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Aachen, November 17, 2014—Brick-and-mortar retail is going through rapid change. Modern radio-based applications, such as electronic shelf labels and location-based services for smartphone users, are optimizing in-store processes and laying the foundations for new business models and shopping experiences. LANCOM Systems, the leading German manufacturer of networking solutions for the commercial and public sectors, introduces a worldwide first that integrates the different radio technologies into a single infrastructure platform. The new E-series access points support classic WLAN, electronic shelf labels (ESL) and iBeacons. The benefits: Lower costs, longer service life of the electronic shelf labels, and a high degree of sustainability.

This worldwide novelty is the result of close cooperation with the Austrian ESL specialist imagotag, the developer of the wireless technology for label control.

The electronic price displays are one of the top trends in retail. According to a recent retail survey, the worldwide market for electronic shelf labels (ESL) is set to grow by an average of 18 percent annually until the year 2018. In Germany, too, retailers are increasingly adopting ESL. Large retailers are already gathering their first experience with electronic goods labels and price tags.

A particularly energy-saving radio technology that controls the electronic price labels ensures that the battery-powered displays have a long service life. Until now, operating these systems required the costly installation and operation of a dedicated infrastructure. Compounding the problem was the interference with existing wireless LAN infrastructures, since both of these technologies operate in the same frequency band (2.4 GHz). Wireless LAN is very widespread in brick-and-mortar retail. Uses include wireless stocktaking or the provision of fast Internet access to customers.

Lower costs, high investment protection

LANCOM has fine-tuned the two wireless technologies to provide interference-free parallel operation in close cooperation with ESL specialist imagotag, developer of the wireless solution for controlling the electronic shelf labels and supplier of the ESLs. Retailers benefit from a lower up-front investment, low operating costs, and a long service life of the battery-powered price tags that operate in parallel to the wireless LAN.

Integrated iBeacon technology for location-based services

Along with wireless LAN and ESL, the new LANCOM E-series access points support a third wireless technology. The integration of iBeacons enables retailers and operators of shopping malls to implement innovative location-based services, including:

- Location-dependent push marketing: Customers in the vicinity receive special offers via app-based push messages on their smartphones.
- Indoor navigation: Radio-controlled localization in combination with an app- or Web-based floor plan conveniently guides customers to the desired offers or shop.
- Business intelligence: Analysis of customer walk paths helps to optimize the layout of the sales floor.

Christian Schallenberg, Member of the Management Board at LANCOM Systems: "I am convinced that electronic shelf labels and location-based services offer enormous potential for the retail sector. Just think about dynamic pricing or improved customer communications. Even today, projects like this frequently fail because of the costs or the technical hurdles. By integrating the ESL and iBeacon technologies in a single professional WLAN infrastructure, the retail sector has the unique opportunity to present themselves as innovative and quick to respond to trends, quite apart from entering into a whole new form of customer dialog. And all of this in a cost-effective, efficient and low-maintenance package."

Dr. Michael Moosburger, founder and Managing Director of imagotag, agrees about the enormous potential for this solution: "Electronic price displays are the major future trend in retail. By combining our ESL technology with wireless LAN and iBeacons, we have jointly created a unique infrastructure solution, which offers completely new possibilities of flexible pricing and customer loyalty to the brick-and-mortar retail sector."

Pricing and availability

The new LANCOM E-series access points are available now from specialist resellers. Also available are the electronic shelf labels from imagotag as well as the central server for controlling the ESLs.

LANCOM Systems background:

LANCOM Systems GmbH is the leading German manufacturer of reliable, innovative network solutions for business customers. LANCOM's two business units, VPN Network Connectivity and Wireless LAN, offer professional users secure, flexible infrastructure solutions for local-area and multi-site networks. The entire core product range is developed and manufactured in Germany. In addition, LANCOM also provides VPN solutions certified by the German Federal Office for Information Security (BSI) for the protection of particularly sensitive networks and critical infrastructures (EPCIP) against cyber attacks. LANCOM Systems headquarters is in Würselen near Aachen, Germany, and other offices are located throughout Europe. Customers include small and medium-sized enterprises, government agencies, institutions, and major corporations from Germany, Europe and increasingly worldwide. The enterprise is a partner in the Alliance for Cyber Security initiated by the BSI.



Background, imagotag:

imagotag stands for innovation and advanced technologies. The company founded by Dr. Michael Moosburger and Andreas Rössl in 2010 quickly became the leading company for electronic shelf labels (ESL) and digital signage solutions. After many years of experience in the development of software, hardware and radio technologies, the company draws on extensive expertise in the retail and logistics industries. The use of modern technologies at the point of sale is a guarantee of competitive advantage, increased customer satisfaction, as well as improvements in image and efficiency. In early 2014, imagotag entered a strategic partnership with Store Electronic System / SES Group, the global leader in Electronic Shelf Labeling (ESL).

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