

IBM Inventors Patent Invention for Transferring Packages between Aerial Drones

Invention extends drone delivery range for shipping

ARMONK, N.Y. - 28 Apr 2017: IBM (NYSE: [IBM](#)) today announced that its inventors have been granted a patent for transferring packages between drones during flight. The invention described in [US Patent No. 9,561,852: In flight transfer of packages between aerial drones](#) helps to extend the range of drones that are delivering packages from a warehouse to a customer's home. IBM inventors developed this patented system using their supply chain expertise to enable precise delivery services to customers using drones.

Drawing of IBM patent, which could extend drone delivery range for shipping. (Credit: IBM)

Drones are starting to be used to transport packages to customer locations, but there are still numerous challenges to this delivery method such as: limited flight range, theft of unattended packages once delivered, and a lack of delivery network optimization. This invention can help to mitigate these challenges by providing in-flight drone-to-drone package transfers to extend package delivery range.

For example, a customer expecting a package could dispatch a personal drone to receive and securely deliver the package to the customer's home. Drone delivery network optimization could be provided to autonomous drones via the communications link described in the patent.

"Drones have the potential to change the way businesses operate and by leveraging machine learning, drones could change ecommerce," said Sarbajit Rakshit, IBM Master Inventor and co-inventor on the patent. "Our inventor team is focused on improving how the most valuable cargo is delivered globally. This could create opportunities such as managing drones to deliver postal packages and medicine in developing countries via the most direct route."

IBM inventors have patented other inventions related to drones and drone-enabling technologies. However, this is just one aspect of IBM's Supply Chain and Logistics expertise. IBM manages supply chains for clients on

a worldwide basis using [IBM Watson Supply Chain](#).

For more information about IBM's patent leadership, please visit: <https://ibm.co/2px5s2M>

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