

Aldi tests a checkout-free store format

Article

The news: Aldi has retrofitted a store in suburban Chicago with checkout-free technology to create an experience it calls “Aldigo.”

The details: The technology, developed by a company called **Grabango**, doesn't require changes to the store's planogram or product displays. It uses computer vision to identify and keep track of every item in the store.

- Shoppers who download the Grabango app can navigate the store as usual, placing items in their baskets. When they're finished shopping, they scan a QR code in the app to have the bill

charged to their card.

- Shoppers also have the option to check out with a traditional cashier.

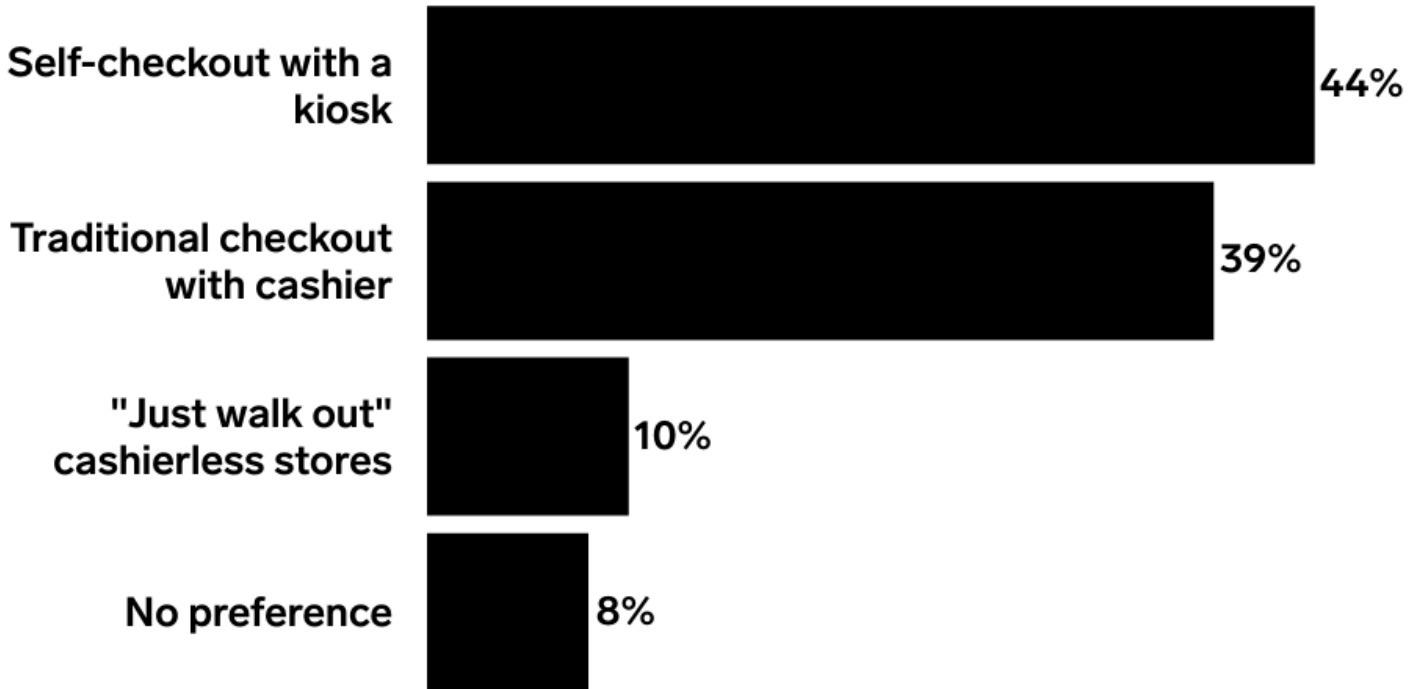
Differing approaches: Aldi's rollout comes just weeks after **Amazon** announced it was [pulling the plug on its cashierless "Just Walk Out" technology](#). The retail giant is shifting its focus to AI-powered Dash Carts, which allow shoppers to scan items as they move through the store and check their spending in real time.

- Just Walk Out—which Amazon continues to use in Amazon Go stores, Amazon Fresh in the UK, and third-party retailers—relies on shelf sensors, which are expensive to operate, wrote Grabango CEO **Will Glaser** in a blog post earlier this month. "These sensors, while innovative, necessitate a fixed store layout that clashes with the dynamic nature of retail, locking down the SKU list and requiring meticulous store upkeep," he wrote.
- That compares with Grabango's approach focused on computer vision, which Glaser claims is "more flexible and cost-effective."

The big takeaway: While Aldi is giving consumers the option of checkout-free shopping, it isn't forcing them to learn to navigate an entirely new technology. That gives it a better chance of success than Just Walk Out.

Preferred Grocery Store Checkout Method Among US Grocery Shoppers, April 2023

% of respondents



Note: ages 18+

Source: Progressive Grocer and RIS News, "2023 Grocery Tech Trends Study: A Balancing Act," Aug 17, 2023

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