

What Shoppers Want from Stores of the Future

How much do they care about robots and VR?

ARTICLE

Krista Garcia

Stores [are closing around the country](#) and consumers have shifted to online shopping channels, so retailers have been implementing in-store tech and omnichannel options to meet the perceived demands of the modern shopper.

A June 2018 survey by [RIS News](#) asked US internet users about the ways they'd changed their shopping behavior compared with five years ago. Not surprisingly, 83% said they now shopped online more, and 55% said they shopped at malls less often. Stores as a general category had mixed responses; 24% of respondents shopped more in brick-and-mortar locations, while 31% shopped in-store less.

The leading new shopping option wanted by consumers was "grab and go" technology (in which customers can self-checkout using their smartphones); 59% said they'd like to use this, and 9% had used it. Interactive shoppable screens in-store also had high interest. Stores like Bonobos' Guideshops, in which you place an order but don't walk out with products, had the highest number who had tried it (23%). Consumers were not particularly interested in virtual reality for immersive experiences (72%) or robots (70%), [no matter how cool they seem](#), while augmented reality to visualize products stands a better chance for consumer adoption.

What New Shopping Options/Technologies Would US Digital Buyers Like to Use?

% of respondents, May 2018

	Would like to use	Using now or have used	No interest in using
Grab-and-go stores with self-checkout from your phone	59%	9%	32%
Interactive, shoppable screens	56%	6%	38%
Home delivery	45%	8%	47%
Order-only stores (products only shipped to your home)	44%	23%	33%
Virtual (computer-generated) try-on for glasses, clothing, beauty, etc.	43%	4%	53%
AR in a store (e.g., overlay furniture on floor plan)	40%	3%	58%
Remote services (e.g., using interactive screens/displays)	38%	9%	53%
In-home product order buttons so you never run out	38%	5%	57%
Drone delivery	38%	2%	60%
Subscription orders of shopper-selected products regularly delivered	36%	15%	49%
Subscription products selected for me regularly delivered	31%	12%	57%
Ordering while in a smart car connected to the internet	29%	3%	68%
Robot services in stores	28%	2%	70%
VR in a store (e.g., using VR to see different environments)	36%	2%	72%

Note: ages 15-74

Source: RIS News, "Retail 2025 Shopper Study: The Future of Retail Is Already Here" sponsored by Infosys, LG and Radial, Aug 30, 2018

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Most of the retailers (87%) surveyed in July 2018 by **Retail Systems Research (RSR)** thought the physical store would not lose importance in the future, regardless of the barrage of recent closings. Fully 63% of retail "winners" (those with an average annual sales growth rate of 4.5% or more) expected the store to become just one of many ways for consumers to shop their brand.

The biggest opportunity to most improve stores was borrowing from what consumers like about online shopping and translating it in-store, cited by 60% of retailers. And if money were not an issue, rolling out new technologies to stores would be retailers' top choice for making stores more relevant.

Which tech do these retailers currently use and are happy with? Hardly any. One of the most satisfactory consumer-facing solutions cited (29%) was mobile app checkout, which aligns with consumer expectations in the RIS study. More "winners" (34%) had implemented

mobile app checkout well, and 65% of these retailers ranked this option highest for potential value.

2018 has seen a lot of interest in "scan and go" checkout, especially among grocers who have already acclimated shoppers to self-checkout. But it's not always a win for retailers. To wit, Walmart ended its Scan & Go pilot earlier this year.