



The DATA CAPTURE Report

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Special SCAN: The DATA CAPTURE Report Reprint

ID Integration SVP Says UID Here To Stay

When it comes to direct part marking (DPM) and DoD Unique Identification (UID) compliance, few integrators stand out like **ID Integration**. Although the company has only been around since 1999, its founders have been designing marking solutions for nearly two decades. Like **Cognex**' Carl Gerst in our cover story, Gary Moe, a founder and SVP of ID Integration, believes the DPM market is going to provide huge opportunities for AIDC vendors and integrators.

So what exactly is UID? In a nutshell, it is a government/DoD requirement to mark items with a "unique identifier" embedded in a 2D Data Matrix code. The marking is applied directly to an item and is to remain with the item throughout its lifecycle. The Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DEFARS) contains the rules used by the DoD and suppliers to the DoD to comply with UID policy when solicitations are issued. DEFARS is a supplement to the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) which is the body of regulations that is the primary source of authority governing the government procurement process. [Editor's note: For a much more thorough definition of UID, go to www.id-integration.com and click on "UID 101 Basics."]

Commenting on the DoD policy, Moe told

SCAN/DCR, "The UID market is still in its infancy. The policy has been in place for several years, but it is really just beginning to see some movement. ID Integration helped draft the UID policy, so we are intimately aware of what is expected and how to meet the requirements of the specification.



Gary Moe, founder and SVP, ID Integration.

"Because UID is an 'unfunded mandate,' compliance has been a slow-moving process. As of last Nov., only 10% of the military's contractors were in compliance. Military suppliers, like **Boeing** for instance, believe there is value in the plan, but have not been willing to pay the added expense for setting up a marking system.

Compliance can be a huge process for suppliers. They have to determine exactly where to place the marking, how to get the ID number and have it registered, what software is needed...it takes a lot of manufacturing planning. And then, they have to set up a system for verifying that the markings are accurate. It requires input from many parts of a company: IT, manufacturing, inspection, shipping, etc."

Military lacks funding

The suppliers are not the only ones who have been slow to adopt the policy. Moe told us that

even the military itself hasn't had the funds to implement the plan. "First, there hasn't been any major money allocated to the various branches of the military to install the necessary hardware and software," explained Moe. "And with a war going on, it has only made matters worse. It has further drained any funds that might have been available.

"All that said, not implementing the plan may be costing the DoD more money," Moe continued. "There are a tremendous amount of military supplies that get misdirected or lost. Sometimes, people in charge of supply replenishment place three orders from three separate vendor for the same item—hoping at least one order will show up on time and at the correct location. Clearly, that's not the most efficient way to do business."

The scope of the plan

There's no question that, if this multi-national policy is followed by all military suppliers, it will make a profound improvement in DoD tracking and procurement efforts. And with the current deployment numbers for military personnel, the need for on time deliveries of necessary supplies is critical. As Moe noted, they cannot do without tanks, planes, helicopters, and weapons. And all these items need replacement parts to keep them operating properly. The numbers are staggering. It is estimated that somewhere between 100 million to 400 million in-service parts need to be marked.

A phased implementation

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to realize that adopting DPM and UID is a job of immense proportions. Just look at some of the giant companies that supply the military: **Lockheed Martin**, Boeing, **Raytheon**, **Northrop Grumman**, and **Honeywell**. These companies can't make changes overnight. Drawings have to be changed to include the new marking specs, equipment has to be purchased for applying the markings, readers need to be in place throughout manufacturing and inspection. There's just no quick or easy way of making all this happen.

Continuing, Moe told *SCAN/DCR*, "Multi-year purchasing agreements don't help either. Some orders were placed prior to the mandate, and even orders that have been placed recently are stretched out over several years. The quantities are often too small to justify changing to DPM."

Phased implementation is the answer to getting started, according to Moe. "In the early stages of implementation, customers may want to have us provide pre-printed name plates for some of their items," said Moe. "Down the road, they can begin to do their own marking. We offer our IDI 'needs assessment' service for any company looking into a DPM/UID system. We believe that, once the process gets rolling, we'll see a snowball effect throughout the military supply chain."

[Editor's note: ID Integration also offers UID compliant

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nameplates and labels in quantities of 1-10,000 through its affiliate company, **Jet City Laser**. Each label or nameplate is shipped with a Certificate of Conformance and quality report that documents that each label/nameplate meets the UID quality and data requirements. Additional information and pricing is available on the company's Web site – www.UID2go.com.]

For the military, ID Integration has created a new service using mobile marking units. ID Integration actually takes these mobile devices to various military bases and marks parts for them. "This is simply another way we are trying to help phase in adoption of UID," said Moe.

Vendors and integrators offer education

ID Integration works with a number of major hardware suppliers, including **Symbol/Motorola**, Cognex, **Siemens**, **Microscan**, **Telesis**, and others. Together, these companies are trying to educate potential users and help them understand the benefits of DPM/UID.

"If you help people understand how something is going to help them, rather than just telling them they have to do it, they are far more accepting," said Moe. "DPM/UID can increase safety by enabling the military to determine the lifespan of a particular component. It may also help determine if one supplier's parts last longer than another's. Our systems help maintain proper inventories and can even be used to track warranty information. But, if our customers don't know about all these benefits, why should they look into purchasing a system?"

Final words

Closing, Moe told SCAN/DCR, "Experience takes time, and we've put in the time. We know how to evaluate customer needs and to recommend the proper technology. This experience will help us be a major player in the market."

For more information: **ID Integration, Inc.**, Mukilteo, WA, PH (425) 438-2533, Email: gmoe@id-integration.com. **SCAN**

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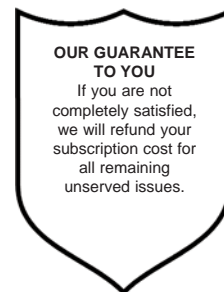
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