



RFID Public Policy Considerations and Recommendations

The Computing Technology Industry Association (CompTIA, www.comptia.org) is the largest global IT trade association, with more than 20,000 members in 102 countries. Our members span all segments of the IT value chain, including hardware, software, telecommunications, IT services, IT repair and sales, and IT training companies – from the very largest multinational companies to sole proprietors. Along with our global public policy and other industry-building initiatives, CompTIA is also the largest vendor-neutral provider of IT skills certifications, having certified the skills in 11 core areas of IT discipline for nearly 775,000 individuals worldwide.

RFID technology represents an immense leap forward for consumers, industry and our economic prosperity. If deployed and used properly, RFID technology holds the great promise to make our lives better. But, as with many new technologies, its growth and adoption cannot ignore important public policies designed to protect and advance competing societal goals. Thus, CompTIA urges Congress and other policymakers to:

Promote adoption through federal leadership

- Provide the guidance and funds needed for widespread and appropriate government adoption of RFID technologies.
- Such federal adoption can promote the overall adoption of RFID, priming the pump for innovation, offering valuable lessons on its use and application, and, most importantly, driving down deployment costs.

Promote adoption, balanced with legitimate individual/societal needs

- Help further the growth of RFID technology by recognizing that existing law, the rapid advance of technology, evolving industry best practices and standards, competitive marketplace dynamics and consumer education present the best ways of balancing RFID adoption against legitimate individual privacy concerns and security/safety demands.
- New RFID-specific regulations should be considered only if these avenues fail.

Recognize that the skills shortage may be the single largest obstacle to RFID adoption

- Tag costs, customer mandates, global standards, hardware/software costs, and tag and hardware shortages, among other things, represent major challenges to RFID adoption.
- Though these factors loom large, RFID skills shortages also stand as a major inhibitor to its development and deployment.
- According to a recent poll of CompTIA members, 80% of the respondents believe there will not be a sufficient pool of RFID-skilled talent in the “short-term” (i.e., the next two-to-three years) from which to hire, with 53% of respondents believing it will impact RFID’s adoption.

Invest in the attainment and certification of the underlying skills to avoid the skills crunch

- Boost underlying skills development through new incentives for IT training and certification (such as those surrounding RFID skills attainment), and by updating federal and state workforce programs so they’re more demand-driven, flexible and streamlined in their implementation.
- Pass legislation aimed at providing IT training and certification tax incentives for U.S. workers and companies.
- Pass an updated Workforce Investment Act, with a greater focus on IT training and certification.
- Ensure federal employees are adequately trained and certified in RFID/IT skills.

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