

Media alert

## AI to Help Retailers Reduce Plastic Waste

**Artificial Intelligence and automated replenishment can help retailers to reduce plastic waste, while maintaining a profit margin, says Blue Yonder**

**Blue Yonder, 24 January 2018** – According to an investigation by [the Guardian](#), it is estimated that British supermarkets create 800,000 tonnes of plastic waste each year. Concerns over the amount of plastic waste were also raised by the [Prime Minister](#), who encouraged Britain's major grocery stores to set up plastic-free aisles. But retailers must go further, Uwe Weiss, CEO at [Blue Yonder](#), the world leader in artificial intelligence (AI) and automation for retail supply chain optimisation, has warned.

According to Uwe, that fresh food is often packaged in un-recyclable plastic, so retailers must invest in AI and machine learning solutions to predict consumer demand to reduce food waste and thus eliminate wasting the plastic in which it is packaged.

Uwe commented: "The global plastic pollution crisis has already caused widespread damage to the environment. With this latest report, it is clear that the scale of plastic environmental issues will continue to increase drastically unless Britain's major supermarkets take decisive action.

"Retailers struggle to predict the right amount of stock to meet customer demand, and they therefore often order more stock than is necessary, preferring to throw food away rather than run the risk of shelf gaps. When this food is thrown away, which is also a serious environmental issue, its plastic packaging must also be disposed of. This can often be recycled but, as we have seen from the figures released last week, too often it is just discarded, with no thought given to the environmental damage caused by this approach."

Retailers have access to an enormous amount of data, whether it is recurring trends, past sales figures, customer footfall or even a change in the weather. AI and machine learning solutions can use this data to reduce plastic waste by making accurate predictions of customer demand and automating replenishment decisions, becoming more accurate as it continues to learn and refine its forecasting models.

This can also significantly improve product availability, removing manual intervention from the process and ensuring that retailers have the appropriate level of stock to match potential sales, reducing food and plastic waste.

Uwe concluded: "We live in an era where humans are producing more plastic waste than ever before, more in the last decade than in the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century. This is where AI can play an important role, offering a solution that not only reduces waste and the environmental impact of the retail sector, but is able to monitor, control and improve replenishment."

## About Blue Yonder

Blue Yonder enables retailers to take a transformative approach to their core processes, automating complex decisions that deliver higher profits and customer value using artificial intelligence (AI).

With AI embedded into their supply chain and merchandising processes, retailers can respond quicker to changing market conditions and customer dynamics, boosting revenues and increasing margins.

Developed by one of the largest teams of PhD-level data scientists in retail, our solution delivers 600 million decisions daily to international grocery, fashion and general merchandise retailers.

Blue Yonder was founded in 2008 in Karlsruhe, Germany, by former CERN scientist Professor Michael Feindt. The company has been awarded the Gartner Cool Vendor Award 2015, the Experton Big Data Leader Award 2016 and the BT Retail Week Technology Award.

**Blue Yonder solutions are available through Microsoft Azure.**

Blue Yonder. Best Decisions, Delivered Daily.

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