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Q&A with Royce Monteverdi of Robotic Parking Systems & David Laurello of Stratus Technologies

By David Laurello ([Profile](#)) and Royce Monteverdi ([Profile](#))

Tuesday, July 5th 2011

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VSM: Can you explain how your robotic parking system works?



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RM: The Robotic Parking Systems patented technology enables parking from hundreds up to several thousand cars in half the space of a conventional ramp-style garage. This creates more floor area for design, development and community enhancements. Architects and developers can use less space for parking and incorporate more green space, retail space, residential or office space or combinations of these. Robotic Parking Systems also retrieves cars for drivers, through a secure kiosk, which delivers the car to its driver at the exit terminal in three minutes or less, facing forward so that it is safe and easy to exit the garage.

VSM: What parking problems and issues does an automated parking system solve?

RM: Robotic Parking Systems provides many different benefits. They include:

- Minimizing the amount of space parking takes up, as Robotic Parking Systems takes up 50 percent less space to park the same number of cars as a conventional garage.
- Increasing parking security for both individuals and cars. Automatic parking eliminates personal exposure to violent crime due to walking through dark aisles, eliminates theft and vandalism and makes the common fender benders and vehicle dings and dents that occur while parking virtually impossible.
- An **environmentally friendly** system that reduces traffic congestion and a garages carbon footprint by reducing the accompanying pollution of people driving around and around looking for a safe, convenient place to park. Pollution is reduced inside the garage by using electromechanical automated parking machinery to move cars into parking spaces, and reducing emissions and energy.
- The convenience of valet parking without a valet, and no longer having to remember where the car is parked or searching for it.

VSM: What technology do you have going on behind the scenes?

RM: All Robotic Parking Systems include a full diagnostic system including early warning indicators and alarms that can be automatically sent to operator beepers or cell phones. Robotic Parking System's HMI (Human Machine Interface) is one of the most sophisticated diagnostics systems in the industry. Its patented high level warning systems provide alerts well in advance of any failures to help maintain a high level of uptime. The HMI records every rotation of any wheel, bearing, gearbox and motor. All moving parts are recorded in real time, and any needed maintenance is immediately reported online to the service department. And, the most important "backbone" is the Stratus ftServer system with true redundancy and an uptime of 99.999% uptime.

The automation software that runs the garage is powered by GE's Cimplicity intelligent platform, which is used worldwide in processes with high complexity and numbers of users. Cimplicity software runs automobile assembly lines such as GM and Ford, as well as container handling in seaports around the world where thousands of movements are performed on a 24/7 basis.

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Robotic Parking Systems also provide true redundancy with multiple elements controlling the same process to provide alternatives in case of failure. All major components have at least one backup system and, in some cases, as many as four. Every machine has built-in redundant components. In addition, at least two of each type of machine is installed in the automated parking facility. Both machines can perform the same tasks at the same time. Therefore, if one machine needs maintenance or repair, there is always a backup machine to keep the cars moving into and out of the garage. True redundancy translates into a greater level of reliability and ensures uninterrupted operations. No single failure will ever result in the system being inoperable. Uptime of the system is unprecedented.

VSM: If your system were to go down, what immediate impact would that have on your parking structures?

RM: Due to the design of the system it is actually impossible for the system to go down – only the components can fail and then other redundant components take over. This provides a system that operates at all times with only a reduction in performance in the event of a single failure. As long as power is available – and this is ensured by a back-up emergency power generator with automatic transfer switch – the system can continue uninterrupted. Even if the software failed to function, which is unlikely with the fault tolerant Stratus servers, the manual override with ensure that vehicles can be retrieved.

VSM: Why did you decide to implement Stratus' technology, and what value do they provide?

RM: Robotic Parking Systems chose to implement the ultra high-end fault tolerant Stratus servers to ensure that the automated parking system is operational at all times. Every piece of data (including garage configuration, location and identity of every car, etc.) and every command is stored in real-time on both servers. If one server fails, the second redundant server automatically takes over with no interruption of service.

VSM: Can you provide us with a quick overview of what Stratus does?

DL: At its core, Stratus provides business and organizations with uptime assurance. For companies that depend on uptime (and almost every business does), Stratus helps protect their money, reputations and lives by offering resilient software and hardware technologies and proactive remote management and monitoring services 24/7.

VSM: How does a business like Robotic Parking Systems benefit from using Stratus' technology?

DL: Virtually every business relies on critical applications being available all the time in order to be successful, and Robotic Parking Systems is a great example. A Robotic Parking Systems garage is a ballet of automation and IT orchestration. Sophisticated software controls the platforms, lifts, motors, sensors, and other mechanical gear that transport vehicles to an open slot in a multi-story steel shelving system. Without continuous uptime, this entire structure would come to a standstill resulting in massive delays, unhappy customers, a damaged reputation and a hit on the company's bottom line.

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VSM: Why is it so important for businesses to prepare for potential downtime?

DL: It used to be that only a handful of applications were considered business critical. Today, the opposite is true. In our experience, most enterprises, especially small and medium business, really don't know how downtime will impact operations or their bottom line. Forrester Research pegs the cost of downtime for the average company at \$150,000 per hour, but if it is even only \$20,000 or \$30,000, that is a big hit to the cost of doing business. While financial impact is obviously important, the impact on reputation and customer satisfaction are also at the top of the list of downtime concerns for many companies. Here's a really simple example, which happened to me. I ordered flowers to be delivered on Mother's Day. The flowers were never delivered because the shop's computer went down three days prior. They didn't know what had to be delivered where. Sure, the store lost business on that specific day, but they've also lost my business for future purchases, on Mother's Day and other occasions. I'm sure other customers feel the same way.

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VSM: What type of negative effects would occur if a business, such as Robotic Parking Systems, were to experience significant downtime?

DL: The important thing to realize about the cost of downtime is that damage extends well beyond the outage. In Robotic Parking Systems case, a system failure would immediately result in several hundred distressed customers, whose plans were put on hold because their cars were locked away. There would be no new business coming in. After an experience like that, there's a good chance customers would not return any time soon. They would tell their friends and family, and future revenue and customers would be lost. This can happen to any business in any industry, from a clothing store that can't process a credit card, to a community bank's ATM network being inaccessible, to a clinic that has no access to electronic patient records.

VSM: What is the most important thing businesses should consider when weighing the importance of preventing downtime?

DL: Management really needs to determine the real cost of being unable to conduct business for hour, and how many people on the inside and outside will be negatively affected. Then, how long will it take to get the operation up and going again? With this as a backdrop, now they are in a position to evaluate various options available to them for achieve the right level of uptime assurance. Achieving uptime assurance need not be costly or complex. What is very important to realize, however, is that very few uptime solutions actually prevent downtime; they are designed to recover from failure. For a period, applications will go offline, data will be lost, business will stop. Robotic Systems selected Stratus ftServer systems because these are among the very few solutions designed to prevent failure, downtime and data loss. Our systems have been doing this for customers around the world for over 30 years.

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Royce Monteverdi - Profile

Royce Monteverdi - President & CEO of Robotic Parking Systems

Inventor, designer and chief technical engineer of the Robotic Parking System garage, Mr. Monteverdi holds numerous patents for automated, robotic parking technology. Mr. Monteverdi began his career as an apprentice at the workbenches of KRUPP in 1972. He earned a degree in construction and mechanics at the University of Stuttgart and Ulm in South Germany in 1976. Simultaneously, he attended architectural classes studying construction and design in developing properties.



Mr. Monteverdi began and successfully ran his own engineering consulting firm in 1981 specializing in industrial design. He then purchased the KRUPP manufacturing plant (which employed more than 200 people) in Stuttgart, Germany during the mid 1980's and increased the annual revenue of the company from \$40 million to over \$100 million.

A few of his projects include the Munich airport, Volkswagen factory, Hitachi Chip (wafer) factory, Mercedes Benz assembly line, the launch pad for the Ariane space rocket and others. In view of his professional expertise and the patents he held for the Robotic Parking System, NASA/Satop asked Mr. Monteverdi to cooperate in developing a security system to detect explosives, narcotics and bodies in cars. This system is in operation today at specific locations.

Mr. Monteverdi also currently serves on National Fire Protection Association Committee on Garages and Parking Structures.

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David Laurello - Profile

David Laurello - President & CEO of Stratus Technologies

David Laurello rejoined Stratus in January 2000. Dave comes to Stratus from Lucent Technologies, where he held the position of Vice President and General Manager of the CNS (Converged Network Solutions) business unit. At Lucent, Dave was responsible for engineering, product and business management and marketing. Prior to this role, he was Vice President of Engineering of the Carrier Signaling and Management Business Unit at Ascend Communications. From 1995 to 1998, Dave was Vice President of Hardware Engineering and Product Planning at Stratus. Before Stratus, he held a number of senior engineering management positions at Digital Equipment Corporation. Dave earned a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering and an MBA from the University of Massachusetts.



Dave is a member of the Stratus Board of Directors. He is also a board member of the Massachusetts High Technology Council, and the Massachusetts United Way of Tri-County.

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