

of sale with ScanItAll scan avoidance technology from Cambridge, Mass.-based StopLift Checkout Vision Systems.

According to Russell, the ScanItAll detection technology is giving him and his store managers information on checkout shrink that they can access from any location via the Internet. "I can look at the incidents of scan avoidance from my office, while my managers can simultaneously see it on a PC at their three locations," he says. "We can also share comments about what we see."

The ScanItAll video recognition technology was primarily developed to catch "sweethearting," the term for when cashiers pretend to scan merchandise on a conveyor belt or shopping cart, but instead deliberately bypass the scanner, thus not charging the customer for the merchandise. In addition, the technology finds any incidents of "scan avoidance," in which merchandise isn't scanned or rung up before being given to the customer. This includes incidents that may be due to honest mistakes by the cashier.

Russell has used several systems aimed at reducing shrink, but StopLift's marriage to video sets it apart. "The differences between StopLift and

most other methods is that while other systems point you toward cashiers that might be a problem, StopLift actually identifies them with video, so there is no room for doubt," he explains.

Russell says scan avoidance activity has dropped approximately 70 percent since the system rolled out. This includes middle-of-the-basket (MOB) and bottom-of-the-basket (BOB) unscanned items in "buggies" or shopping carts, which have accounted for an average of 22 percent of all scan avoidance.

In the Cloud

Since the StopLift system is cloud-based, it can also be accessed over the Web by laptop or even by mobile devices — tablets such as the iPad or the Android-based Samsung Galaxy. As a cloud-based system, it also costs less to deploy. If he were employing a non-cloud-based system, Russell would have to create a network for each grocery store to access the incidents, and the expense would be prohibitive. The StopLift system, however, is hosted on the Internet and managed by StopLift instead of Russell's, and doesn't require the grocer's IT personnel or infrastructure to run. All that's needed is an Internet connection.

The cloud-based system also provides Russell's with the following benefits:

- Yearlong storage of incidents, complete with video and millisecond synchronized transaction log
- Mobile interfaces for tablets and phones
- Collaborative online case management among loss prevention, store operations and management
- e-mail Integration — the ability to e-mail video links rather than large video attachments
- Ability to export video for law enforcement
- Ability to respond to retailers by adding new features and improvements without troubling the IT department
- Graphical representation and export of store operations data

While catching shrink is one thing, probably the biggest benefit delivered by the system is its ability to prevent shrink from happening in the first place. "Our baggers pay more attention to the buggies now and make sure to unload them," Russell says. "We have a bagger at every checkout, and MOB and BOB have plummeted." PG



Russell's Supermarkets is a three-store franchise under the Piggly Wiggly banner that serves the metro Birmingham, Ala., market.