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CTIA roundup: New products for unwiring work and life

Tiny Bluetooth trackers, rugged Android, protecting Wi-Fi outside

By John Cox, Network World
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CTIA is a trade association for the wireless (cellular) industry, with members including mobile operators, equipment suppliers, and manufacturers and VARS of wireless services and products.

As a result, the annual conference and [exhibit](#) held last week in Las Vegas covered a wide range of product news.

Adhesive-backed Bluetooth-enabled trackers

One of the more intriguing products is an enterprise version of a Bluetooth tracking radio that's packaged into an enclosure the size of two 25-cent pieces stacked on top of each other. You stick the device to an object and then track it and find it using an app on your iOS or Android smartphone.



The StickNFind Bluetooth tracking radio

Adhesive-backed, the device can be attached securely to ... well, anything bigger than a quarter: your tablet, smartphone, the TV remote, pet collars, and now to a range of industrial gear and commercial products.

The consumer version of StickNFind, from Israel-based [StickNFind Technologies](#) with U.S. offices in Davie, Fla., was unveiled at the Consumer Electronics Show earlier this year. At CTIA the company announced StickNFind for the Enterprise. Essentially, it's now a programmable radio tracker. Among the other changes:

- Search by SKU, serial number or date the StickNFind was attached; all of these are discoverable and displayed via the mobile app on an iOS or Android device with a Bluetooth 4.0 radio.
- Scan 5,000 inventory items per minute via the mobile application.
- SDK and API available for enterprise programmers to create their own apps to use with StickNFind stickers.
- Unique ID number for each sticker.
- And it's waterproof.

StickNFind is a subsidiary of SSI America, which has been designing and building Bluetooth

products for other brands, in automotive and health/fitness, for example, for 12 years. Inventor and founder Jimmy Buchheim crowdfunded three ideas, including StickNFind, which had a crowdfund goal of \$70,000 and ended up with \$1 million.

The company invented three critical elements. First, was the smallest current Bluetooth radio, running the Bluetooth 4.0 Low Emission (LE) software stack to minimize power use. But everything they tried was too big. Finally, by inventing the second key advance, they were able to achieve the first one: StickNFind scrapped the standard Bluetooth software stack and wrote their own. That finally let them improve power efficiency and, their third invention, improve tracking accuracy. The radios have a range of about 100 feet with line of sight.

With better efficiency, they were able to go with the smallest standard watch battery available, a replaceable lithium ion CR2016, which gives the StickNFind 12 months of life, based on 30 minutes of use daily.

The plastic housing was another challenge. The Chinese manufacturers they talked with said that at less than 0.3 mm the plastic would be too thin, and prone to break. StickNFind hit on the idea of making the bottom half of the case 0.2 mm but the top half, which could be popped open to replace the battery, at 0.3 mm.

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