

# Top 3 retail automation technologies to watch

## Article

Despite slowing sales growth, **US ecommerce sales** will top \$1 trillion for the first time this year. Our **“Reimagining Retail” podcast** team spoke about the latest ways retailers are trying to streamline their ecommerce operations.

**Droning on.** Though drone delivery technology is still in its early stages, it’s becoming a larger part of commerce quicker than expected, said our analyst Yory Wurmser.

- UPS and Walmart are expanding their drone programs, while Alphabet’s Wing subsidiary is working with retailers on drone delivery.

- “The average consumer is not going to get drone delivery this year or in 2023, but you’re going to see a lot of activity and excitement around it,” said Wurmser.

**Better, faster, stronger.** Fulfillment center automation isn’t anything new, but Wurmser predicts that the types of automation will become more sophisticated in the years to come.

- Nearly half of fulfillment warehouses will be automated by 2024.
- Evolving automation technologies will benefit the industry twofold: They will increase the speed of fulfillment while also addressing labor shortages.
- “I think you’re going to start to see automation that replaces menial and dangerous jobs that warehouses have a hard time hiring for,” said Wurmser.

**Breaking the code.** Another existing technology that will evolve is QR codes.

- About 89 million people will use QR codes this year, increasing to 102 million by 2026.
- Wurmser says that QR codes will bring a more seamless form of commerce, especially in nonretail settings.

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