



INTRODUCING The RTIH Retail Technology Innovations Report

RTIH is pleased to announce the launch of its second Retail Technology Innovations Report, sponsored by 3D Cloud by Marxent.

This highlights the top 50 retail tech plays of the past 12 months as decided by our Editor, Scott Thompson, and an independent advisory panel.

We were looking for groundbreaking technology deployments, launches, and pilots from across the omnichannel retail landscape, be they payments, supply chain, online, mobile, physical store etc related.

Thompson produced a longlist which then went to the advisory panel, consisting of:

Mike Cadden, Interim Chief Technology Officer, Marie Curie

Matt Taylor, Technology Transformation Leader at EY, Retail and Consumer Products

Christine Russo, Retail Industry Analyst

Carole Kingsbury, Former Director of IT, Ted Baker
Peter Waugh, Director, International Digital (EMEA, LAC & AP), Starbucks

Nadine Neatrou, Marketing Director, Selfridges
Matt Bradley, Director and Founder, Retail Technology Show

They picked their stand out retail technology plays, put forward their own favourite innovations, and, based on this, Thompson drew up the final 50.

Innovation and technology play a critical role in the success of the retail sector, and it is great to celebrate this with the 2024 Retail Technology Innovations Report.

Many thanks to 3D Cloud by Marxent, which provides 3D product visualisation software trusted by top furniture and DIY retailers, for sponsoring it.

PHYSICAL RETAIL

Sticky

UK-based startup Sticky picked up the Innovative Product of the Year award at Smart Retail Tech 2024, which took place in February at London ExCel. It beat out Bango and Consumer Insights Lab to secure the gong.

The company enables retailers to turn more of their physical space into Points of Sale, and last year secured £1.5 million to fund its expansion plans.

Sticky uses its own operating system with NFC technology to enable companies in sectors such as retail, hospitality and health and fitness to process payment transactions in less than ten seconds.

Asda

Asda has been testing out gamified learning for those employees getting to grips with its new checkout system.

This has been taking place at the grocery giant's Goldthorpe store in Rotherham, in partnership with Attensi.

In a LinkedIn post, Bruce Gibb, Learning Design Manager at Asda, said: "Gamified learning



Waitrose and WRAP have trialled PoS messaging to encourage more customers to buy fresh produce loose.

in Asda is live! Delighted to have landed new checkout training in line with our new checkout system in the pilot store this weekend."

He added: "This has been a project I have been lead on since taking my Learning Design role on and it's fantastic to see it come to life."

"The reaction from the Goldthorpe store leadership and colleagues has been fantastic, they transitioned from the games to the live environment effortlessly and the competitive nature of the solution engaged a desire to practice and repeat, driving confidence and capability."



McDonald's

McDonald's has served up an immersive campaign that celebrates manga and anime. This went live on 26th February and saw the fast food giant change its name to WcDonald's.

Guillaume Huin, Sr. Marketing Director at McDonald's, said this was "as an homage to the name used for decades in mangas and anime to refer to McD. New logo, Japanese name, flipped arches, new exclusive packaging, WcNuggets and a new WcDonald's sauce with quite a spicy kick - we are officially WcDonald's now."

He added: "To honour the art of manga and anime, we have partnered with the legendary Japanese animation Studio Pierrot (Bleach, Naruto) and Acky Bright, a brilliant Japanese manga artist, to release four mini episodes and short mangas, once a week."

The mangas were unlocked via a QR code on packaging or in select manga stores across the US. Each episode and manga covered a different genre of the anime world, going from shoji (romance) to shonen (action), fantasy or mecha battles. And each had its own characters.



McDonald's becomes WcDonald's.

Dartmouth's Tuck School of Business

Mashgin reports deployment of its self-checkout technology at Dartmouth's Tuck School of Business in Hanover, New Hampshire.

New touchless self-checkout kiosks speed up the checkout experience for Tuck students, with average transaction times at Mashgin kiosks said to be between 10 and 16 seconds.

These use AI powered computer vision to recognise and ring up objects up to 10x faster than traditional checkout with a cashier. Mashgin instantly identifies packaged goods, produce, and open plated food items (e.g., a piece of fruit, salad, combo meal plate) from any angle.

Consumers place their items on the kiosks and are ready to pay without barcodes, apps or RFIDs. "We initially piloted Mashgin's technology in a 24/7 unmanned convenience store. Our students loved the technology and ease of use," says Amelia Heidenreich, General Manager of Tuck Dining and Catering. "We decided to add a second unit to our dining hall to increase the speed of service, and we may consider deploying more."

Boxbar

Boxbar has launched what is pitched as the world's first ever automated self-serve, full menu drinks solution.

This allows event organisers and venue operators to serve up to eight different beverage types all from the same terminal. It has the ability to serve beers (including Guinness), ciders, wines, cocktails, spirit and mixers and soft drinks from a

single terminal.

"Beverage sales are key to the success and profitability of businesses, yet bar service is still defined by a dwindling pool of trained staff, excessive queuing, long wait times, throttled sales and frustrated customers," says Reshad Hossenally, Boxbar CEO and Co-Founder.

"With Boxbar we're 360% faster, serving two drinks in 30 seconds. We've seen first-hand how much this can affect queuing times, on average dropping by over 70%. Simply put, fans enjoy a far better experience whilst operators increase efficiencies and sales, reduce overheads and boost profitability."

Carrefour Belgium

Carrefour Belgium has opened its smallest store in Belgium, measuring just 18 sqm.

BuyBye by Carrefour is located at the retailer's Belgian headquarters in Zaventem (near Brussels). The autonomous store consists of a series of refrigerated vending machines where customers can purchase lunch, snacks, cold drinks and fruit.

Shoppers need to download the Carrefour BuyBye app, create an account and add a payment method before they can use the app to open the machines, take out products and check-out.

This is the result of a collaboration with startup Reckon AI. In a LinkedIn post, the latter said: "Picture this: aisles guided by AI, curated sections tailored to your needs, and an immersive shopping experience like never before. This store isn't just a place to shop; it's a destination where innovation meets your everyday needs."

Plans are afoot to roll-out the concept to Carrefour Belgium's existing physical stores.

Żabka Polska

Żabka Polska has launched its first ever store that is open 24/7 and offers both a traditional and autonomous shopping option.

In a LinkedIn post, Patryk Powierża, Head of Nano Growth at Żabka Polska, said: "We have opened the first hybrid Żabka store powered by autonomous technology (supplied by AiFi). How does it work?"

"From 6am-11pm, the store operates like a traditional store with a cashier. From 11pm-6am, it is switched to an unmanned format, which enables autonomous shopping. Thanks to that we can extend opening hours, be available 24/7, and deliver a great retail experience to Polish customers."



We're always striving to make customers' experiences even better and more convenient



New touchless self-checkout kiosks speed up the checkout experience for Dartmouth's Tuck School of Business students.



Retail Tech Innovations Report

Netto

German discount chain Netto has opened what is pitched as Europe's largest autonomous supermarket in Regensburg.

The 800sqm location enables customers to shop without registering, checking in or self-scanning. An intelligent camera system records every movement and assigns products taken from the shelf to each shopping basket. This is done without collecting any personal or biometric data. Fruit and vegetables are automatically weighed and added to baskets as soon as they are taken off the shelf.

Once finished, customers can make their way to one of two fast exit terminals. The store uses technology from Trigo,

the company behind Aldi's autonomous stores in Utrecht and Rewe's pilot in Munich. In addition to the fast exit terminals, the shop also has regular service and self-service checkouts.

It features the latest extension of Trigo's EasyOut system, with the company adding the capability for shoppers to review their receipts, approve and pay, before they leave the store.

The new EasyOut Station generates shoppers' receipts in real-time while utilising the fast exit terminals. Payment is made by card, Apple Pay, Google Pay or the Netto app. Using the app also enables shoppers to automatically redeem coupons and archive the paperless receipt within the app.

EE

In February, EE unveiled its latest Experience store alongside former Newcastle United player Shay Given in the Metrocentre, Gateshead, one of Europe's largest indoor mall style shopping centres.

This is the fourth of EE's Experience stores and the first of more than ten brand new Experience and Experience Local locations set to open in the UK over the next year.

The announcement came as EE committed to investing £6 million in the British high street in the next 12 months. Its belief in physical retail has seen the launch of new store formats including its flagship Studio store in London, Experience stores in Manchester, Cardiff and Kent, and

most recently its Experience Local stores in Derby and Guildford.

The new retail strategy was announced in June 2023 with the launch of the EE Studio store in Westfield London, White City, featuring an immersive Digital Spa to support customers' wellbeing and a Gaming Zone.

Footasylum

Embracing a MACH approach, Footasylum has collaborated with NewStore and Talon.One to deliver omnichannel shopping experiences across its stores.

The project, which was led by Absolute Labs, leveraged NewStore's modular, mobile first platform, to integrate Footasylum's physical and digital channels, providing customers with a seamless online and in-store shopping experience.

The roll-out, coupled with Talon.One's promotion engine, also facilitated omnichannel purchasing journeys that significantly enhanced brand engagement.

Jisp

Jisp's AR powered Scan & Save loyalty and rewards offering is now live with Sudheesh Pallikulangara, whose business Sudi's Stores has eight sites across the northwest of England.

These are predominantly in the Blackpool and Lytham St Annes area, offering customers a broad convenience range and services. Scan & Save will bring discounts and loyalty rewards to help manage customers' shopping budgets.

Sam Halliwell, Operations Manager overseeing the eight stores, says: "We've been researching the market and had seen the benefits Jisp Scan & Save could bring to a retail operation."

"Given the cost-of-living crisis we felt it was the right time to bring it into our estate, both as a way of rewarding our customers with great deals and loyalty payments and helping to grow our sales and profitability."



Sustainability and inclusivity feature heavily in our latest innovations report.



Jisp's AR powered Scan & Save loyalty and rewards offering.

Inter Miami CF

American soccer club Inter Miami CF has opened Zippin powered checkout-free stores at Chase Stadium, its home ground.

These went live ahead of the new MLS season, which kicked off in February.

"We've been working tirelessly during our short offseason to introduce technology to decrease wait times and expand the variety of our exceptional food offerings with the goal of elevating and providing a memorable match day experience to our fans at Chase Stadium," says Laurence McMillon, Director of Food & Beverage.

Four Zippin powered checkout-free stores have been launched. These are the first outdoor checkout-free stores ever deployed in existing structures and tents.

Shoppers enter with a valid payment method (credit card or mobile wallet) and pick the items they want. Upon leaving, they are automatically charged for the items they take (if they picked something up and put it back, they aren't charged if they don't leave with it). Shopping typically takes just 30 seconds or less.



An EE Experience store.





ONLINE RETAIL

TikTok

TikTok is working on a new in-app Trendy Beat shopping section, offering products that are shipped and sold by a subsidiary of its parent company, ByteDance.

This is currently being tested in the UK and features popular items that have appeared in trending videos. The move can be viewed as TikTok looking to take on the likes of Amazon and Shein, indicating, as it does, a shift from a current e-commerce strategy dominated by the TikTok Shop marketplace.

TalkShopLive

Video commerce and retail media enablement platform TalkShopLive has announced the launch of its new Shoppable Simulcast feature with Instagram.

The product officially debuted in March with a livestream featuring Grammy nominated artist, producer, songwriter, and actor Benny Blanco.

This featured Blanco preparing recipes from his new cookbook and entertaining guide, titled Open Wide, and also streamed in association with TalkShopLive media partner Billboard. Blanco also signed copies of his book.

The live event was embedded across multiple destinations, including Billboard.com and Billboard's Instagram and Facebook page, Blanco's

Instagram and Facebook page, TalkShop.Live and across TalkShopLive's content distribution network.

Any TalkShopLive stream can be simulcasted on a seller's Instagram account while still keeping the shopping element intact. The Instagram integration comes after TalkShopLive launched its Shoppable Simulcast product and first destination with Meta on Facebook.

L'Occitane

L'Occitane Middle East has tapped Confer With's live video shopping technology to enhance its online platform.

This allows customers to interact in real-time with knowledgeable brand ambassadors, bringing the in-store experience to the digital realm.



TalkShopLive's new Shoppable Simulcast feature with Instagram.



Physical stores remain a hugely important piece of the omnichannel retail puzzle.

AI

The Very Group

The Very Group recently brought the entire company together for an event entitled, Very Con: AI in Action.

CIO Matt Grest said: "It's always going to be a big call to bring the whole company together for an AI immersion day, but as a business we have made huge strides over the last 12 months in powering the business using genuine AI and I really wanted to keep up the momentum and bring more colleagues into the fold."

He added: "We had a fantastic day where we were able to outline our strategic ambitions, we had colleagues demonstrating how we're already leveraging genuine AI across the business and saw many great demonstrations from our valued partners in Amazon Web Services (AWS),

Microsoft, Samsung Electronics, Meta and Multiverse - great energy in the office all day from everyone."

The big reveal of the day was the launch of VeryGPT, a generative AI chatBot that will be available to all employees.

Grest said: "This gives everyone access to a new tool that they can use to support their daily activities, in a safe and secure environment with appropriate guardrails. We've already been able to demonstrate some amazing productivity gains from colleagues using VeryGPT during our internal trial, and I can't wait to see what colleagues are going to do with this now that it's rolled out to all."

JD.com

JD.com has unveiled its ChatRhino (Yanxi in Chinese) large language model (LLM), designed to serve various industries.

Our judging panel said:

"Given JD.com's muscle in Asia (and globally) this could be very influential in driving GenAI adoption. It may be early days for where it has made a difference, but anything the company does is well worth looking at."

Matalan

Matalan has partnered with Kin + Carta on a GenAI and Large Language Model (LLM) tool, which creates detailed product descriptions for items listed on its website.

The move is pitched as the first time a UK retailer has used AI in this way and forms an important part of Matalan's digital transformation journey. The tool will be implemented across all departments, including clothing and homeware.

L'Oreal

L'Oreal and NTT DATA have partnered to create Lore, a virtual beauty advisor powered by the latter's conversational AI platform, Eva.

"The development process of this solution was challenging and, simultaneously, very rich in learning. We trained the virtual beauty consultant for months to ensure that it would achieve its goal to provide consistent and responsive answers, even in the most complex situations," says Santiago Santa María, Director of Conversational AI at NTT DATA.

Lore makes recommendations to customers and advises on beauty products based on their needs, redirecting them to the brand's online store, or letting consumers shop within the same application.



The Very Group goes big on AI.



Ikea

Ikea has launched an AI powered home design, inspiration and shopping tool, available exclusively on the OpenAI GPT Store.

It says that the move marks “a significant step in democratising planning services and creating a better life for the many, by offering a tool that gives users personalised furniture and decor suggestions based on factors such as room dimensions, personal style, sustainability preferences, budget, functional requirements, and more.”

“The new Ikea AI Assistant on GPT Store is an ongoing initiative, and the continuation of a journey that looks to enrich the retail experience and explore additional avenues to interact with our customers and co-workers, as they help us improve and develop further,” says Parag Parekh, Global Chief

Digital Officer at Ikea Retail (Ingka Group).

Metro Brands

Metro Brands, an Indian footwear and accessory specialty retailer, has entered into a partnership with Nextail, a merchandise planning platform.

The long-term agreement encompasses a number of AI driven solutions across buying and merchandising.

Metro Brands operates more than 800 stores across over 180 Indian cities, with plans to open approximately 200 by FY 2025. It says that, through accurate demand forecasting and decision automation, the Nextail platform will ensure product availability across its rapidly expanding store footprint.

Amazon

Doug Herrington, CEO Worldwide at Amazon Stores,

recently took to social media to discuss Rufus, a new GenAI powered conversational shopping experience.

Launching in early 2024 in beta to a small subset of customers in Amazon’s mobile app, this will roll-out to additional US customers over the coming months.

Boots

Boots is working on the launch of a ChatGPT personal shopper for its website which would be able to give customers recommendations on lipsticks and beauty gifts.

The retailer, which in 2023 announced plans to close 300 stores around the UK amidst a rise in online sales, has a partnership with Microsoft - the biggest investor of ChatGPT’s owners OpenAI - and already implements the chatbot in other areas of its business.

Boots is also deploying Ocula Technologies’ Ocula Boost solution. The AI platform addresses abandoned shopping carts by analysing sites to: identify actions to improve the customer experience, accessibility and performance; rank insights based on predicted value and effort; and ensure teams focus on the right areas.

SUPPLY CHAIN

Wiliot

Wiliot’s IoT platform connects digital and physical retail

worlds using its stamp sized IoT Pixel devices to address challenges across supply chain efficiency, omnichannel retailing, food safety, and inventory management.

Once attached, the IoT Pixels connect to Wiliot’s cloud and retailers are equipped with real-time, item level visibility into every product within their supply chains.

To quote our judging panel: “A product that is Bluetooth enabled, self-powered, programmable, and 100% traceable is a real winner for any and all organisations, not just retail.”

Shein

Chinese fast fashion giant Shein is marketing its supply chain technology to global brands and designers.

It’s a smart move, according to Brittain Ladd, a supply chain consultant and former Amazon executive. “Shein and Temu are both doing exactly what I stated they would do when I first started writing about the companies two years ago,” he says. “Primarily, they are following the Chinese business playbook written so well by Alibaba, Pinduoduo, and JD.com - provide an ecosystem of options and services that are open to all.”

Shein’s Executive Chairman, Donald Tang, announced the aforementioned plan in a letter to investors, allowing outside brands and designers to leverage his company’s tech for testing out new fashion items in small batches and tracking how popular they are with consumers.

Tang called the new initiative “supply chain as a service.”



Shein is following the Chinese business playbook written so well by Alibaba, Pinduoduo, and JD.com - provide an ecosystem of options and services that are open to all

Kingfisher

Kingfisher has launched what is pitched as the first AI powered assistant in the home improvement sector, harnessing the capability of generative AI to support customers with their DIY projects.

Launching initially at Castorama France, this answers customers’ DIY queries and provides step-by-step advice on a range of home improvement projects, as well as tailored product recommendations.

Customers can ask the assistant questions in natural language while shopping online. It will answer in a friendly and conversational way with relevant advice. As well as conversing with customers via text chat, the assistant will soon be able analyse photos to perform visual searches and answer visual queries.

It will initially provide advice in relation to power tools, before being extended to cover Castorama’s full range of products. It is capable of operating in multiple languages, and if it proves successful, it will ultimately be rolled out to other banners across the Kingfisher Group.

To power the assistant and support other future applications of AI, Kingfisher’s data team has developed a proprietary AI orchestration framework, named Athena. This will manage prompting and interaction with a range of large language models, as well as other AI tools developed in-house. It incorporates a range of controls to ensure security and protect against sensitive or inappropriate content.

Kingfisher has launched what is pitched as the first AI powered assistant in the home improvement sector.



The new Ikea AI Assistant on GPT Store is an ongoing initiative



Newegg

Newegg, an online retailer specialising in technology products, has deployed Geek+'s shelf to person picking system that uses autonomous mobile robots (AMR) in its Ontario, California, warehouse.

The robots operate within a designated area before lifting and carrying mobile shelves to workstations where employees pick and scan products to prepare them for shipping to customers.

The Geek+ system includes 24,360 storage locations for products within hundreds of shelves.

flaconi

GreyOrange has been selected by flaconi, a Germany e-retailer for beauty and perfume, to improve overall warehouse operations for faster, more efficient distribution to its customers.

flaconi is leveraging GreyOrange's GreyMatter fulfilment orchestration platform in combination with a fleet of 70 Ranger Assist robots. Utilising the Robots as a Service (RaaS) and Software as a Service (SaaS) model, based on demand, flaconi says that it now has peak season flexibility for the warehouse.

It can fulfil orders quickly by leveraging dynamic zoning, hybrid picking, and GreyMatter's balanced distribution of work to the robots according to fulfilment needs.

Dexory and Iron Mountain

Dexory, a provider of AI and robotics solutions, has announced a partnership with Iron Mountain, a specialist

in information management, storage, data centre infrastructure, and asset lifecycle management.

Since 2021, Iron Mountain has expanded into a third-party logistics (3PL) provider, with the aim of disrupting the warehouse and logistics industry with its solutions. The company has chosen to adopt DexoryView as its preferred inventory and tracking solution at four warehouses across Kettering Symmetry Park, Lutterworth Symmetry Park, Magna Park North and Rugby Symmetry Park.

Iron Mountain, which lays claim to more than 225,000 customers around the world, was looking for an automated solution to inventory management and space optimisation for these warehouses, rather than opting for a more traditional and manual intensive route.

Using Dexory's technology, combining analytics with autonomous robots, it will be able to scan 15,000 locations per hour, without impacting its day-

to-day operations. This allows the company to analyse its pallet lifecycle within its warehouses. In addition, it is able to gather full visibility of stock and track inventory movements.

ONLINE DELIVERY

DoorDash and Wing

DoorDash and Wing have announced the launch of their drone delivery partnership in the US, starting in Christiansburg, VA.

Select local consumers will be able to order eligible menu items from Wendy's - the pilot's first restaurant partner - through the DoorDash marketplace and have them delivered via drone.

This follows a pilot programme that the pair launched in Australia in 2022 and has since expanded to



Domino's Pinpoint Delivery has gone live in the US.

three locations in Queensland with over 60 participating merchants, marking the first time that Wing integrated its drone delivery service within another marketplace.

GREEN RETAIL

Waitrose and WRAP

Waitrose and WRAP have trialled Point of Sale messaging to encourage more customers to buy fresh produce loose to cut household food waste, save money and reduce single use plastics and unnecessary packaging.

This took place in Waitrose's Thatcham store near Reading and included the use of eye tracking software to follow shoppers' unconscious reactions.

People were recruited by a specialist research company to take part in this element of the study. This involved wearing hardware while they shopped to track their eye movements and identify which signage had been viewed and for how long.

Reiss

Fashion retailer Reiss has announced a partnership with AI powered verification platform Compare Ethics as part of its commitment to sustainability and the use of responsible materials and standards.

Said platform evaluates and ranks the quality of green claims against regulatory requirements,



Domino's Pizza

Domino's Pizza is introducing Domino's Pinpoint Delivery in the US, a new technology that allows customers to receive a delivery in such places as parks, baseball fields and beaches.

Customers with the Domino's app can select the service, drop a pin on the map and get pizza delivered pretty much anywhere, the retailer says.

"We're proud to be the first quick service restaurant brand in the US to deliver food to customers with the drop of a pin," says Christopher Thomas-Moore, Domino's Senior Vice President – Chief Digital Officer. "We're always striving to make customers' experiences even better and more convenient, and Domino's Pinpoint Delivery does exactly that."

and offers actionable steps for achieving full compliance.

It will verify between 3-14 data points for every sustainability claim made by Reiss, with the aim of ensuring compliance to all regulations and reducing internal workload.

Ocado Retail

For the first time, Ocado customers are able to receive a 20p monetary reward for scanning and recycling packaging using their smartphones.

The retailer has teamed up with Polytag and Bower to deliver the initiative. Customers can scan a QR code printed onto Ocado's own brand two and four pint milk bottles.

The first 20,000 codes scanned will see consumers receive a 20p reward which will appear in their digital wallet in the Bower app – the same amount that will be redeemed as a deposit in the upcoming Deposit Return Scheme legislation once it is rolled out in 2025. This 20p can then be withdrawn to their bank account.

Although consumers will not redeem a deposit – as it will

not be added at the point of purchase – the partnership aims to demonstrate the viability of a DDRS by enabling people to receive a cash incentive for recycling using their smartphones.

DPD UK

In pursuit of its net zero 2040 goal, DPD UK has launched the EcoLaunchpad programme, where it reaches out to experts in sustainability, technology, and innovation to develop and test new ideas that can help it further reduce its carbon footprint.

Partnering with L Marks, a global innovation specialist that has worked with brands such as BMW and Lloyd's of London, it connects with hundreds of tech startups in order to explore innovations to meet its sustainability goals and overcome the issues it has encountered on its net zero journey.



It ain't easy being green, but many retailers and brands are nonetheless doing sterling work in this space.





Starship Technologies

Starship Technologies, a provider of autonomous delivery services, has announced the installation of the first wireless charging station for its robots in Europe.

Thanks to a collaboration with Cambourne Town Council, a fleet of its robots will now recharge between making grocery deliveries across Cambourne in Cambridgeshire. The service first launched in Cambourne back in May 2022, offering groceries from the Co-op store at 29 Mosquito Road in Upper Cambourne.

Starship first introduced wireless charging stations on George Mason University campus in the US over six months ago.

It now expects to further reduce emissions in Cambourne as robots will no longer need to be couriered by van between service areas. Wireless charging is more energy efficient, allowing them to charge up overnight, while they're sleeping, on-site.

Archive and ACS

Archive, a technology platform for branded resale, has announced a partnership with Advanced Clothing Solutions (ACS), a UK-based circular and sustainable fashion fulfilment hub.

The aim is to offer apparel, footwear, outdoor, and luxury brands cleaning, repair, and fulfilment of secondhand items on a branded resale marketplace. ACS says that it will utilise Archive's resale operations technology to maximise profitability and efficiency for brands embracing circular business models. The first brands in the UK to leverage this partnership include The North Face and PANGAIA.

INCLUSIVE TECH

Currys

Currys has become the first tech retailer to partner with WelcoMe, with the aim of improving the shopping experience for customers with disabilities.

A purpose built web app, the platform works by allowing shoppers with a disability to register an in-person store visit, online.

Through filling out a quick form indicating any specific disability related needs or information, and an estimated date/time of arrival, stores are then notified of the upcoming visit giving them the opportunity to prepare for and accommodate any specific requirements etc.

The tool also gives retail partners access to pointers and best practice techniques to help accommodate anybody, specific to certain disabilities.

A trial is taking place across 20 Currys stores around the Birmingham region, including: Birmingham Castle Vale, Birmingham Highgate, Birmingham Selly Oak, Burton, Cannock, Kidderminster, Leicester Fosse, Leicester St Georges, Loughborough, Merry Hill Retail Park, Shrewsbury, Solihull, Stafford, Stoke Festival Park, Stoke Longton, Sutton Coldfield, Tamworth, Telford, Wednesbury J9 and Wolverhampton.

Pinterest

Pinterest is building on its hair pattern search and skin tone ranges offerings to introduce its latest inclusive product, called body type ranges, firstly in the US and later to roll-out in the UK.

The tool allows users to refine their searches for women's fashion and wedding ideas by different body types, so they can see themselves represented in the inspiration they are seeking.

Unilever and Be My Eyes

Unilever has partnered with Be My Eyes to introduce AI assisted cooking for blind and low vision shoppers.

This builds on the addition of on-pack Accessible QR (AQR), developed by computer vision specialists Zappar, to Unilever's Persil and Colman's products in the UK last year and is part of the company's global connected pack strategy, which includes using new digital experiences and technology to evolve and



differentiate the way shoppers interact with and use its products.

Unilever is initially trialling the Be My Eyes technology in the UK through its Colman's Singapore Noodles Meal Maker, with the intention of rolling it out across more brands in 2024.

Scanning the AQR code on the front of pack, shoppers can now be directed to the Be My Eyes app for free and connected to either a volunteer to read and describe cooking instructions or to a virtual AI chatbot which uses Chat GPT-4 capabilities to address recipe or cooking questions.

Sibstar

Sibstar, a debit card and app for people living with dementia that has appeared on the Dragons Den TV show, was unveiled as the winner of the FinTech's Pitch Live 2024 competition, held at the Pay360 trade show in London during March.

Founder and CEO, Jayne Sibley, told attendees that she created Sibstar after her mum got dementia. "I built the app because of my lived experience," she said, while detailing the problems her mother was encountering in remembering to take cash, use one card and not another, and

so on when she went shopping or outside.

The Retail Trust

Retail industry charity, the Retail Trust, has developed a generative AI powered dashboard to help retailers including FatFace and Next improve staff mental health and prove the value of their wellbeing strategies.

The new 'happiness dashboard', built in partnership with a handful of retail employers and the Retail Trust's technology partner BJSS, allows companies to track staff wellbeing trends and improve the effectiveness of support.

The platform works by identifying trends around which Retail Trust wellbeing services employees are using to generate recommendations on how to improve engagement, reduce levels of absenteeism or presenteeism, and increase staff retention.

It also shows each employer exactly how much initiatives to improve mental health are saving their business and the economy, by calculating the financial value of fewer staff calling in sick, working while unwell, quitting their jobs or turning to the NHS as a result.

PAYMENTS



In pursuit of its net zero 2040 goal, DPD UK has launched the EcoLaunchpad programme.

Flying Tiger Copenhagen

Flying Tiger Copenhagen has announced the deployment of MishiPay's suite of transaction solutions across 56 UK stores.

Since the end of September, the chain has been operating exclusively on MishiPay for all transactions.

Already a user of MishiPay's Scan & Go solution, Flying Tiger Copenhagen has expanded its partnership to include cash desk and self-checkout kiosks. It has further plans to introduce the company's mobile Point of Sale (mPOS) solution to its roster.

Everlane

Shopify's ShopPay solution has made an appearance on a non-Shopify website, with some industry observers predicting the end of one-click checkout businesses.

Everlane's website now has an express checkout that features the offering alongside Apple Pay and PayPal.

RETAIL MEDIA

HyperFinity

Decision intelligence specialist, HyperFinity, has launched a new retail media product, designed to help retailers leverage their first-party data, and maximise the impact of advertising.



This year's report highlights several interesting uses of AI in the retail sector.



Retail Tech Innovations Report

The UK-based company's platform links together customer spend data, product attributes, and web browsing data to deliver precise insight into consumer behaviour and needs. These insights are used to target consumers with highly relevant products on retailers' websites, apps and in-store.



Walmart has announced a pilot project with unspun, a fashion tech company using 3D weaving tech.

Walmart

Walmart has announced a pilot project with unspun, a fashion tech company using 3D weaving technology, a collaboration that, if successful, could help reduce the environmental impact of garment production, offer a more sustainable process for meeting apparel demand and support the companies' commitment to shift more textile manufacturing back to the US.

Out of its micro factory in Oakland, California, unspun's technology aims to more quickly and efficiently transform yarn into garments.

The pilot project addresses concerns about waste in the apparel industry driven primarily by fabric loss from traditional flat weaving, cutting and garment assembly, and from discarded extra inventory built to meet growing consumer demand and fashion trends. And not to forget the emissions generated from transporting garments and fabrics supplied offshore.



Rokt and Deliveroo

Rokt, an e-commerce technology company that uses machine learning and AI to serve relevant offers to shoppers, has announced a partnership with delivery giant Deliveroo on the order tracker page.

Deliveroo has been building its retail media network since launching its advertising platform in 2021.

As part of its newly developed advertising platform, it will now integrate with Rokt, which allows brands to capture the attention of customers directly on e-commerce confirmation pages.

This means that advertisers in the Rokt Ads network can now access Deliveroo's audiences, and Deliveroo can provide the most relevant third-party offers to customers on their order confirmation page.

Joybird

Joybird, a unit of La-Z-Boy and furniture manufacturer and retailer, has announced the full integration of 3D Cloud by Marxent's 3D Cloud Room Scanner technology into its online 3D Space Planner tool.

Joybird is the first furniture retailer to offer this integrated 3D floor plan creation experience to customers. The 3D Cloud Room Scanner technology enables customers to create a floorplan 10x faster than traditional measuring, recreating a room in three dimensions in just minutes.

It leverages algorithms to precisely capture room dimensions, layouts, and existing furniture, allowing users to virtually design and arrange Joybird's furniture pieces within their actual living spaces.

3D Room Scanner joins 3D Space Planner and Modular Sofa Builder. The latter tool provides real-time customisation to mix and match components to build a customised couch, loveseat, sectional sofa, or double-sided lounge.

New Balance

New Balance recently opened a concept store in Singapore, featuring a Volumental 3D foot scanner in the fitting area.

Since partnering with Volumental in 2017, the retailer says that it has scanned the feet of more than one million shoppers worldwide.

The scan, which takes less than five seconds, provides employees with detailed information about a customer's feet, helping them find a shoe that's sure to fit.

3D TECH

J.Crew

J.Crew has launched a Virtual Closet app on Apple Vision Pro, the heavily hyped new spatial computer that blends digital content with the physical world and unlocks spatial experiences.

Created in partnership with Obsess, this allows users to shop J.Crew products in an interactive, ultra-high-definition 3D environment.

It utilises SharePlay, a set of features for shared experiences while on a FaceTime call, to chat with J.Crew's stylists or host group calls to get others' opinions on looks.