



IoT food containers

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## FOOD CONTAINERS ALERT USERS WHEN CONTENTS NEED TO BE EATEN

 SUSTAINABILITY

### Chicago-based tech startup has launched food containers which use the Internet of Things to help users reduce food waste.

With the world's resources at risk of exhaustion, it is imperative to avoid food waste. The average American throws away 40 percent of the groceries they buy, and innovative inventions are hoping to combat this. We have seen the creation of a [dynamic pricing system](#) which could revolutionize grocery shopping. The technology allows consumers to purchase products close to their expiration dates for a lower price, preventing food waste. The invention of the [FridgeCam](#) also combats food waste, this time in people's homes. The smart fridge camera sends users alerts when food is soon to expire. The Chicago-based startup [Ovie](#) is very similar, also alerting users when food is going out of date. However, this is done in a different way, with containers that use smart technology rather than a camera.

Ovie products include, or consist of, a smart fridge tag. This tag changes color to signal whether or not the food is still good to eat. Green when recently tagged, yellow when it is getting close to expiring, and red when it is unsafe to eat. The tags are very straightforward and easy to use. Users only need to press the button on the SmartTag and tell Alexa what food they are saving. If users don't have a smart home speaker, they can type the food into the Ovie app. The tag then works by extracting data from a database of information about food expiration dates. This identifies how long the food should last for and starts the countdown on the SmartTag. When half the duration has

passed, the tag sends a notification to your smartphone. Users can adjust their preferences for food duration in the mobile application. Moreover, the app sends users recipe ideas to use up the food they have in the fridge. Currently crowdfunding on [Kickstarter](#), there are several Ovie products available. The container, clip, and connect are all available for pre-order, to be distributed in January 2019.

It will be interesting to see how this Smarterware influences the cooking and eating habits of users. Geared towards more efficient, less wasteful food consumption, how could this technology be improved in the future? Is this just the beginning of smart products helping households to be more environmentally-friendly?

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