

San Antonio Public Library Adopts RFID Systems from 3M

Library Becomes One of the Largest to Use Radio Frequency Identification For Self-Service, Circulation Management and Inventory Applications

The public library system of San Antonio, the seventh largest city in the United States, will install a wide range of radio frequency identification (RFID) products from 3M in its Central Library and all 23 of its branches.

The installation will include 3M SelfCheck Systems that enable customers to perform most check out, return and renewal transactions, including fines and fee payments, without the aid of library staff. Other RFID components will facilitate faster and more efficient circulation and inventory procedures.

The San Antonio Public Library, which serves a fast growing population that now exceeds 1.25 million, will become one of the largest municipal library systems in the United States to embrace RFID technology. Installation is scheduled to begin this summer after 3M RFID tags have been affixed to all print and electronic circulation items.

The new technology will help increase staff productivity, as the library system expands its services in tandem with a remodeling and construction program now taking place, according to Aubrey George, the library's assistant director for support services.

"The library has been averaging a steady 3 percent annual growth in the use of its services for several consecutive years," says George. "We've added three branches and are building a fourth. This technology will help us accommodate that growth cost-effectively. It will provide library patrons with the option of self-checkout and return, while helping us manage our collections with improved speed and efficiency."

A total of 60 3M SelfCheck System units will be installed throughout the library system, in three phases. In the first phase, the Central Library and the Cody, Cortez, Great Northwest, Igo, McCreless, San Pedro, Semmes and Westfall branches will receive the units. The project is scheduled for completion in 2008.

"This is an important affirmation of RFID as a substantial productivity enhancement for the nation's heavily burdened municipal library systems," said Rory Yanchek, business manager, 3M Library Systems. "Naturally, we're very gratified that the library chose 3M as its source of this important new technology. We look forward to helping the staff of the San Antonio Library realize all the benefits they anticipate."

With the RFID system, each item in the library's collection is affixed with an RFID tag that contains a tiny antenna and a memory chip that stores information about the item's identity and allows accurate identification and tracking. A cordless, handheld scanner reads the tags, enabling library staff to easily locate, inventory, check in and check out materials. Unlike barcode systems, radio frequency identification does not require line of sight between the tag and the scanner, resulting in easier, more efficient tracking.

A global leader in library innovation for more than 35 years, 3M Library Systems provides security, productivity and information management solutions that harness technology to enable a more human library, freeing librarians to spend more time doing what they do best – helping people. 3M also partners with libraries to support their technological advancement and ensure their success through numerous industry sponsorships and programs. For more information about the 3M Library Systems solutions, visit <http://www.3M.com/us/library> or call 1-800-253-6845.

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3M Public Relations Colleen Horn Harris, 651-733-1566 <http://www.3m.com/PressContact> LVM Group Inc. Bob Rurmerman, 212-499-6567 bob@vmgroup.com or James T. Kimer, 212-499-6571 james@lvmgroup.com

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