



Perfect Collaborator

By the way, why not today? What do we think when we think about RFID (Radio-Frequency Identification)? Just a more expensive barcode label?

When Imagine a future world where robots would take care of admin and operational tasks within companies. These robots would be able to work 7*24 hours, never making mistakes on product identification, which they did without touching them, not even to align them with the barcode label reader.

When used in the warehouse, the robots would detect immediately any attempt of theft, as their radar would catch any product movements without the corresponding dispatch instruction. Nothing would ever get into or go out of the warehouse without the robot awareness and appropriate action.

From the food safety point of view, or product obsolescence (like in the electronics business, for example), the robots would know at all times what products were close to being outdated, not having to move from the place where they were.

When used in retail, the robots would eliminate the need for points of sale with company personnel, as they would be able to read automatically the contents of the shopping cart, without taking the product out of it, saving time to the clients and eliminating invoicing mistakes.

These robots would also be aware of stock-out products on shelves, triggering immediate replenishment mechanisms.

How this imaginary world be good without the costs and inconvenients of the referred operation. Maybe one day...

By the way, why not today? What do we think when we think about RFID (Radio-Frequency Identification)? Just a more expensive barcode label? A new buzzword to let some people write a few articles or some companies sell consultancy or technology?

We hope not. Each one of the promises described above is possible with RFID.

Even if we consider the aspects related to technology development, it seems that is now more the case that RFID is waiting for the market rather than the

market waiting for it.

From the economical point of view, not all products can carry a 50-cent RFID label, but how many products there are to whom this cost is irrelevant? What is being done on these industries?

One last issue: what companies are right now concerned with the qualification of their employees performing admin tasks capable of being automated? What effect will this have on unemployment? Will this be a barrier to future technological development, or is there anything that can be done?

By Joaquim Pereira