

### *Magstripe is so old school*

#### Overview

Settled within the city landscape of central Texas sits a major university known as one of the best facilities for academic achievement in the state and called home by over 35 thousand students. So, you can imagine that trying to track books being checked in and out of the library that caters to the population of a small city can be a difficult task. Such was the case at this university.

#### Problem

The issue arose after the university upgraded student and faculty ID badges from a magstripe to a more reader friendly and flexible iCLASS contactless smart card. Using contactless cards and readers means no more having to use readers and cards that have a limited lifespan. Because the magstripe badges make contact with the reader when swiped, the friction causes them to wear out over time. The upgrade was used to mitigate this problem, but from it another issue surfaced. The university realized that the library magstripe database was different from the database used for building access around the campus. The task was to find a product that not only reads magstripe data and places it on the new contactless cards, but also plays back that data from the card to the magstripe database so that the library does not have to purchase an entire new database.

#### Solution

After contacting the installers and notifying them of the problem, they in turn reached out to their supplier of AIR ID products, RF IDEas. While listening to the installers' problems at the university, RF IDEas knew right away how to solve the issue and in turn have product sent out to them the very next day. The solution consisted of using the AIR ID Card Manager software, AIR ID Writer, and the AIR ID Playback devices manufactured by RF IDEas.

The installation began by loading the RF IDEas card manager program onto all the library computers to which a magstripe reader was connected. This card manager program acts as the controller for getting information from the magstripe cards and then placing the information on the new contactless smart cards. The card manager also functions as the converter for the data collected from the magstripe cards. After the data is gathered from the old magstripe badge it can then be transferred to their new cards by an AIR ID Writer.



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## Results

The university was amazed by how smoothly the project transitioned from magstripe to smart card. In fact, the entire conversion was completed in only 3 days, which is typical of an RF IDEas solution. The reason our solutions are accomplished quickly is because the products manufactured are plug-n-play making them extremely easy to install and use.

## Benefit

With this solution, the university was able to keep the existing magstripe library database software program. Therefore, they realized a cost savings right away. In addition, installing a new database program would have required them to catalogue the entire contents of the library, which would have taken its toll on manpower alone. With the RF IDEas solution, expenses were minimal and impact on staff time was even less of a drain. Now, with the new system in place, students and staff can carry a single ID card that enables them to enter buildings and check out books. The new cards also have the future capacity to be used as debit cards throughout the entire campus, making cashless transactions for students and staff.

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