

How AR and VR Will Reshape Shopping

Smartphones will play a much larger role, but change won't happen overnight

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Technologies like augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) have the potential to change the shopping journey. According to a recent [Ericsson](#) survey, AR and VR will make it possible to get all the benefits of shopping in a store directly on a smartphone, for instance. But don't expect that advanced shopping scenario right away.

Just 17% of AR and VR users worldwide said that scenario is already mainstream and accepted by consumers in general. For the most part, many believe it will happen at least three years from now.

A good number of respondents also believe stores will have a much smaller floor space, because they'll be using AR and VR technology to showcase their products. Again, many believe this is likely to become mainstream at least the next three years.

Timeframe in Which Augmented/Virtual Reality Users Worldwide Think Select Advanced Shopping Scenarios Will Become Mainstream*, Jan 2018

% of respondents

1 Already mainstream	5 Within 6-10 years from now
2 Within a year	6 Later
3 Within 3 years from now	7 Never
4 Within 5 years from now	

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Almost all shopping will be done via smartphone and physical stores will disappear	19%	23%	22%	13%	11%	7%	6%
Technologies like AR and VR will make it possible to get all the benefits of shopping in a store directly on a smartphone	17%	27%	25%	17%	8%	4%	2%
Stores will have much smaller floor space but instead use AR and VR to show off their products	16%	24%	26%	18%	8%	6%	2%
Pop-up stores that temporarily appear and sell special selections, seasonal goods or unique offers	21%	26%	25%	16%	6%	4%	2%

*Note: ages 15-69; among the 35% of internet users who use AR/VR at least weekly; numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding; *and accepted by consumers in general*
 Source: Ericsson Consumer & IndustryLab, "Beyond smartphone shopping – the rise of smart assistants," May 7, 2018

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Interestingly, this group of AR and VR users also imagines that sometime soon, almost all shopping will be done via smartphone—and that physical stores will disappear. In fact, just 6% of those surveyed said this is something that will never happen.

Technology has been a focus for many retailers this year. Zara recently **bet on technology** to drive people to stores, as did **Nordstrom, Target and Walmart**, just to name a few.

Although consumers remain wary due to things like **costs and user experience**, a January 2018 **Perkins Coie** poll revealed that 18% of US AR/VR professionals expect the retail industry to invest in the technology this year, compared with 7% in July 2016.