

# Expanding IoT to Retail Shopping

Connected devices are changing the way people all around the world lead their lives. Connected devices are bringing revolutionary changes to all industries and providing to be a significant disrupting force. The Internet of Things (IoT) is introducing innovation and new opportunities in the market by bringing every object, customer, and action into the digital kingdom. While the Internet of things may seem a little absurd or like a science fiction, it is fast becoming a reality.

## How Does IoT Affect Retailers?

Retailers will soon have to develop and execute an IoT strategy to make a presence in the market and be at par with their competitors. Although in its very early stage of implementation, the importance of Internet of things has been already acknowledged by the industry. A recent [Retail Systems Research](#) (RSR) report says that 72 percent of surveyed retailers testified that they have Internet of Things associated developments already in progress.

This outburst of the popularity of the connected devices and Internet of Things would definitely have a major effect in revolutionizing the retail business. The IoT movement offers retailers opportunities in three critical areas: customer experience, supply chain, and new channels and revenue streams. Customer experience is probably the most important change. Let's look into what role the Internet of Things would play in customer's shopping experience.

## Improving Real-Life UX

[The Gartner forecast](#) says that there will be over 25 billion connected devices by 2020, and the Internet of Things will contribute to \$263 billion in services spending. This acceptance will definitely re-design the customer experience and, like online shopping, IoT will draw a lot of attention among consumers. The customer adaptation of Internet of things is predicted to be very fast. Based on a recent study it is believed that nearly [two-thirds](#) of consumers intend to buy and use a connected home device by 2019. The ownership of wearable technology is probably going to double up year after year from 2016. There are several features that would definitely create a different shopping experience once the Internet of Things gets implemented. These are listed as follows:

- Scanning a barcode on clothing or other merchandise to show product information or to find other colors or sizes on the retailer's eCommerce website.
- Contactless checkout by automatic scanning of products as a customer walks out of the store.
- Smart mirrors that allow customers to "try on" different clothing virtually.
- Customers can call for assistance or check inventory availability via their mobile device or wearable.

- Beacons serve up information on frequent store visitors, such as purchase histories to help a sales associate deliver high-touch service to their most valued customers.
- Personalized digital coupon distributed to a VIP customer upon entering the store.
- IoT-connected digital signage that pushes content to stores in real time, customized for specific stores, cities, or regions.
- Robots with touch screens for browsing inventory that can lead customers to desired products.
- Suggested products based on desired activity level tracked by wearable fitness device.
- Customers can use their smartphones or a wearable device to scan an item and get product information, reviews or social media commentary

## **What Future Does IoT Hold for Retail**

Looking at the features, we can easily predict that these would be warmly accepted by the consumers. These certainly provide the customer the independence to shop and give them access to all the features they want, to make an informed decision before buying. It will grant a chance for retailers to develop a massively improved ecosystem that bridges the physical and digital worlds, permitting bi-directional, real-time interaction with consumers, both inside and outside the store. The connected devices in the IoT network will link and connect these interactions. Considering all the features and benefits on the anvil, it can be said that IoT is designed to improve and will enhance customer experience in the retail industry.

## **To Sign Off**

Obviously, IoT is a fairly new concept and as of now, it's not that widely implemented. But it cannot be denied that the possibilities are endless with the Internet of Things. The innovations are promising. It will change the spheres of shopping and retail industry completely and open avenues previously unheard of in the industry.

The revolutionized retail market will definitely make it very easy for the merchants with customer intelligence which will enable them to develop their sales and marketing campaigns accordingly. It certainly would help them to increase productivity and achieve an unbeatable competitive edge.

*The article is authored by **Chandni Bhagchandani**, Corporate Communications Manager, **CIGNEX Datamatics***

---