



How Can Tech Help with Food Fraud?

For connoisseurs of seafood, there's no problem in paying extra to ensure their red snapper is of the highest quality, their wild salmon was sustainably and ethically sourced at sea, or their lobster is fresh off the boat that morning. However, [a rising tide of food fraud](#) has meant that opening your chequebook wider doesn't always guarantee that you get what you pay for.

Thankfully, one Dubai restaurant is taking steps to ensure such undesirable scenarios become a thing of the past. By partnering with an e-commerce marketplace dedicated to seafood, the eatery is allowing patrons to see via the use of an app the exact provenance – complete with certification – of their chosen meal order.

Food fraud on the rise

Food fraud, which encompasses the theft, misrepresentation, adulteration, substitution, illegal processing, waste diversion and document fraud of food products, has risen substantially in recent times. According to experts on the topic, the practice could cost the industry up to \$40 million across the globe each year.

Fish and seafood are one of the biggest targets of such unscrupulous individuals, with a recent investigation revealing that one in five fish consumed in restaurants and markets was labelled incorrectly. For those who love their fruits of the sea, that's an unacceptably high percentage and results in paying over the odds for substandard fare.

UAE eatery leads the way

Thankfully, the forward march of technology could provide a solution to this global issue. In the Emirati metropolis of Dubai, one enterprising restaurant is bringing in steps to curtail the practice. Rockfish, an Italian bistro on the beach, has teamed up with Seafood Souq, an online marketplace with allows buyers and sellers of seafood to connect remotely.

By leveraging the data provided by Seafood Souq, Rockfish can equip its customers with a QR code that allows them to see the exact origins of their order. This includes the exact time and location that it was caught, as well as details on how it was transported and the relevant documentation to back those facts up.



A blueprint for the food industry as a whole?

Although the service has only been recently introduced at Rockfish, it's already proving to be a huge hit with the restaurant owners themselves, who finally have a way to verify their order is what is advertised. "Seafood is an industry that is wrought with not necessarily fraud but opacity or darkness within the supply chain. It is very difficult for buyers to know where they're getting their seafood from," [explains Sean Dennis](#), founder and CEO of Seafood Souq.

Those sentiments were echoed by Marco Acquaroli, executive sous chef at Rockfish. "We're very happy now. Our guests (are) 100% sure where the fish was in the last 24 hours," he commented. If it continues to be popular with patrons and proprietors alike, there's every reason to believe similar technology will be rolled out across the entire food industry in the foreseeable future.