

Shoppers Like Emerging Tech in Theory

Consumers think it improves customer experience but many haven't tried it

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Emerging retail tech straddles the line between utilitarian and useless. Improving the customer experience is usually the end goal but when it's implemented just for the sake of showing off, consumers don't always find it useful.

According to a June 2018 [JDA Software](#) survey, consumers were receptive to the idea of retail tech. Nearly all (97%) said new technologies either always or sometimes enhanced the customer experience. Specifically, 42% said features like augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), mobile coupons and in-store robots always enhance it.

Mobile coupons are very different from robots, though, as most consumers have considerably more experience with using apps for discount codes than receiving customer assistance from a non-human helper.

With the rise of smart speakers and phone-based assistants like Siri, voice assistance is different matter. Forty percent of internet users worldwide had used a voice-controlled device for shopping, according to a JDA survey. Among those who had used Siri, Google Home or

others, 17% used it for research only, 12% for buying only and 11% a combination of the two.

Despite **conflicting reports**, by many measures those figures are higher in the US--at least among those who already own smart speakers. On the high end, over half (54%) of US smart speaker owners had ever made a purchase via voice commerce, according to **Delineate**, while that number dropped to 26% in a survey by **Voicebot, Rain** and **PullString**.

Comparative Estimates: US Smart Speaker Owners Who Have Made a Purchase via Their Smart Speaker, 2017 & 2018

% of respondents

	2017	2018
Delineate, March 2018	-	54%
Fluent, March 2018	-	27%
Voicebot, Rain and Pullstring, March 2018	-	26%
OC&C Strategy, Feb 2018	51%	-
Localytics*, Feb 2018	49%	-
NPR and Edison Research**, Jan 2018	44%	-
Google and Peerless Insights***, Aug 2017	44%	-
Morning Consult, Sep 2017	33%	-
comScore, March 2018	30%	-

*Note: ages 18+; ever made a purchase; *made a purchase 2-10 times; **ordered a new item they had not purchased before/reordered an item; ***at least once a week*

Source: various, as noted, Aug 2017-March 2018

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VR has seen fewer widespread applications in retail, but AR to aid in kitchen design or to visualize how furniture would look in a room **has seen greater adoption and holds more promise**.

Augmented reality (AR) tools to preview a product would increase the likelihood of making a purchase for roughly one in five of consumers, according to JDA. But once a shopper used AR, they were more convinced. Close to half (47%) who experienced AR aids, said it would help make a buying decision.

It would appear consumers need more exposure to emerging tech to decide whether it truly improves the shopping experience. In a **Bizrate Insights** survey conducted for eMarketer, **most US internet users had not used AR while shopping** (90.4%) but 42.3% said they would like to.