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*The TX SCARA robot is designed to work within the cold compartment of a convenience store and replenish stock 24/7. | Credit: Telexistence Inc.*

To validate its AI-based Robot-as-a-Service (RaaS) solution for grocery retailers, **Telexistence Inc.** announced the mass production of TX SCARA, to be installed in 300 FamilyMart convenience stores in Japan, starting later this month in major metropolitan areas.

TX SCARA was developed to handle the specialized work of replenishing shelves in refrigerators with bottles and cans, a monotonous, tiresome activity typically carried out by employees in frequently uncomfortably lit environments.



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While currently, store workers need to restock the storage shelves behind the robot to ensure it always has more bottles to refill shelves, Telexistence hopes that it can automate this part of the job in the future as well.

Tomohiro Kano, general manager of the Store Development Department and Railway and Corporate Franchisee Department, of FamilyMart, commented, "The decline in Japan's labor population is one of the key management issues for FamilyMart to continue stable store operations. The introduction of Telexistence robots into FamilyMart stores will eliminate the need for store employees to replenish beverages in refrigerators, and the newly created time can be reallocated to customer service and shop floor enhancement, leading to higher quality store operations."

The goal of Telexistence is to use robots to improve all simple labor workflows in human society. This venture is a small step towards that goal. This initiative is being developed by Telexistence on the basis of a partnership with Microsoft Japan and NVIDIA.

In particular, NVIDIA GPU-accelerated AI technologies are built into Telexistence-developed hardware that enables AI and remote control of robots over the Microsoft Azure platform. NVIDIA and Telexistence have been collaborating since 2017, shortly after Telexistence was founded.

The system is sold through a RaaS business model. FamilyMart doesn't own the robots, but rather is paying for their service in a subscription model. Telexistence remotely monitors the operations of the robots and if there are any issues, the robots can be recovered and teleoperated remotely

During routine operations, the GORDON AI autonomously operates the TX SCARA. If there is an error or failure such as a dropped or fallen object, or an item that has been misplaced, Telexistence staff in remote locations use VR headsets to take control of the robot and to resolve the situation without any interaction from FamilyMart employees on site.

At one store, each TX SCARA can take the place of one to three hours of human labor each day.

Telexistence believes that the market potential for TX SCARA is enormous. There are 16,000 FamilyMart convenience stores in Japan alone, in addition to another 40,000 or so from other brands.

Next, Telexistence wants to target the 150,000 convenience stores in the US, where more than half of consumers



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



### **Mike Oitzman**

Mike Oitzman is Editor of WTWH's Robotics Group and founder of the Mobile Robot Guide. Oitzman is a robotics industry veteran with 25-plus years of experience at various high-tech companies in the roles of marketing, sales and product management. He can be reached at [moitzman@wtwhmedia.com](mailto:moitzman@wtwhmedia.com).

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