Introducing ‘Smart Shield’ – Detego defies the laws of physics with breakthrough in RFID tag localization

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London, UK, 04.04.2019 — **Detego, the leader in business intelligence for fashion retailers, has released the latest innovation for their RFID-based inventory management software with a feature they call ‘Smart Shield’. This new technological advancement utilizes machine learning to determine the relative location of individual RFID tags, a feature which will drastically improve costs and process efficiencies for retailers implementing RFID.**

Over the course of recent years, Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology has been applied in many different business domains to solve, for example, the issue of monitoring stock. Retailers, in particular, use the knowledge of item locations to understand in which area of the store they can find articles, for example, the backroom or sales floor. By having this knowledge, retailers achieve optimal product availability for their customers through an efficient replenishment process. When applied correctly, RFID technology provides the benefit of up to 99% stock accuracy and on-floor availability. However, until now there have always been limitations with the ability to understand an item’s exact location, due to the long-distance read signal achieved by modern RFID systems. The most common “best-practice” methods that can ensure such high figures are currently known to involve a physical method of shielding between individual stock locations, whether this is using foil or metallic paint. However, this common and costly method of shielding has left retailers and Detego wondering what else could be done to lower the hurdles on the initial steps of the RFID journey.

Every individual RFID tag creates a specific time & signal stamp when it is read by an RFID reader – up to several times per second. By collecting this data and applying smart algorithms within their software, Detego takes RFID-based merchandise management to the next level by adding an additional location element. Within this tag localization initiative, Detego establishes their ‘Smart Shield’ feature which can be utilized with just a handheld reader. With this advancement, retailers will no longer need to spend additional time and resources to put up physical shielding. Instead, they can roll-out RFID projects at a fraction of the time and cost. A newly-published research paper exploring the potential of this ground-breaking technology will be presented at this year’s 2019 IEEE International Conference on RFID.

“When RFID was developed, the concept of individual tag localization was always considered as ‘the holy grail’. Our latest innovations around this topic with our ‘Smart Shield’ feature is on par with traditional methods like physical shielding. By removing this barrier, a much faster and affordable implementation into brick-and-mortar stores has been made possible. However, this is just one element within our far more general localization initiative that will bring a variety of exciting new features for our customers.” says Detego CTO, Dr Michael Goller.

Detego says the new capability to 'localize' specific RFID tags has benefits far beyond the ‘Smart Shield’ feature. Through the machine learning infrastructure in place that enables individual tag localization, Detego can improve store

operations in the following ways:

• Replenishment advice and picking lists for e-com processes can be optimised through location-based sorting to make the process more efficient for the store associate when in the backroom.

• Staff will now additionally be supported in finding items to further enhance customer service.

“Utilizing the information about relative locations of items can drastically increase staff efficiency and business process efficiency across various functions relating to logistics, warehousing and retail. Together with features that will significantly lower the costs for a roll-out, retailers will experience an even faster time to market and will have the ability to enable franchise/wholesaler partners with full RFID capabilities at low costs.” says Detego CTO, Dr. Michael Goller.

Having pioneered and tested this exciting new technology, Detego’s ‘Smart Shield’ is now readily available as part of their global SaaS platform. The first retailers are already beginning to successfully utilise the new system, seeing an increase in process efficiency across both the backroom and the shop floor. But perhaps the biggest development enabled by the ‘Smart Shield’ is the greater ease with which retailers can now implement RFID systems in stores. As this relatively-young technology continues to

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improve, developments like the ‘Smart shield’ are further steps towards RFID becoming part of the status quo in the fashion retail landscape, as advancements such as this discover new use cases for the technology whilst simultaneously reducing the cost and time required for implementation.

Company Contact:

Detego

T. +447464207099
E. l.sinclair@detego.com
W. https://www.detego.com

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