

Robots become part of the retail industry

Brands are rushing to find new and creative things to 'please' customers in the context of the wave of artificial intelligence and other advanced technologies gradually appearing in many fields from economics, education education to entertainment...



The wave of artificial intelligence (AI) has created an investment boom in robotics. According to PitchBook data, startups in this nascent field have attracted about \$1.6 billion in venture capital over the past five years. While some robotics companies look to the future, others simply aim to deploy robots to assist humans in stores and warehouses around the world.

FROM WAREHOUSING TO DELIVERY

Employees at an Amazon warehouse near Seattle, USA recently got acquainted with a new 'colleague': a robot nearly 2 meters tall, humanoid and with glowing white eyes. Named Digit, the robot is configured to perform one basic task: picking empty yellow boxes off shelves and transporting them to a conveyor belt, over and over again. Robot Digit is currently still in the testing phase and of course cannot change the logistics industry anytime soon. Still, this is a big step forward in terms of technology, and it puts manufacturer Agility Robotics at the forefront of efforts to build machines that can serve the retail industry.

CEO Aindra Campbell, who has worked in manufacturing for 25 years, including stints at Apple and Ford, said Agility will likely produce dozens to hundreds of warehouse robots. in the next 12 months. Due to limited battery life, Digit can only operate for a few hours at a time. But businesses that buy robots emphasize that this is the solution to automating dangerous and repetitive jobs that humans don't want to do.

Meanwhile, not in the warehouse but right on the street, from March 6, 2024, Uber Eats Japan has launched a small robot delivery service in Tokyo after the service was successfully deployed. in U.S.A. The Japan Times reported that when users order on Uber Eats, the autonomous robot will go to the designated store to pick up the

goods and deliver them to the customer's address.

Also in Japan, convenience store chain Family Mart announced that it will use robots at 300 stores with the highest sales to automatically fill beverage products when shelves are empty. This robot system is expected to reduce the workload at stores by 20% to create more time for customer service staff.

Previously, in June 2023, Korean convenience store chain GS25 also introduced Eeron self-driving service robots into more than 9,000 stores across Kim Chi. It is known that Eeron can serve food and drinks in liquid form without spillage or breakage because the company has specially applied vibration control technology to the robot. Coupang's order processing center - considered the Amazon of Korea - in Daegu city operates day and night with more than 1,000 robots controlled by AI. These robots help reduce human workload by 60%.

In Southeast Asia, robots are already present in the retail industry. According to Nikkei Asia, Indonesian telecommunications provider Telkomsel has launched the first 5G smart warehouse in Bekasi district, West Java. The new warehouse takes advantage of advanced technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT) and big data (Big Data) to simplify operations and reduce energy consumption. Warehouse workers can instruct autonomous guided robot vehicles to transport goods quickly to designated destinations, or use robots to optimize inventory management and prevent out-of-stocks. Accordingly, this technology can save time and improve order processing efficiency by 25%.

Earlier this year, Singapore launched the Hive 2.0 Hi-Tech Retail Innovation Hub at the Esplanade Xchange. The center includes 10 unique retail experiences for startups focused on automation, robotics and digital retail services. Minister of State for Singapore's Ministry of Trade and Industry Low Yen Ling said: "These innovations can help reduce operating costs, increase sales and solve the manpower and logistics challenges facing manufacturers. Retailers often encounter ".

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