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Overview: [Augmented Reality](#) (AR) allows digital images to be superimposed over a user's real-world environment through a smartphone, headset, or other device.



Retail Perspective

AR opens an array of new customer engagement opportunities that enable autonomy over the virtual and in-store shopping experience. It can also facilitate store designs and display layouts, and bolster employee training procedures for worker productivity and satisfaction. However, one major challenge AR will face in becoming mainstream will be to create a universal platform for all users to access AR content ([Strategy Business](#)).

Key Takeaways

- Unlike Virtual Reality (VR) that entirely immerses a user in a virtual world, AR layers digital content on top of the physical world.
- Several retailers have already implemented AR in their mobile applications and websites to deliver a more engaging shopping experience.
- Wearable AR devices are being used in manufacturing and industrial settings and can boost workers' productivity on an array of tasks, even without prior training ([Harvard](#)).

Retail Use Cases

Customer Experience: IKEA has been experimenting with AR since 2013, and plans to release a new AR mobile app called "IKEA Place" that lets users drop virtual furniture into a real home. The app's user interface is unlike that of a typical retail app, employing a camera viewer similar to Snapchat's that accurately simulates furniture positioning in a particular room ([Time](#)).



Similarly, Gap, earlier this year, released its DressingRoom app that lets shoppers browse the company's selection and virtually "try on" clothes, helping consumers understand how items will actually fit without having to set foot in the store ([Engadget](#)).

Store Planning & Training: Dusobox creates packaging and augments in-store displays to simulate their use in live retail locations without any prior physical samples. This allows the store to get a better understanding of the size, scale, and visual impact of a new display ([Augment](#)). Other industry giants like BP and Boeing are already testing interactive simulations, animations and 3D graphics that create step-by-step guides for trainees to quickly master complex procedures and processes without the risk factors involved in real-life situations or using real equipment ([TechCrunch](#), [Recode](#)).

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