



Adding value

COUNTING IS one of mankind's most basic requirements and when the abacus was developed in ancient China several thousand years ago it was a great technological breakthrough that was later adopted by many other countries. While the modern scanner is now used in retail establishments around the world, the abacus can still be seen in some small shops in Hong Kong and the Mainland.

Then... As the retail industry developed in Asia, the abacus was gradually replaced by check out tills that were essentially mechanised adding machines. The operator simply punched in the price of each item and the till calculated the amount of money the customer needed to pay.

Now.. Computers play a vital part in the operation of today's modern supermarkets. Laser scanners read the bar code which contains information such as the price, country of origin and product code of each item being purchased. The modern check-out till also performs several other functions, from monitoring stock levels and customer loyalty programmes, to handling payments by credit and debit cards.



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