

# EXHIBIT 5

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PERSONAL TECH

# Grocery Shopping Made Easy

State of the Art

By DAVID POGUE    JUNE 19, 2008

On “The Jetsons,” when George got hungry, he just pushed a couple of buttons on the Food-a-Rac-a-Cycle on the kitchen counter. In seconds, a freshly synthesized meal appeared on a plate, prepared to his exact specifications.

In the real world, food-synthesis science is only in its infancy, as you know if you’ve ever tasted fake blueberries in a muffin. But there is a machine that could be the Food-a-Rac-a-Cycle’s great-great-grandfather: a new countertop appliance called the Ikan.

The mission of this \$400 device is to eliminate trips to the grocery store. The hardware component is a bulbous bar code scanner, dressed up in Any-Décor White and mounted on a countertop stand, an undercabinet bracket or a wall mount. It offers a color screen on the front, a laser scanner underneath and a Wi-Fi antenna inside that connects to your home wireless network.

Each time you’re about to throw away an empty container — for ketchup, cereal, pickles, milk, macaroni, paper towels, dog food or whatever — you just pass its bar code under the scanner. With amazing speed and accuracy, the Ikan beeps, consults

its online database of one million products, and displays the full name and description.

In a clear, friendly font, the screen might say: “Nabisco Reduced Fat Ritz Crackers 14.5 Oz.,” for example. Now you can toss the box, content that its replacement has been added to your shopping list.

After a few days of this, you can review the list online at [Ikan.net](http://Ikan.net) — and if everything looks good, click once to have everything delivered to your house at a time you specify.

Maybe it’s not exactly a Food-a-Rac-a-Cycle. But at least it’s the Netflix of groceries.

Reactions to this gizmo are all over the map. Old-school homemakers may consider it a silly redundancy. How much more effort is it, they ask, to maintain a handwritten list? And isn’t going to the grocery store more than just a time drain? Isn’t it also a little outing, a small source of pride and accomplishment, an opportunity for social interaction?

Other people can’t believe the amount of time this system saves. You’ve just compressed a two-hour weekly errand into about 10 minutes. All you have to do is approve the illustrated, error-proof online shopping list, and then let somebody else battle the traffic, haul the bags and pay for the gas.

The Ikan company has found that customers’ reactions also depend on age, income and location (city vs. suburb, for example). But before you decide, consider some of the less apparent aspects of the Ikan.

First, there’s an environmental benefit. A big green Recycle log appears on the Ikan’s screen whenever you scan a package that’s recyclable in your town, warning you not to throw it away. (The company researches each municipality’s recycling policy individually as Ikan units are purchased, so the logo may not appear the first day you own the Ikan.)

Furthermore, consolidating many deliveries on a single truck removes a number of cars from the road, providing an additional green benefit.

Above all, though, your happiness with the Ikan will depend on what grocery delivery is available in your area.

The best situation is to live in Manhattan or certain surrounding suburbs, where Ikan is smoothly integrated with the D'Agostino grocery chain. For example, if you want something that has no bar code, like fresh fruit, you can press a Voice Reminder button and simply speak it: "Six green bananas." A D'Agostino representative on the other end will manually add the requested item to your order.

Furthermore, if you scan something that D'Agostino doesn't carry, a rep will call you to discuss a substitution. That speed bump eventually goes away, of course; over time, your standard list fills with those substitute items that the store does carry.

If you live beyond New York City, you may be able to get delivery from a company like Peapod, which offers service through Stop 'n' Shop and Giant stores in 10 states. (That's the service I tested.)

At the moment, the Ikan isn't quite as well integrated with Peapod. For example, those spoken fresh-fruit recordings are not transmitted to your Peapod.com list. They show up on your page at Ikan.net, neatly typed out when possible (the system offers speech recognition of 800 terms, like "limes" or "bananas"). But you have to add them to your Peapod.com list manually.

You don't get a phone call about substitutions, either. Items that Peapod doesn't carry congregate in a special section of your Peapod.com list; choosing substitutions is left to you.

Most of the Ikan's weaknesses stem from its fledgling status, not from design or concept problems. It's incredibly solid and speedy in performing its central functions: recognizing your home network, identifying products you're scanning and transmitting them instantly to the Web. Even teenagers won't forget to add things to the list, since it's so much fun to scan them.

But the Ikan's appeal will grow as the company develops partnerships with more store chains, as the features grow and as the steep price goes down.

The Ikan unit is a little bulky for a kitchen counter. The next version, the company says, will be far smaller; it will incorporate a digital camera instead of a laser apparatus.

It's also a little alarming that the thing is perpetually on. Sure, it uses only a trickle of electricity, but seeing that screen lighted day and night, ready for the next scan, will bug the environmentalist in you.

Finally, you've got a wireless Internet-connected machine with a color screen right there on your counter. What a waste not to have it fetch news, sports scores, weather and other Web info for you — or, at the least, to offer recipes and how-to cooking videos. The company says that it plans to add all of these features.

Incidentally, if you've never tried home grocery delivery, you're in for a treat; at least in my Peapod experiments, the system is extremely refined. The Web site is exceptionally well designed for quick list-building — you can search by category, by name, by aisle or by items you've ordered in the past.

You can specify a two-hour delivery window, leave instructions like “If no answer, leave in garage,” use store coupons (just hand them to the driver), use your store loyalty card, view all of the store's specials and so on. Frozen items come surrounded by little dry-ice packets, which produce huge volumes of white cloudy steam when dropped into a bucket of water — hours of fun for my whole family.

My one disappointment: nearly every item in my test orders came, pointlessly, in its own white plastic bag — every jar of pickles, every package of bacon. After unpacking, I put all 30 bags back into the large insulated delivery coolers that the driver had dropped off, hoping that the store would get the message. Or at least reuse the bags for the next customer.

Still, the time savings are truly gigantic. For a delivery charge of \$6 to \$8, you save a couple of hours a week and you gain incredible convenience. At the very least, you can use the home delivery option for staples — the stuff you always buy — and visit the actual store just for the elective items, or things you want to hand-pick.

All right, Americans don't really need another way to avoid moving their bodies or leaving the house. But think of it this way: with all that time you save, you can get to the gym more often. That's the way of the future, isn't it?

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