

HOME » SOFTWARE

JUN
21
2018

SOFTWARE



Augmented Reality Adoption Picks Up Speed in Retail

AR is being used to provide guidance in and outside of stores — a practice that may expand in the future.

by [Erin Brereton](#) X

Erin Brereton has written about technology, business and other topics for more than 50 magazines, newspapers and online publications.

LISTEN 04:34

In the past several years, a number of retail stores have introduced augmented reality-based services to enhance consumers' shopping experience.

Initially, some retailers used the technology as **a promotional element** — allowing shoppers to unlock the different powers of Marvel's Avengers [while walking down Walmart store aisles](#), for example, or scan a box in [a Lego Store](#) to see a 3D depiction of the model inside.

Today, a new wave of retailers is releasing AR-enabled tools that have been designed with a more practical goal: **making it easier for customers to find, evaluate and ultimately buy items, both in-store and online.**

SIGN UP: Get more news from the *BizTech* newsletter in your inbox every two weeks!

More Design Options, Recognition Boost Retailers' Use of AR

The 2016 launch of the Pokémon GO app, which the developer says [surpassed more than 500 million downloads](#) within a few months, likely helped fuel AR's popularity — or at least awareness of the technology — in recent years.

Whether or not consumers have directly experienced augmented reality, many know it exists. Indeed, **74 percent** now expect retailers to offer some kind of AR element, [according to a Digital Bridge survey released in September](#).

Numerous new AR tools have cropped up following the release of smartphones embedded with AR platforms such as [Apple's ARKit](#) and [Google's ARCore](#) in the past year, which gave developers additional resources to create robust AR experiences.

"Consumers are now seeing the benefits of being able to place objects — like furniture — over a picture of the environment in front of them and are increasingly expecting retailers to offer them the ability to do this," says Digital Bridge CEO David Levine.

A number of new retail-sector offerings, **such as cosmetics, allow customers to visualize how potential purchases will be used.** [The Benefit app](#) helps cosmetics buyers test out eyebrow shapes, for

Latest Articles



Strategic Data Management Is Key To A Smarter Cloud Approach



What You Should Know About Cisco Enterprise Agreements



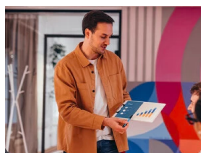
How To Achieve Secure, Easy Access With Elegant Identity And Access Management



Android 10 End Of Life: How Logitech's CollabOS Keeps Devices Secure And Updated

**CLOUD**

Strategic Data Management Is Key to a Smarter Cloud Approach

**MANAGEMENT**

What You Should Know About Cisco Enterprise Agreements

ADVERTISEMENT

example, and [Sephora's Virtual Artist](#) projects make-up artist-designed looks onto users' faces.

Some clothing retailers, [such as Gap](#), offer apps that let customers see what outfits would look like without actually trying them on. The retailer says the app was created in response to the fact that **"technology continues to change the way customers engage with brands, browse products and shop."**

Several home furnishing chains, including [IKEA](#), [Home Depot](#) and [Pottery Barn](#), also have released apps to help consumers visualize new pieces of furniture and design elements in a room.

AR Can Facilitate the Way Consumers Move Through Stores

Some companies are also using augmented reality to enhance customers' in-store experience. [MAC Cosmetics](#), for instance, added virtual mirrors in U.S. brick-and-mortar locations last year for customers to try on eye and other looks using live video images of themselves, eliminating the need to repeatedly wipe off and reapply make-up.

Other retailers, including [Walgreens](#), have turned to AR in recent years to help shoppers physically navigate stores using apps that layer product location and sale notifications over images of the store's aisles. The app helps the drugstore chain provide added convenience by simplifying store visits and saving customers time.

AR Still Has Room to Grow in Retail

AR's adoption hasn't been immediate in retail — or many other industries. According to [a survey released in April from ARTilly Intelligence](#), in partnership with Thrive Analytics, **only about a third (32 percent) of consumers have used mobile AR apps.**

More than a third of IT decision-makers, however, say developing augmented reality mobile apps **should be one of the highest priorities to evolve the brick-and-mortar digital experience**, according to a recent [Riverbed survey](#).

Research conducted by two retail-sector analysts suggests AR experiences, like the app early-adopter [American Apparel](#) offered several years ago, showcasing pricing, color choices and other details

when in-store signage was scanned, may particularly resonate with customers. [A 2018 Accenture study](#) found that **61 percent of consumers want to use AR (and virtual reality) to visualize how clothing might fit.**

How retailers capitalize on AR's potential remains to be seen. However, Accenture predicts it is "likely that more and more retail companies will be taking advantage of augmented reality to drive customer engagement to new levels" — a move that could have a positive outcome for both customers and retailers.

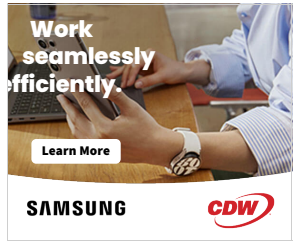
DRAGONIMAGES/GETTY IMAGES



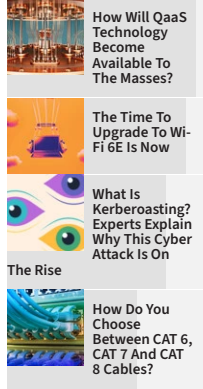
Become an **Insider**

Sign Up

Sign up today to receive premium content!



Trending Now



More On **MOBILITY** **DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION**

INNOVATION **AUGMENTED REALITY**