Retail Futures
The ubiquitous presence of (mobile) technology has dramatically changed our daily lives and will continue to do so in the future. It has affected many domains of society. Retailing and shopping is no exception. Shifts in shopping behaviour and new technologically driven shopping experiences present new strategic and operational challenges for retail management. However, new technology also generates new opportunities for increasing profits and/or improving service delivery. The availability of person(al) information creates a new playing field for the interaction between retailers and their customers.

Despite the recent interest of academia in the potential and problems of new technology in retailing and shopping behaviour, current knowledge is still limited and highly fragmented. This book, with contributions from leading, mainly European, scholars on this topic is a timely and welcome addition to the literature which reduces the gap in our knowledge. Particularly interesting are the thought-provoking chapters on the future of retailing and new ethical issues that emerge.

I think this book is critical reading for everyone interested in retailing and technology. The balance between theory, empirical findings, showcases and reflection makes it a highly valuable source of information for academics and practitioners alike.

Professor Soora Rasouli, Co-editor Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, Professor of Urban Planning, Technical University of Eindhoven

This book is a timely, invaluable resource for academic researchers, students and practitioners trying to come to terms with rapid changes in the retail technological landscape. Writing about future technology is notoriously difficult and material becomes dated very quickly, but this book navigates the reader confidently through the minefield with case studies and evidence-based evaluations of technological progress and consumer responses. This book is an excellent contribution to contemporary thinking and presents a coherent, convincing exposition of how technology is changing the world of retailing and shopper behaviour. It has an accessible style that makes it a good read for the general as well as the specialist reader. I strongly recommend this book to anyone interested in how technological changes will affect retailing and shopping.

Professor Charles Dennis, Professor of Consumer Behaviour, Departmental Research Leader, Middlesex University London
Retail Futures: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly of the Digital Transformation

EDITED BY

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To Matteo
# Table of Contents

List of Figures \hspace{1cm} xi
List of Tables \hspace{1cm} xiii
Preface \hspace{1cm} xv

**Section 1: Theoretical and Technological Background**

Chapter 1  How Innovative Technology Serves the Retailer: A Store Sales Cycle Model  
*Tibert Verhagen and Jesse Weltevreden*  
3

Chapter 2  The Rise of Service Robots in Retailing: Literature Review on Success Factors and Pitfalls  
*Laurens De Gauquier, Malaika Brengman and Kim Willems*  
15

Chapter 3  Technological Diversification in Retail Agglomerations: Case Studies Alongside the Digital Marketing Mix  
*Amela Dizdarevic, Heiner Evanschitzky and Christof Backhaus*  
37

**Section 2: Changes in Retail Management and Strategy**

Chapter 4  Digital Signage in the Store Atmosphere: Balancing Gains and Pains  
*Stephanie van de Sanden, Kim Willems, Ingrid Poncin and Malaika Brengman*  
53
Chapter 5 Technology-infused Organizational Frontlines: When (Not) to Use Chatbots in Retailing to Promote Customer Engagement 71
Mathieu Lajante and Marzia Del Prete

Chapter 6 Dealing with Fake Online Reviews in Retailing 85
Scott Dacko, Rainer Schmidt, Michael Möhring and Barbara Keller

Chapter 7 Towards Omnichannel Retail Management: Evidences from Practice 97
Sandro Castaldo and Monica Grosso

Section 3: Changes in Consumers’ Experience, Behavior and Decision-making

Chapter 8 Dancing to the Algorithm, a Discussion of the Online Shopping Behaviour of Minors 113
Alun Epps

Chapter 9 Transforming the e-retailing Experience: Towards a Framework for the Socialisation of the Virtual Fitting Room 129
Vanissa Wanick and Eirini Bazaki

Chapter 10 Smart Consumers and Decision-making Process in the Smart Retailing Context through Generation Z Eyes 147
Constantinos-Vasilios Priporas

Section 4: Future Challenges

Chapter 11 The Dark Side of Artificial Intelligence in Retail Innovation 165
Ali B. Mahmoud, Shehnaz Tehseen and Leonora Fuxman

Chapter 12 Retailing and the Ethical Challenges and Dilemmas Behind Artificial Intelligence 181
Andreas Kaplan
Chapter 13  Do I Lose my Privacy for a Better Service?  
Investigating the Interplay between Big Data Analytics and Privacy Loss from Young Consumers’ Perspective  
Virginia Vannucci and Eleonora Pantano  

Acknowledgements  

About the Authors  

Index
List of Figures

Chapter 1
Figure 1.1. Store Sales Cycle Model. 9

Chapter 2
Figure 2.1. Humanoid Robot Pepper Entertaining Passers-by in a Chocolate Store. 17

Chapter 3
Figure 3.1. The Digital Marketing Mix. 40

Chapter 4
Figure 4.1. Welcome Kiosk at Carrefour. 56
Figure 4.2. Touchscreen Recipes. 57
Figure 4.3. Touchscreen with Recipes of Chocolate. 58
Figure 4.4. Book Recommendation System. 58
Figure 4.5. Beer Recommendation System. 59
Figure 4.6. Beaulieu’s Interactive Product Catalogue. 60
Figure 4.7. Interactive Product Information Kiosk. 61
Figure 4.8. Touch and Go Application. 62

Chapter 5
Figure 5.1. Example of a Real Service Interaction between a Customer and a Chatbot for a Large Telecommunication Company in Europe. 74
Figure 5.2. Technical Process of a Chatbot with Emotional Awareness. 79
Figure 5.3. Emotional Awareness for Chatbot Troubleshooting. 80
Chapter 7
Figure 7.1. Mapping the Touch points. Note: The colour of the cells corresponds to the number of companies that claim to use a touch point in a specific phase of the customer journey, i.e., in the different phases of interaction with customers (see the legend on the right for details).

Chapter 9
Figure 9.1. The Framework for the Socialisation of the Virtual Fitting Room.
Figure 9.2. Employee–Consumer Interactions in the Virtual Fitting Room.
Figure 9.3. Consumer–Consumer Interactions in the Virtual Fitting Room.
Figure 9.4. Employee–Consumer–Consumer Interactions in the Virtual Fitting Room.
Figure 9.5. Employee–Consumer Third Party Interactions in the Virtual Fitting Room.

Chapter 11
Figure 11.1. AI Patent Applications of Leading Technology Companies from 1999 to 2017.
Figure 11.2. Cortona: Microsoft’s Personal Assistant.
Figure 11.3. Google Gmail’s AI-Powered Filter.
# List of Tables

## Chapter 2
Table 2.1. Overview of Studies on Robots in Retail Studying the Impact on Customers. 19

## Chapter 3
Table 3.1. Features of the Examined Retail Agglomerations. 39
Table 3.2. Overview of Case Studies. 42

## Chapter 8
Table 8.1. The Practical, Physical and Psychological Benefits and Harm of Wi-Fi Infinity to Minors. 114
Table 8.2. The Practical, Physical and Psychological Benefits and Harm of Wi-Fi Infinity to Minors (Detailed). 120

## Chapter 10
Table 10.1. Influence of Smart Technologies on Consumer Decision-making Process. 156
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For decades, we tried to imagine the future of retailing from different points-of-view. In 2001, for the movie *Minority Report*, Steven Spielberg (in cooperation with MIT) imagined a new store where the shopping assistants were only virtual on virtual assistants (replacing human employees with avatars). In which scenario, they recognized each consumer through the retina scanner and suggested new products to buy accordingly. More recently, in 2017 James Patterson hypothesized ‘The Store’ (*The Store*, Random House) as an online retail giant able to control the life of American consumers, by influencing not just their preferences as customers but also those in their private lives.

More realistically, scholars predicted the future of retailing as the consequence of massive developments in technology (Grewal, Noble, Roggeveen, & Nordfalt, 2020; Inman & Nikolova, 2017; Pantano, Priporas, & Stylos, 2018), increasing usage of big data analytics (Bradlow et al., 2017), artificial intelligence (Davenport, Guha, Grewal, & Bressgott, 2020; Shankar, 2018) and changes in the retail services (Tezuka, Nada, Yamasaki, & Kuroda, 2019; Wirtz et al., 2018). Conversely, other authors tried to understand the extent to which we (as consumers) are willing to accept and use these technologies (Bertacchini et al., 2017; De Bellis & Johar, 2020; Evanschitzky, Iyer, Kenning, & Schutte, 2015), and the extent to which retailers are able to adopt them to create more pleasant and rewarding shopping experiences (Pantano & Vannucci, 2019; Van de Sanden, Willems, & Brengman, 2019).

However, studies only provide a fragmented understanding of the theory basis and practice for providing a comprehensive overview of the phenomenon. Thus, the following questions are still open:

1. *How will we shop in the future?*
2. *What are the challenges of competing in the new scenario?*
3. *What should we expect from consumers and retailers point of view?*

The aim of this book is to provide new approaches to retailing prompted by the increasing impact of technology and innovation. This is carried out in order to support scholars, students and practitioners to take advantages from the technology-based innovations through a more comprehensive perspective. To this end, this book provides a strong collection of theories, empirical evidence and
case study applications synthesizing the emerging studies on the innovation and technology management for retailing.

In particular, this book is organized in four main sections: (1) theoretical and technological background; (2) changes in retail management and strategies; (3) changes in consumer experience, behaviour and decision-making and (4) future challenges and direction. The first section includes three chapters investigating how technology supports retailers, the increasing adoption of robots for delivering retail services and the technology currently in use in retailing agglomerations. The second section comprises four chapters on how the technology changes retail management and strategy by focussing on digital signage, frontlines’ role, responses to fake reviews and on the shift towards the omnichannel retailing. The third section embraces three chapters on changes in consumer behaviour, by investigating the extent to which the new technologies changed the online shopping behaviour, the e-retail experiences and the decision-making process. Finally, the fourth section includes three chapters on the consequences of artificial intelligence adoption in retail services, with emphasis on the ethical challenges and privacy concerns.

This collection of chapters does not expect to be exhaustive. Instead, it provides a foundation for your critical reflection and investigation of the phenomenon. It also provides some useful tools to better understand the emerging complexity within the retail sector. Tools that hopefully help you begin to answer two broad questions. What will the future of retail look like? And more importantly, is it a future you are comfortable with?

Enjoy reading
Eleonora Pantano

References


