



Fujitsu unveils U-Scan self checkout at RBT 2003

Australian retailers got their first chance to see the latest in U-Scan technology the most popular self-checkout systems in the world at Retail Business Technology (RBT) 2003. Designed as an alternative to express checkouts, U-Scan offers self-scanning, self payment and even cash out for shoppers in a hurry, said Marcus May, General Manager Retail, at Fujitsu Australia. With over 9,000 systems installed in North America alone, U-Scan has the largest installed base in self-scanning checkout technology. Its customer list reads like a Who's Who of retailing, and includes such names as Wal-Mart, Kroger and Safeway. Research from the IHL Consulting Group predicts that by 2005, 95 per cent of all North American grocery chains will be using some form of self checkout, and the system is likely to be trialled soon in Australia. We expect to see over two thousand self-scan lanes in Australia within a couple of years, said May. The EFT-only U-Scan terminal allows customers to self-operate all normal checkout operations, including cash-out, but reduces footprint by restricting payment to credit and debit cards only. With over 70 per cent of retail payments in Australia currently tendered via EFT this compact, cash-less terminal is slated to attract strong interest. The system is intelligent enough to learn about new product sizes, weights and other factors, such that cheating the system is very difficult. The U-scan stations also incorporate built-in video cameras to enable a central operator to oversee multiple checkouts to provide customer service or security support. Further, the U-Scan solution incorporates software specially designed to overcome the difficulties of dealing with items that are off a store's item master file. This includes unique smart integration programming to minimise the time and cost of integrating U-Scan units with existing point-of-sale software. Not only does the U-Scan system take up less space in the store (approximately half that required for a conventional checkout) it enables retailers to re-deploy operators and increase customer satisfaction by letting them check-out at their own pace. U-Scan is the ideal solution for customers wanting to avoid queues. Surveys indicate that 80 per cent of customers using self-scanning like the service, said May. We also see it as an ideal solution for service stations and convenience stores.

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