

Amazon

# Pet translators and body implants: Amazon gives a glimpse at what the future of shopping will look like

Amazon's new Shop of the Future comes with a vision of AI assistants, virtual shelves and self-managing homes

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The future of shopping is going to involve a lot of talking – some of it with animals. Augmented reality will drive a more interactive experience, and your body will do the buying.

That's according to futurists commissioned by Amazon to mark the release of its "Shop of the Future" store. In the coming decades (the report isn't more specific than that), stores will be run by voice-activated shopping assistants and connect automatically with self-managing homes. Shoppers will spend less time buying essentials, and more time on 3D-print creative projects or indulging in "guilt-free hedonism" within sensory augmented reality.

In particular, the futurists – Anne Lise Kjaer, of trend-management firm Kjaer Global, and William Higham, from creative consultancy Next Big Thing – predict that automated subscriptions will increasingly allow homes to self-manage the purchase of food and other essential items.

technology, with embedded sensors letting us pay for items without the need for cash or cards. They also mention the idea of "super-agers", with people of advanced ages boasting mental fitness on par with younger ages, thanks to tools that encourage lifelong learning through cross-generational "brain dates".

It's perhaps no surprise that automated shopping and voice-controlled assistants are so prominent in the report, given that Amazon is pushing hard with its Alexa-controlled Echo device. The futurists also talk about services that will be increasingly simplified through self-management, which plays to Amazon's tune of Prime subscriptions and Dash buttons.

Another futuristic concept mentioned in the report include what the futurists dubs personality projectors – virtual shelves that display digital books, film and music collections in a way that mimics traditional bookshelves.

The report has been released to mark the launch of Amazon’s “[Shop of the Future](#)” store, designed as a hub for “cutting-edge products” that showcase some of the predicted next-generation technology within existing products. It’s basically an excuse to push more technology and gadgets on Amazon, but done in a more specific, direct way.

The question lingering throughout the report’s future-gazing, however, is whether a move towards sensor-controlled automation would lead to Amazon having a monopoly over our daily shopping habits. Will AI-directed consumption subsume individuals within a system where our desires and life-choices are guided by Amazon’s systems, offering us only the illusion of authenticity via 3D-printed craft items and vegan cooking?

Perhaps it won’t as bad as all that, but among all the smart sensors and innovative voice-controlled gadgets, it’s worth questioning who is building the systems that may one day form the foundations of our homes. Maybe we should ask the cat what it thinks.