Reading letters over the net before they arrive

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Letters in up to B5 format are separated at high speed at the feeder of the mail sorting machine. Further processing is carried out at a transport speed of four meters per second.

Siemens' Trust-Ebox system automates electronic dispatching of letters to such a degree that postal service companies will be able to provide their customers with digital letters at competitive costs. In addition to returning from vacation to find their mailboxes often filled to overflowing, people also become annoyed by unwanted advertising in their mail. And mail carriers may have to cover long distances to deliver a single letter if the recipient lives at a remote location, which raises the cost of transporting the letter. These problems can be solved by turning the letters into electronic post that customers can access online.

Siemens Mobility has developed an automation solution in which images of the envelopes are immediately made when the letters are sorted. These facilities analyze and sort more than 50,000 letters per hour. Trust-Ebox customers who have received a letter are sent an image of the envelope by e-mail, allowing them to digitally access their mail online from anywhere in the world. If the customer wishes, the postal service company can open the envelopes and scan the letters to make them available as digital copies. Customers can immediately have unwanted advertising destroyed, while important letters can still be forwarded as usual. Ideally, the number of letters would be reduced to such an extent that the customer would need mail delivered only once a week.

The Swiss Postal Service plans to begin offering private end customers a Trust-Ebox-based service this summer. Such a service would especially benefit the Swiss Postal Service because the country's geographical situation requires the company to transport many pieces of mail over long distances in order to reach many customers.

The Trust-Ebox automation solution is not only designed for postal customers, however; it can also be used to efficiently digitize companies' incoming mail. Siemens Real Estate is currently testing Trust-Ebox for in-house mail at its office in Konstanz, for example, and has plans to expand the system to other locations as well.

These tests will enable the company to more precisely assess market requirements and allow developers to further optimize the process. Siemens Mobility wants to launch the Trust-Ebox on the market as a product later this year.

Source: Siemens

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