

RFID and AIDC News: Is Visidot a Viable Alternative to RFID and Traditional 2D Bar Codes?

Unique Scanning Technology is Little Understood, but Offers Intriguing Possibilities

SCDigest Editorial Staff

Is a Visidot in your future?

If you are like most supply chain and logistics practitioners, your likely reaction is: What is a Visidot?

That's the same reaction we had regarding the technology from a little known company called [ImageID](#), but the approach is very intriguing. In a sense, it combines elements of both bar code and RFID capabilities, and is worth looking at for a number of supply chain and asset management applications.

The term "Visidot" makes it sound like the solution is some kind of bar code symbology, and indeed image ID does offer a color-based symbol of a kind, but the basis of the system from the Israeli-based company is in reality a new generation of bar code reader.

That reader provides several advantages that traditional bar code readers do not:

Very long range scanning – the claim is that it can read as far away as 150 meters

Bar code orientation is not important – that isn't true for traditional bar code scanners except for the more expensive, limited read range omnidirectional scanners

Rapid reads of multiple bar codes – claim is that a full pallet's worth of case-level bar codes can be read in as little as one second

The Visidot reader can read traditional linear or 2D (e.g., DataMatrix) bar codes, or ImageID's own simple color coded symbology. Like any bar code scanner, line of site is required, a disadvantage over RFID. However, the technology appears to be able to

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rapidly scan multiple items from long distances with high read rates and accuracy, achieving the goals of RFID in some applications at potentially far lower costs.

As shown in the illustration nearby, for example, a Visidot reader can scan multiple bar codes in parallel. That means that after a pallet of goods with unique serial numbers is built and labeled, a sheet with those serial numbers could be printed and attached to the pallet. Run the pallet by a Visidot reader, and voila – all the serial numbers are captured as the pallet is received.

"Visidot is deployed worldwide, and currently tracking over 1 million assets per day, mainly performing shipping/receiving verification of pallets in the food and RPC (Returnable Plastic Container) industries," says **Rafi Pilosoph**, Vice President of Sales and Marketing for ImageID. Though the customer base is still very limited, a big success came with the adoption of Visidot technology by reusable pallet company IFCO.

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Pilosoph says Visidot can enable companies to achieve the operations benefits of RFID (rapid reads of multiple items) while leveraging existing bar code technology and labels. Even in the case of a damaged bar code, the Visidot system can often detect that a bar code was present, alerting operators to the fact that an unscannable item was present.

One perspective is that Visidot combines elements of bar code and RFID. Another is that the technology combines elements of traditional laser scanners and newer (and much more expensive) video imagers.

While ImageID's technology has been primarily deployed for asset tracking and re-usable containers, the approach could potentially have applications in a wide variety of supply chain applications.



**With the Visidot System
Users can Scan a Large Number
of Bar Codes from Long
Distances in Just Seconds**