Fujitsu introduces Australian-developed electronic shelf labels

Fujitsu Australia launched a revolutionary Electronic Shelf Label system at Retail Business Technology (RBT) 2003 that was developed by ILID Pty Ltd in Australia and uses in-store lighting as a radical new data transmission medium. This system is unique, totally Australian developed, and much more cost effective than the printed, paper-based systems it replaces, said Marcus May, General Manager Retail, at Fujitsu Australia. The LCD-based Electronic Shelf Label system integrates with the stores own stock control and master list database to allow instant, storewide or chain-wide price displays, reflecting identical pricing at both the shelf and checkout. Staff normally have to cope with at least 12,000 price changes a week, and simple human mistakes often mean the price at the shelf does not reflect the price at the checkout. This new system completely avoids those off-list errors, and offers instant, accurate updates across all stores if required, said May. The other possibility is to run cumulative electronic pricing labels on trolleys, so that customers can see exactly how much they are spending as they move around the store gathering items, May added. The Electronic Shelf Label system does not use cable, radio frequency (RF) or infrared (all of which require power and two-way communications) but instead links into the light output from a stores fluorescent tubes. The key is a special modulating device which replaces the normal starter in the fluorescent light fitting, explained May. This links the light output to the latest data in the main database and allows very efficient, totally pervasive distribution of pricing information to all shelving areas throughout the store. Circuitry in the label then decodes the data and displays the price for the stock on its particular shelf. The use of light as the data transmission medium also enables very low power consumption at the receiving (shelf label) end of the data trail. This in turn enables multi-year battery life in the LCD label itself, and consequent low running costs. This will revolutionise retail outlet and supermarket shelf pricing, May believes. We have a realistic price for the labels themselves and 10 to 20 year battery lives, which means negligible ongoing cost. Im confident we can expect to see these labels everywhere. Notes to Editors Fujitsu Australia Limited Fujitsu is a global leader in information and communications technology solutions. Throughout Australia and New Zealand Fujitsu is recognised as a leading systems integrator and services provider. We deliver complex infrastructure systems and services, and business and telecommunications solutions, as well as offering access to a wide network of partners. From the desktop to the data centre; multi-vendor procurement to prime contracting; consulting to systems integration, Fujitsu has earned a reputation as the single supplier of choice for leading corporate and government organisations. Visit au.fujitsu.com for further information Fujitsu Australia Limited is a wholly owned subsidiary of Fujitsu Limited of Japan. About Fujitsu Limited Fujitsu is a leading provider of customer-focused IT and communications solutions for the global marketplace. Pace-setting technologies, highly reliable computing and telecommunications platforms, and a worldwide corps of systems and services experts uniquely position Fujitsu to deliver comprehensive solutions that open up infinite possibilities for its customers success. Headquartered in Tokyo, Fujitsu Limited (TSE:6702) reported consolidated revenues of 4.6 trillion yen (US$38 billion) for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2003. For more information, please see www.fujitsu.com. About ILID Pty Ltd (www.ilid.com.au) ILID (pronounced eyelid) designs and manufactures Electronic Shelf Labels (ESL) for the Retail and Warehouse industries. ILID display modules are placed on the edges of store shelves to show a product's price, along with other information. The ILID System is unique, as it uses a globally patented system, modulating existing fluorescent light to transmit data to ILID labels, ensuring the ILID labels match the information in the store's cash registers. The primary advantage of communicating via light is the lack of interference a significant issue with the congested, regulated RF (Radio Frequency) technologies and troublesome IR (Infrared) line-of-sight technologies. The ILID approach makes ESL technology a business reality through reduced infrastructure cost, reduced label cost, and extended battery life. ILID Pty Ltd is a wholly-owned subsidiary of UXC (www.uxc.com.au, ASX:UXC), and is Australian owned and operated, situated in Melbourne, Australia.