do that again, so she will have to work hard.”

“Since I started late, I feel like it’s been a catch-up for me,” Christina said. “I always thought you had to be professional to perform with an orchestra.”

She said she has not decided whether to pursue playing professionally.

“I’ve looked into a few pre-college schools for kids who want to major in music and get into a better conservatory,” Christina said.

She also has attended summer music camps.

“They play really amazing and you learn a lot from people your age,” Christina said.

“She’s worked very hard,” Dolan said. “She’s very gifted and will be able to pick any college.”

Christina also won the Kansas City Symphony Young Artist Competition, which won her the right to play with the Kansas City Symphony on April 22. She will repeat her performance on May 24 at the Lyric Theatre, 1029 Central St., Kansas City, Mo.

“It’s highly unusual for a student her age to be playing four times in major auditoriums with two of our largest orchestras,” Dolan said. “I don’t know of anyone that’s done that before.”
Former Augustan receives KU Excellence Teaching Award

Mike Ortmann, son of Betty Ortmann and the late Fred Ortmann of Augusta, will receive a Kansas University Wolfe Teaching Excellence Award during the University of Kansas graduation weekend May 19-20.

Ortmann will receive a $3,000 cash award and Lawrence High School will receive a $1,000 award in his name. He is a teacher at Lawrence High School in Lawrence. Teachers are nominated by KU seniors and go through a tiered selection process.

Ortmann grew up in Augusta, graduated from Kansas State University in 1977. He has a master's degree from Wichita State University and taught in Newton and Derby before coming to Lawrence High School 13 years ago. He is currently the chairman of the social studies department and teaches advanced placement classes in U.S. European and world history, and East Asian studies.
Michelle Tran of Derby was among nine University of Kansas graduating seniors who officials visited the classrooms of earlier this month to announce that they were Chancellor's Student Award recipients.

The awards recognize the students' academic, volunteer and leadership accomplishments during their time at KU. Tran received the Alexis F. Dillard Student Involvement Award.