



Augmented reality

It's the latest buzz-term from the world of technology. Is 'augmented reality' (AR) just a fad or will it change advertising forever?

1 Read this advert for a SmartPhone app (application). Would you download it? Compare your answer with a partner.

<p>New augmented reality app!! Just point your phone and see information displayed on-screen! Opening times - ratings - phone nos. and much more! The future is here now! DOWNLOAD</p>	<p>Restaurants Bars Hotels Museums Banks Cinemas</p> <p>Petrol Parking Shopping Theatres Hospitals Photos</p>		 <p>Name of building: ALC Tower Built: 1982</p>	<p>Application: a piece of computer software designed to do a particular job Definition from: <i>Macmillan English Dictionary</i></p>
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2 Skim the transcript of a business programme and put these examples of 'augmented reality' in the correct order (1-5).

Magazine ads	Sport	Business socialising	Leisure	Online shopping
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Good evening. Tonight we are looking at augmented reality, or AR. Jonathan, can you explain: what is AR?

Well, AR's been around for a while. Watching a football match on TV, have you seen a giant logo laid on top of the pitch? Well, that's AR. Nowadays, there are new AR apps -er, applications, for SmartPhones. These apps show information overlaid on the picture of the real world you see through the phone's camera. So, you can find a nearby restaurant and also read information about it. Let me show you. OK - as you move the phone around, you see these boxes displayed on top of the picture? Well, if you touch one of them on the screen, information is displayed about that place, like an address, phone number, or opening hours. Or even an entry about it from Wikipedia.

Ah-ha. And then of course I could just call and make a booking. Clever. Mind you, I think I'd be a bit scared holding up my phone in the street and waving it around. So, AR could open up a world of "n-commerce", where "n" stands for "nearby" - showing customers information about local shops or businesses. OK now - tell us about Grazia.

Sure. Well, it's a fashion glossy. It has just brought out an AR edition. So, readers can watch a concert by the group

Florence and the Machine or listen to style tips. You have to hold up these AR barcodes, here, so they can be activated by a webcam or your phone and the information is downloaded from the web. An advert doesn't need to be something you just look at on a page. Readers can experience a product and engage with brands in a more compelling way.

Right. So, implications for the fashion industry and retail generally. Can you give us any more examples?

Sure. This type of technology allows you to try on a new wardrobe, different colours and styles, in front of a web-cam. No need to go to the shops to see what you look like.

Hmm. No more shopping? So, where's all this going?

Well, I saw the most amazing prototype app at the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona. You point your phone at someone, and it recognises their face and pulls down details from the web about that person, perhaps their Twitter name, or their Facebook details, and it shows those details in the air - around their head!

Looking through your phone, of course. Sounds quite futuristic. I think networking is going to change fast.

I think it already has Mary. Er, didn't I give you my AR business card?

3 Read the complete transcript. Summarise what you learn about the examples of AR (1-5) in the transcript.

4 Decide if the following words are red three, two or one-star words, or black no-star words.

prototype	virtual	application	futuristic
congress	image	commerce	logo
retail (adj)	implication	brand (n)	compelling

*** - very frequent
** - quite frequent
* - frequent
No star - less frequent
Macmillan English Dictionary

5 Work in small groups to answer the questions / complete the task. Be ready to report back to the whole class.

- What do think about the uses of AR described in the programme? Would you use any of them?
- How do you think AR will develop in the future? Will it grow or flop? Will it 'change advertising forever'?
- Have you downloaded any business apps to your SmartPhone. If so, which is your favourite? Why is it useful?