

Amazon leans into AR shopping with new hair salon

Article

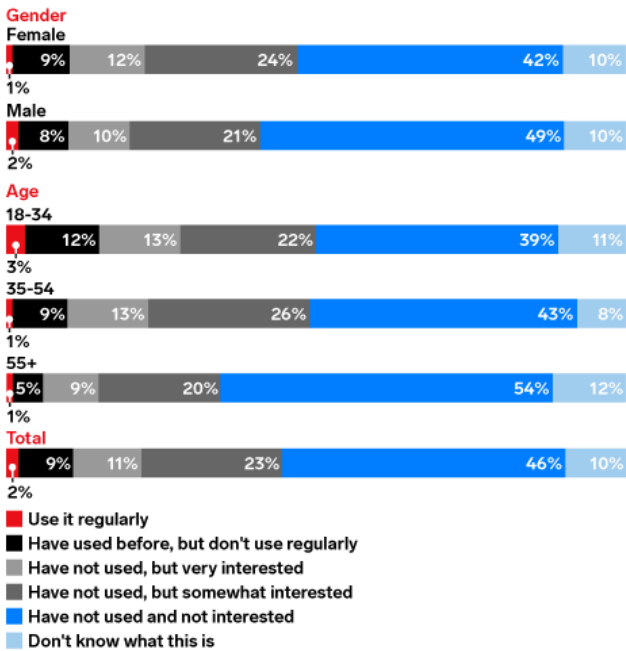
Amazon **announced** yesterday that it's opening a hair salon in London—but it's not exactly looking to get into the styling business. Instead, Amazon described the venture as a way to “showcase new products and technology.” The salon will use AR to show customers how their hair could look after using various products, which customers can then purchase via QR code. The experience is a blend of in-person and virtual shopping—a new muscle that Amazon is

starting to flex as it **ventures** further into brick-and-mortar retail. With the salon in particular, it's likely that Amazon's real interest lies in gauging consumer interest in AR and experimenting with ways to integrate the technology into other parts of its business.

Consumer adoption of AR for shopping is still low, but it's rising quickly, especially during the pandemic. With in-store visits heavily limited during lockdowns, adoption of the tech for shopping has more than doubled in the past year. Just 5% of US adults said they had used AR or virtual reality (VR) while shopping in a **December 2019** wave of an eMarketer and Bizrate Insights survey. By the February 2021 wave, 11% said they had done so, and another 34% said that they were at least somewhat interested in trying it. Overall, we **forecast** there will be 93.3 million monthly AR users in the US this year, or 28.1% of the population.

How Interested Are US Adults in Using AR* and VR While Shopping?

% of respondents, by demographic, Feb 2021



Note: numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding; *for example, trying on clothing or makeup by superimposing an image onto themselves
 Source: "The Insider Intelligence Ecommerce Survey" conducted in February 2021 by Bizrate Insights, Feb 9, 2021

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On the business side, interest is also ramping up. Companies like **Snapchat** and **Pinterest** that already used AR pre-pandemic have begun ramping up their use of the technology for social commerce. Others like **Facebook** and **Apple** are investing heavily in the hardware. Amazon itself also experimented with AR during lockdowns, **launching** an AR tool for furniture

shopping in August 2020. It even **experimented** with a lipstick try-on feature with L'Oréal in 2019. The hair salon is just one more sign that Amazon is getting serious about using AR for shopping.

And Amazon's investments in AR are certain to push adoption even higher. It's not clear yet how or when Amazon plans to integrate AR into its platform—at least beyond the small experiments it's done with furniture and makeup. But with Amazon alone set to **account** for more than 40% of all US retail ecommerce sales this year, bringing AR to the platform would undoubtedly increase adoption, which in turn would open the door for more marketers to begin experimenting with the format.

For more on this, read our “US Virtual and Augmented Reality Users 2021” report [here](#).