Charles walton a technology trailblazer

Technology

The application of the Radio Frequency Identificationtechnology(RFID) has been so widespread in this era of Information Technology. Its advantages and the fear of some privacy issues even reached to the legislative halls of several nations around the world. The issues even reached to the streets and the homes. But one important figure behind the device has been set out of the limelight. The person was Charles Walton. In a quest to find what has become of the father of RFID, I came across upon a lot of literatures that mentioned the names of Walton.

Most of the documents I encountered are discussions about RFID technology its benefits in a lot of areas of commerce, security, and other Information and Communications Technology based applications. One document even comprehensively discussed the origin of the technology and mentioned the names of key figures in the electronic field but failed to highlight the actual maker of the first passive RFID prototype. Most documents discussed the principles behind RFID systems which is basically composed of a tag and a reader. Ahmed (2004) explained the tag, containing a microchip and an antenna, stores the information.

These tags may be of active or passive type. Active tags have a power source or battery inside the tag and passive tags doesn’t carry any power source. The information inside the tag is accessed by a reader which is composed of a transmitter and receiver that can be connected to a PC for decoding. Walton pioneered the idea of developing the RFID to replace the bar code but the cost of his invention was too high compared to the alternative so he looked for another application and made success in the lock and key application (Khened, 2005, p. 24).

From then on the application of the technology became widespread and Walton made fortune out of it. The patent given in 1973 expired seventeen years later in 1990 which made his invention free for public use. Currently, the RFID market become huge that forecasts on shipments of RFID systems (including transponders, readers, software, and services) reached $890 million in 2000 to increase by approximately 24% annually to have reached $2. 65 billion in 2005 (ITAA, 2004).

The latest document I could get that mentioned about the whereabouts of Charles A. Walton was in year 2005 with the internet article published by Massachusetts Institute of Technology that featured Charles Walton as inventor of the Week. The article mentioned Walton’s patent of another derivative of the first RFID, a proximity card with incorporated PIN code protection, his latest then in the lines of patented inventions.

The invention was co-authored by Kenneth, B Cecil and was published in 2003 (WIPO, 2003). The last part of the article mentioned Walton continued to invent in line with RFID as well as other areas out of his laboratory in Los Gatos, California. Records may show that Charles Walton continued his endeavors as technology trailblazers and we look ahead to finding something new out of his ingenuity. But if another invention may not come and as times go by, the name Charles A.

Walton, the father of RFID may fade from the limelight of technology innovations, we would always recall that the name has made an imprint that could not be forgotten in the field of information technology inventions.

References

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