



# THE Griffin Report

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## D New Channels Report

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**D** New Channels Report  
Retail Solutions for Checkout Theft .....D1

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# Packing Some Punch:



A Bedford, Mass. company called StopLift has created video recognition software to catch what the retail industry calls "sweethearting", a practice which occurs when cashiers pretend to scan merchandise but deliberately bypass the scanner, thus not charging the customer for the merchandise. The software, which constantly monitors 100 percent of the security video, flags the transaction as suspicious, quickly reports the incident, identifies the cashier and the date and time of the theft.

## Cameras Over Checkout Registers: Monitoring "SweetHearting" Theft Activity

A company called StopLift Vision Systems has created video recognition software to catch what the retail industry calls "sweethearting," a practice which occurs when cashiers pretend to scan merchandise but deliberately bypass the scanner, thus not charging the customer for the merchandise.

"If you can't sell more in this economy, you can still lose less," said Malay Kundu, chief executive officer of StopLift, headquartered in Bedford, Mass. "I remember one incident where the cashier lifted the turkey over his head, pretending to look for the price, and put it down on the other side of the scanner."

As soon as a "sweethearting" incident occurs, the software, which constantly monitors 100 percent of the security video, flags the transaction as suspicious. It quickly reports the incident, identifying the cashier and the date and time of the theft.

StopLift's technology visually determines what occurs during each and every transaction to immediately identify fraud at the checkout. The tech-

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## Cameras At Checkout...

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nology eliminates costly, time-consuming human review of video, drastically reduces and deters fraud at the checkout, and significantly improves profitability, Mr. Kundu said.

Rather than take a one-size-fits-all approach, StopLift develops targeted applications to address the specific needs of retailers from different sectors including general merchandise, grocery, and specialty retail.

Retailers have tried to track theft through data mining, but as Mr. Kundu notes, "How do you do data mining when there's no data?"

Tom Perkins, director of loss prevention at Hannaford's Supermarkets in Scarborough, Maine, which has implemented a pilot program using StopLift, said, "Having the StopLift technology in place has enabled us to discover losses that we were previously unaware of. This is one of the most significant leaps in loss prevention technology I've seen in more than a decade. Despite several new kinds of loss prevention technology available to us, none of them has

addressed sweethearting, which is costing the retail industry nearly \$13 billion a year."

The Springfield, Mass.-based supermarket chain Big Y also commented on the StopLift program. "We are excited to be able to control more of our shrink and loss through the use of this emerging technology. In addition, StopLift will enable us to improve our cashier work force overall through better training as well as better systems to detect and control employee theft," according to Mark Gaudette, director of loss prevention at Big Y.

StopLift Vision Systems grew out of Mr. Kundu's Harvard Business School research study, "Project StopLift," on retail loss prevention. With technological research insights Mr. Kundu developed while at MIT, Project StopLift concluded that video recognition could be used to automate and, thus, make possible the comprehensive examination of surveillance video. Prior to founding StopLift, Mr. Kundu developed facial recognition systems for identifying terrorists in airports. 