International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research (IJFMR)
E-ISSN: 2582-2160 ● Website: www.ijfmr.com ● Email: editor@ijfmr.com

MartPilot: Real-Time Smart Shelf Monitoring and Inventory Analytics Using Computer Vision

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ABSTRACT
Retail inventory monitoring and shelf management are important challenges in modern retail environments due to the increasing need for accurate stock tracking and efficient product supervision. Traditional inventory monitoring methods mainly depend on manual inspection, which is time-consuming and less effective for large retail stores. This paper presents a Smart Retail Shelf Monitoring and Product Detection System developed using deep learning and computer vision techniques for intelligent retail automation.
The proposed system uses a YOLO-based object detection model to identify and localize multiple retail products from shelf images captured through cameras or uploaded through a web interface. The model detects products under different shelf arrangements and varying lighting conditions with improved accuracy and real-time performance. The system also performs automated inventory monitoring and shelf analysis through an interactive dashboard interface.
The frontend is developed using React.js for user interaction and visualization, while the backend is implemented using REST API services and database integration for efficient data processing and storage. Experimental results demonstrate reliable product detection performance and improved inventory visibility in retail environments. The proposed system provides a scalable, user-friendly, and intelligent solution for smart retail automation and inventory management.

Keywords: Retail Automation, Computer Vision, Deep Learning, YOLO Object Detection, Smart Shelf Monitoring, Inventory Management, Product Detection, Real-Time Retail Analytics.

1. INTRODUCTION
Retail management is one of the most important sectors supporting product distribution, customer satisfaction, and business operations across modern commercial environments. In large retail stores and supermarkets, maintaining accurate inventory visibility and efficient shelf monitoring is essential for improving operational efficiency and reducing product management issues. However, retail shelves often face problems such as misplaced products, inaccurate stock tracking, and delayed inventory updates, which can affect customer experience and retail performance. Traditional inventory monitoring methods mainly depend on manual inspection by store staff, which is time-consuming, less efficient, and

difficult to manage in large-scale retail environments.

In recent years, advancements in Artificial Intelligence, computer vision, and deep learning have transformed retail automation by enabling intelligent image-based monitoring systems. Deep learning models such as YOLO-based object detectors are capable of identifying and localizing multiple products from retail shelf images by extracting visual features such as shape, texture, packaging patterns, and object boundaries. These technologies make it possible to perform automated shelf monitoring and inventory analysis using cameras or uploaded shelf images without requiring specialized retail hardware systems.

This paper presents a Smart Retail Shelf Monitoring and Product Detection System designed to provide real-time inventory visibility and intelligent shelf analysis using deep learning and computer vision techniques. The proposed system allows users to upload retail shelf images through a web application interface. The uploaded images are processed using a YOLO-based object detection model trained for retail product recognition and localization under different shelf arrangements and lighting conditions.

In addition to product detection, the system integrates inventory monitoring and shelf analytics features through an interactive dashboard interface. The application is developed using React.js for frontend visualization and REST API-based backend services with database integration for efficient processing and storage. By combining deep learning, computer vision, and intelligent retail analytics, the proposed system helps retailers improve inventory management efficiency, reduce manual supervision effort, and support modern AI-driven retail automation systems.

2. RELATED WORK

2.1 Deep Learning in Retail Product Detection

Deep learning techniques have been widely explored for automated product detection and inventory monitoring using retail shelf image analysis. Earlier research mainly focused on barcode-based inventory systems and traditional image processing methods for product recognition. However, these approaches were less effective in handling complex retail shelf environments containing multiple products, varying lighting conditions, and object overlap. Recent advancements in Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) and YOLO-based object detection models significantly improved real-time product detection accuracy and multi-object localization performance in retail applications.

2.2 Artificial Intelligence in Smart Retail Automation

The application of Artificial Intelligence in retail automation has increased rapidly with the growth of computer vision, machine learning, and intelligent analytics technologies. AI-based retail systems are increasingly used for inventory tracking, customer behavior analysis, shelf monitoring, and automated retail management. Modern retail analytics platforms integrate deep learning and image processing techniques to improve inventory visibility and operational efficiency. However, many existing retail applications mainly focus on stock management and sales analysis, while intelligent real-time shelf monitoring and automated product localization systems remain limited.

2.3 Image-Based Shelf Monitoring Systems

Image-based retail shelf monitoring systems have become an important research area due to the availability of advanced object detection models and large retail image datasets. Deep learning architectures such as YOLO, Faster R-CNN, SSD, and MobileNet-based detection systems have been applied for identifying retail products from shelf images with improved accuracy and inference speed. Recent cloud-based retail analytics platforms further improved accessibility by enabling real-time

product monitoring through web applications and dashboard systems. Despite these advancements, many systems still lack efficient real-time inventory visualization,
scalable architecture, and intelligent shelf analytics for practical retail deployment.

3. SYSTEM ARCHITECTURE

The proposed Smart Retail Shelf Monitoring and Product Detection System follows a multi-layer architecture consisting of frontend modules, backend services, deep learning inference systems, and database integration. The frontend interface allows retailers to upload retail shelf images and visualize detection results through an interactive dashboard. The backend server manages REST API communication, image preprocessing, and interaction with the deep learning model.

The system uses a YOLO-based object detection model to identify and localize multiple products from shelf images in real time. The detected product information, confidence scores, and localization details are processed and stored in the database for inventory monitoring and future analysis. The dashboard interface provides product visualization, inventory visibility, and shelf analytics to improve retail management efficiency. By integrating deep learning, computer vision, and web technologies, the proposed architecture provides an intelligent and scalable solution for modern retail automation systems.

The architecture of the proposed Smart Retail Shelf Monitoring and Product Detection System mainly consists of the following layers:

3.1 Presentation Layer

The presentation layer is developed using React.js for web-based retail monitoring and visualization. It provides an interactive user interface through which retailers or administrators can upload retail shelf images and monitor inventory information efficiently. The frontend also displays detected products, shelf analytics, inventory summaries, and real-time visualization outputs in a user-friendly format.

The presentation layer includes:

- Image upload and visualization module
- Product detection dashboard
- Inventory monitoring interface
- Shelf analytics and reporting system
- Real-time result visualization

3.2 Application Layer

The application layer is implemented using REST API-based backend services. It acts as the communication bridge between the frontend application, deep learning inference modules, and database storage systems. The backend handles image preprocessing, API request management, detection result processing, and inventory data management.

The backend functionalities include:

- REST API management
- Image preprocessing and validation
- Request handling and processing
- Communication with AI inference modules
- Inventory data processing
- Database interaction and storage

3.3 AI Inference Layer

The AI inference layer performs retail product detection and localization using a YOLO-based deep lear-

ning object detection model trained on retail shelf datasets. The uploaded shelf image is analysed to identify multiple products simultaneously under different shelf arrangements and lighting conditions.
The model performs:

- Multi-product detection
- Product localization using bounding boxes
- Confidence score generation
- Shelf image analysis
- Real-time object detection

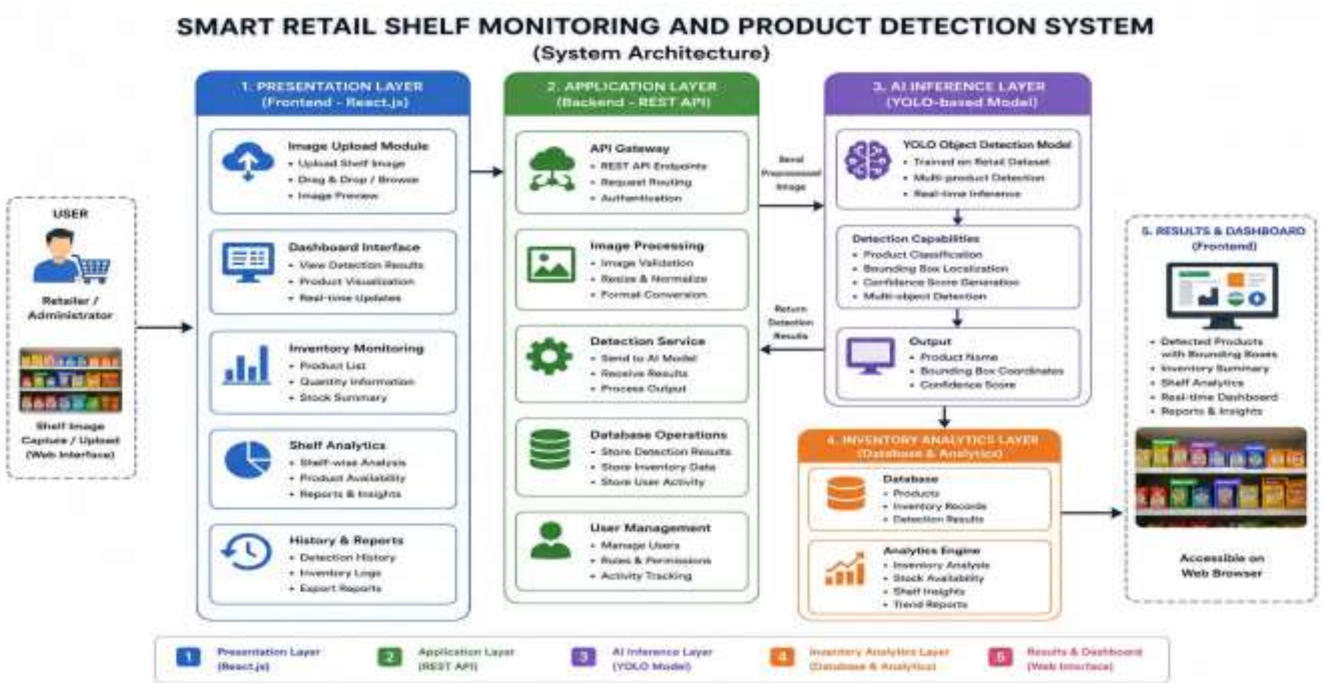
The AI layer also generates product classification results and inventory visibility information for shelf monitoring.

3.4 Inventory Analytics Layer

The inventory analytics layer generates intelligent inventory monitoring and shelf analysis outputs based on the detected product information. The system provides:

- Inventory visibility monitoring
- Shelf analytics and reporting
- Product quantity tracking
- Real-time dashboard visualization
- Product availability analysis
- Retail inventory insights

This layer improves retail management efficiency and reduces manual supervision effort through intelligent shelf monitoring and automated inventory analysis.



4. DEVELOPMENT JOURNEY

The development of the Smart Retail Shelf Monitoring and Product Detection System involved systematic evaluation of multiple technological approaches before finalizing the current architecture.

This section explains the complete development process, including implementation strategies, experimental approaches, encountered challenges, and optimization techniques used in the system.

4.1 Phase 1: Initial Design and System Analysis

The project began with detailed system analysis focused on retail inventory monitoring and automated shelf analysis. A Use Case Diagram was designed identifying the primary actors: Retailers, Administrators, and System Users. Core use cases identified included: Upload Shelf Image, Detect Products, View Inventory Details, Monitor Shelf Status, Analyse Product Availability, and Generate Reports.

Simultaneously, the overall system architecture was planned with the following components:

- React.js Frontend Interface
- Backend REST API Services
- AI Product Detection Module
- Inventory Monitoring System
- Dashboard and Analytics Interface

The initial design focused on creating a lightweight and user-friendly system suitable for real-time retail shelf monitoring and product detection.

4.2 Phase 2: CNN-Based Product Detection Approach

The first product detection approach implemented was a custom Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) model trained using retail shelf image datasets. The purpose of this approach was to build a customized deep learning model specifically for retail product recognition and classification.

Implementation involved:

- Image preprocessing and normalization
- CNN model development using TensorFlow/Keras
- Data augmentation techniques
- Multi-product classification training

Challenges encountered:

- High computational requirements during training
- Slower inference speed during testing
- Increased model size affecting system performance
- Difficulty in real-time multi-product detection
- Lower efficiency under dense shelf arrangements

Although the CNN model achieved satisfactory classification results, it was not efficient enough for lightweight real-time retail deployment.

Decision: The custom CNN architecture was replaced with a more optimized object detection model suitable for real-time retail shelf monitoring.

4.3 Phase 3: YOLO-Based Product Detection System

The second and final product detection approach used a YOLO-based object detection model optimized for real-time retail applications. The primary reason for selecting YOLO was its high detection accuracy combined with fast inference speed and efficient multi-object detection capability.

Implementation included:

- Training YOLO-based object detection model using retail shelf datasets
- Real-time product detection integration
- Product localization using bounding boxes

- Confidence score generation and visualization
- Shelf analytics and inventory monitoring integration

The model was trained to detect multiple retail products under different shelf arrangements and lighting conditions.

Advantages observed:

- Faster real-time detection speed
- Improved multi-product localization
- Reduced processing latency
- Better performance in dense shelf environments
- Improved inventory monitoring efficiency

Decision:

The YOLO-based object detection architecture was finalized as the primary product detection model due to its efficient real-time performance and optimized retail monitoring capability.

4.4 Phase 4: Backend Integration and System Development

The next phase focused on integrating the frontend application with backend services and AI-based product detection modules. The backend was developed using REST API-based services to manage image processing, API communication, product detection workflows, and inventory monitoring operations.

Implementation involved:

- REST API development for product detection
- Shelf image upload and preprocessing
- Detection result handling and visualization
- Inventory monitoring integration
- Product localization and confidence score generation
- Dashboard data processing and analytics

The backend architecture was optimized to improve real-time detection performance, reduce processing latency,
and support efficient communication between the frontend interface and AI inference modules.

5. IMPLEMENTATION DETAILS

5.1 Technology Stack

Technology Stack

Component	Technology Used
Frontend	React.js
Backend	REST API Services
AI Model	YOLO Object Detection
Database	MongoDB / Database Integration
Programming Language	JavaScript, Python
Visualization	Dashboard Analytics
Image Processing	OpenCV
Deep Learning Framework	TensorFlow | PyTorch

5.2 Key Design Decisions

5.2.1 YOLO for Product Detection

Initially, a traditional CNN-based classification model was considered for retail product recognition. However, the model required higher processing power and produced slower inference speed during multi-product detection. YOLO-based object detection was selected because it provides high detection accuracy with lower inference latency, making it suitable for real-time retail shelf monitoring and inventory analysis.

5.2.2 React.js for Frontend Development

The frontend interface was developed using React.js to provide a responsive and interactive user experience for retail monitoring. React.js enabled efficient dashboard rendering, real-time visualization updates, and smooth integration with backend API services.

5.2.3Image Preprocessing and Validation

Direct image processing without preprocessing caused inconsistencies during product detection under different shelf conditions. To improve detection reliability, the system performs image preprocessing operations such as resizing, normalization, and validation before forwarding images to the AI inference layer.

5.2.4 Real-Time Inventory Analytics

The project initially focused only on product detection. Later, inventory analytics and shelf monitoring modules were integrated to provide inventory visibility, product quantity analysis, shelf insights, and real-time dashboard visualization. This improved the practical usefulness of the system for intelligent retail management.

5.3 Product Coverage

The implemented system is capable of detecting multiple retail product categories under different shelf arrangements and retail environments. The trained YOLO-based object detection model supports:

- Beverage products
- Snack packets
- Grocery products
- Personal care items
- Packaged food products
- Household products
- Dairy products
- Bottled products

The system also supports multi-product detection and simultaneous localization for intelligent retail shelf analysis and inventory monitoring.

5.3 PRODUCT COVERAGE

PRODUCT CATEGORY	PRODUCTS SUPPORTED
BEVERAGE PRODUCTS	Water Bottles, Soft Drinks, Juices, Energy Drinks, Tea Bottles
SNACK PRODUCTS	Chips, Biscuits, Chocolates, Namkeen, Snack Bars
GROCERY PRODUCTS	Rice, Flour, Pulses, Spices, Cooking Ingredients

PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS	Shampoo, Soap, Toothpaste, Face Wash, Deodorants
PACKAGED FOOD PRODUCTS	Noodles, Pasta, Ready Meals, Canned Food, Breakfast Items
HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS	Detergents, Cleaners, Dish Wash, Floor Cleaners, Fresheners
DAIRY PRODUCTS	Milk Packets, Butter, Cheese, Yogurt, Cream
BOTTLED PRODUCTS	Sauces, Oils, Syrups, Condiments, Vinegar

MULTI-PRODUCT DETECTION: The system supports detection and localization of multiple products simultaneously in a single shelf image using YOLO-based object detection.

Total Classes Supported: 8

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

6.1 Product Detection Results

The YOLO-based object detection model successfully identified and localized multiple retail products from uploaded shelf images with high accuracy. Product categories such as beverage products, snack items, grocery products, and packaged food items produced reliable detection results under different shelf arrangements and lighting conditions.

The system effectively analysed:

- Product localization using bounding boxes
- Multi-product detection
- Shelf-wise product arrangement
- Product visibility and availability
- Real-time inventory monitoring

The application also correctly identified multiple products simultaneously and reduced incorrect product classification during shelf analysis.

6.2 Inventory Monitoring and Analytics Results

The inventory monitoring module generated real-time shelf analytics and inventory visibility information based on detected products and shelf conditions. The generated analytics included:

- Product availability monitoring
- Shelf inventory summaries
- Product quantity analysis
- Real-time dashboard visualization
- Shelf-wise analytics and reports
- Inventory visibility insights

This feature improved the usefulness of the system by providing intelligent retail monitoring, reducing manual supervision effort, and improving inventory management efficiency in retail environments.

6.3 System Performance

SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

FEATURE	AVERAGE RESPONSE TIME
Image Upload	< 2 seconds
Product Detection	2–4 seconds

Product Localization	< 1 second
Inventory Analysis	2–3 seconds
Dashboard Analytics	2–4 seconds
Report Generation	2–3 seconds
Result Display	< 1 second

7. CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

7.1 Product Detection Accuracy Challenges

One of the major technical challenges encountered during development was achieving consistent product detection accuracy in dense retail shelf environments. Products with similar packaging designs, colors, and shapes occasionally caused incorrect classification during initial testing. Variations in lighting conditions, shelf arrangements, image quality, and partial product occlusion also affected detection consistency. To improve model performance, image preprocessing, normalization, and data augmentation techniques such as rotation, scaling, and brightness adjustment were implemented to improve dataset diversity and model generalization capability.

7.2 Dataset Limitations

The system primarily uses retail shelf image datasets collected under controlled and semi-controlled retail environments. Real-world retail stores often contain crowded shelves, overlapping products, varying lighting conditions, and background noise that may affect product detection accuracy. Expanding the dataset with real-time supermarket shelf images and large-scale retail environments would improve model robustness and practical deployment performance.

7.3 Real-Time Image Processing Challenges

During development, handling high-resolution shelf images introduced several processing challenges due to the presence of multiple products in a single frame. Initial implementations produced slower inference speed and increased processing latency during multi-product detection. This issue was reduced by implementing image preprocessing and optimized YOLO-based object detection techniques for faster real-time inference and efficient image handling.

7.4 Real-Time Inventory Monitoring Performance

Maintaining fast detection speed while preserving high product detection accuracy was another significant challenge. Traditional CNN-based approaches produced slower inference times and increased memory consumption, making real-time shelf monitoring less efficient for large retail environments. This issue was mitigated by replacing traditional classification approaches with YOLO-based object detection architecture optimized for faster multi-object detection and real-time inventory monitoring.

8. FUTURE WORK

Several extensions are planned for future development of the proposed Smart Retail Shelf Monitoring and Product Detection System:

- Multi-store inventory monitoring: Extend the system to support centralized monitoring across multiple retail branches simultaneously.

- Real-time CCTV integration: Integrate live CCTV camera feeds for continuous shelf monitoring and automated inventory tracking.
- Low-stock alert system: Implement automated alerts for low-stock products and inventory shortages.
- Advanced shelf analytics: Improve shelf analysis using advanced AI models for customer interaction analysis and product placement optimization.
- Mobile application support: Develop mobile-based monitoring applications for remote retail inventory management.
- Cloud-based retail analytics: Integrate cloud computing services for scalable real-time analytics and large-scale inventory management.

9. CONCLUSION

This paper presented a Smart Retail Shelf Monitoring and Product Detection System designed to improve retail inventory visibility using deep learning and computer vision techniques. The system successfully integrates a YOLO-based object detection model, real-time image processing, inventory monitoring modules, and an interactive dashboard interface for efficient retail automation and shelf analysis.

The development process demonstrated the importance of iterative model evaluation and system optimization. Initial traditional CNN-based approaches provided satisfactory classification performance but resulted in higher computational complexity and slower inference speed during multi-product detection. The YOLO-based object detection model provided the best balance between detection accuracy, real-time performance, and efficient inventory monitoring capability suitable for practical retail applications.

Key technical contributions of the proposed system include: (1) implementation of a YOLO-based retail product detection model trained using retail shelf image datasets; (2) real-time detection and localization of multiple retail products under different shelf arrangements and lighting conditions; (3) integration of intelligent inventory monitoring and shelf analytics modules; (4) development of a React.js-based dashboard interface supporting real-time product visualization and inventory analysis; and (5) implementation of optimized image preprocessing and backend communication techniques for smooth real-time detection performance.

The proposed system demonstrates that modern Artificial Intelligence and deep learning technologies can significantly improve smart retail management by enabling accurate, fast, and automated product detection. By reducing dependency on manual shelf inspection and improving inventory visibility, the system helps retailers improve operational efficiency, reduce monitoring effort, and support intelligent AI-driven retail automation systems.

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