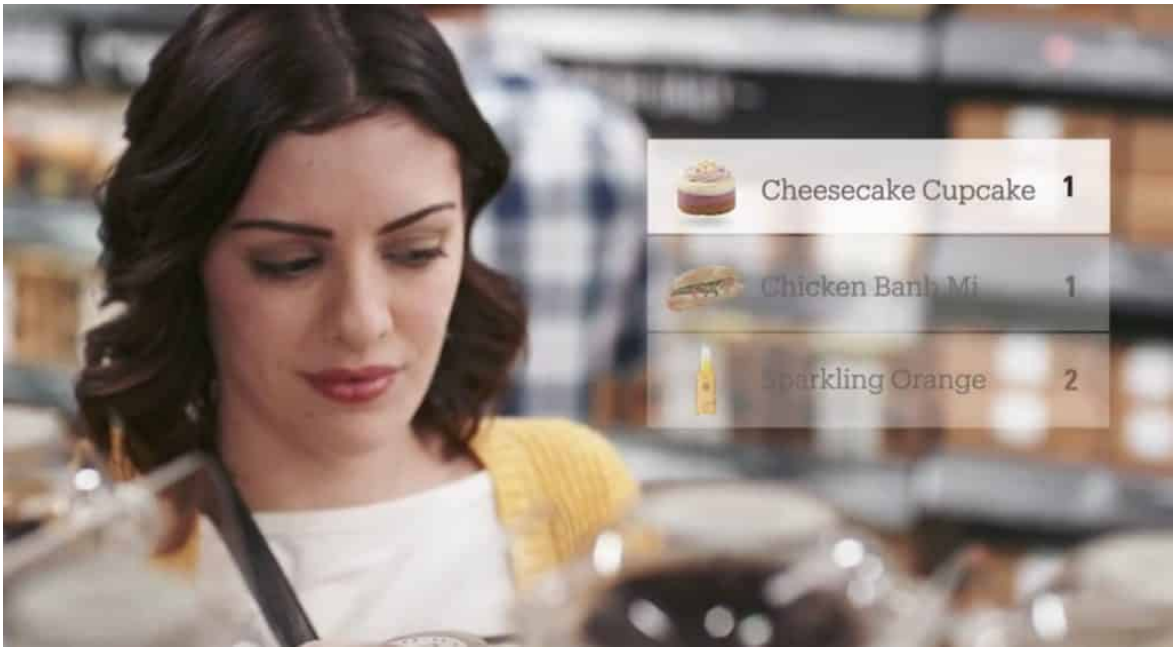

Amazon Invents 'Smart' Convenience Stores Without Checkouts or Cashiers

The store tracks your every move and everything you put into your basket. When you are done, just walk out of the store. Your total balance is automatically charged to your debit/credit card. TN Editor

Call it Amazon.com's driverless store.

The tech giant has built a convenience store in downtown Seattle that deploys a gaggle of technologies similar to those used in self-driving cars to allow shoppers to come in, grab items and walk out without going through a register.

The 1,800-square-foot store, officially dubbed "Amazon Go," is the latest beach in brick-and-mortar retail stormed by the e-commerce giant, which already has bookstores and is working on secretive drive-thru grocery locations.

It's clearly a sign that Amazon sees a big opportunity in revolutionizing the staid traditions of Main Street commerce.

In the much longer term, if the experiment works out and is adopted widely, it could radically transform the nature of work in the retail industry, much like driverless car and truck technology threatens to upend transportation.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics says that cashiers are the second-largest occupation, with 3.5 million employed in the U.S.

Analysts with Cowen say the move shows how aggressively Amazon is pursuing the grocery business, which represents about 17 percent of total U.S. retail, or nearly $800 billion. It's an area dominated by Wal-Mart, an Amazon rival that is revving up its e-commerce game. For Amazon, it represents a huge source of potential revenue growth, plus another way to ensconce itself in people's shopping habits.

While more and more people, especially among the younger cohorts, are going online for their groceries, "we acknowledge some people may never be comfortable with the idea," say the Cowen analysts.

Amazon shares closed up 2.57 percent on Monday, trading at $759.36 and widely outperforming the market.

The Wall Street Journal has reported, citing people familiar with the matter, that success in its experiments could lead Amazon to open more than 2,000 brick-and-mortar stores in various formats. Amazon declined to comment on those plans.

"Clearly there is a strong user case in avoiding lines and automating payments," says Colin Sebastian, an analyst with Baird who closely tracks the company. "It makes it just as convenient, if not more convenient, than online shopping in some cases."
Amazon could get even more bang for its revolutionary technology, perhaps, by selling it to other brick-and-mortar retailers, Sebastian said.

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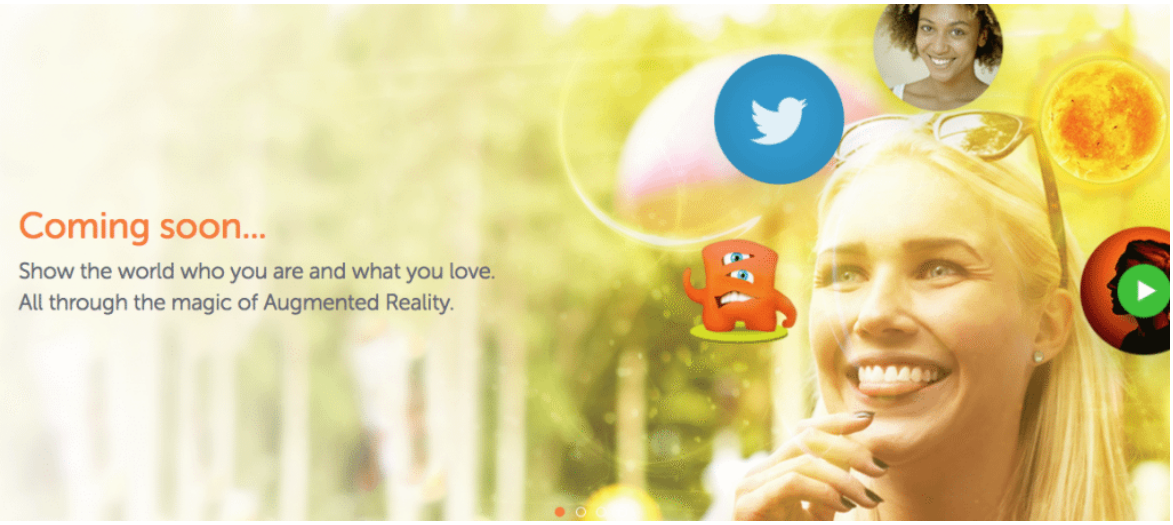

Facial Scanning App Lets You Find Out Everything About Them

Technocrats build things because they can, but not with any concern about the impact on other humans. Blippar brings privacy-busting to the public. TN Editor

Blippar is an app that uses your smartphone's camera to reveal more about the world through augmented reality .

Today, the company behind the app has announced that facial recognition will be introduced so you can scan other people and reveal their profile.

It's billed as the world's first facial recognition for phones.

The profiles are strictly an opt-in only experience, meaning members of the public have to go through a process to get their faces recognised and turned on before they become "blippable".

They can switch their profiles 'on' and 'off' as they wish.

The app can also be used to scan faces on TV or in print – meaning you could look up a particular actor or musician.

“Over 70,000 public figures will be automatically discoverable with information drawn from publicly accessible sources unless they choose to set up their own AR Face profile, giving them control of the information communicated,” said Blippar in a press release.

“Users can add personalized content to express their personality in the form of photos, favourite music and current AR mood,” the company said.

“As well as discovering who is your celebrity look alike is, there is also an option to build connections between yourself and the millions of objects, concepts and entities that exist in Blippar’s knowledge graph.”

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Scientists: Plants Learn Like

Humans When Adapting To Environment

Technocrats have such a low view of humans that they are easily compared to plant life. However, this is the prevailing philosophy of Technocracy in general. TN Editor

The saying goes ‘you live and learn’, and it seems that this logic may apply beyond humans.

A new study has revealed for the first time that plants can learn about their environment and make links between events in the same way we do.

The researchers hope that their findings will open up bigger ecological questions of how changes to our environment will shape future plant communities.

Previously it had been thought the ability to learn was exclusive to animals.

But researchers from the University of Western Australia set out to prove that plants too were capable of associative learning.

The study, published in the online journal Scientific Reports, was inspired by Pavlov’s experiments with dogs, one of the most revealing studies in the history of behavioural research, which demonstrated that behaviour could be changed using conditioning.

Through a range of behavioural experiments, the team was able to provide convincing evidence that plants were capable of learning a particular association between the occurrence of one event and the anticipation of another.

Professor Gagliano, who led the study, experimented with pea seedlings, placing them in a Y-shaped maze to see how they responded after initially being exposed to light from a particular direction.

Using a fan and a light the team were able to ‘teach’ the seedlings where the best light would be by getting them to associate light being in a certain place in relation to the fan.

With a Y-shaped tube and a seedling at the bottom, the researchers showed that if they placed a light at one end of the Y, the seedling would again try and head to that end of the Y shape because it associated it with the light, even if the light had been removed.

The results showed the seedlings were able to learn and choose the best growth direction for survival by correctly predicting the occurrence of light once it was removed.

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