

# AUGMENTED REALITY

- Mixing of real-world and virtual
- Uses character or object recognition to initiate
- Driven by upswing in smart phones and web cams

## What is Augmented Reality?

Augmented Reality is technically defined as the live view of a physical real-world environment whose elements are merged by virtual computer-generated imagery resulting in a mixed reality world. In simpler terms, it's mixing live video with computer generated 3D objects or information overlays. Augmented Reality, or AR, is not a new concept; in fact, you've probably seen it in different forms in the past, like the yellow first-down lines that appear during a televised football game. [For marketers, AR provides an opportunity to virtually "place" your products in the hands or room of your consumer.]

Recently AR technology has been put in the hands of the everyday user by way of advertisements, games, and phone applications. Requiring only a standard computer and webcam, AR applications can be programmed to recognize faces, everyday objects, or most commonly, an icon printed out on paper. The rise in popularity of webcams and the increased inclusion of them in standard laptops pushes augmented reality out of the labs and into the homes of consumers.

Sunglass manufacturer, Ray-Ban, has taken advantage of this technology by allowing users to "try-on" their products. Utilizing facial recognition technology, you can browse through different styles and try them on, giving you an in-store experience from the comfort of your home. Check it out: <http://www.ray-ban.com/usa/neverhide/events/virtuallmirror>.

Recent hype stems from the increasing number of smart phones available that can support AR. Instead of webcams, the mobile version relies on the phone's camera. One popular mobile application allows people to locate nearby restaurants and restaurant reviews just by pointing their iPhone in a restaurant's general direction.

## Why it Matters

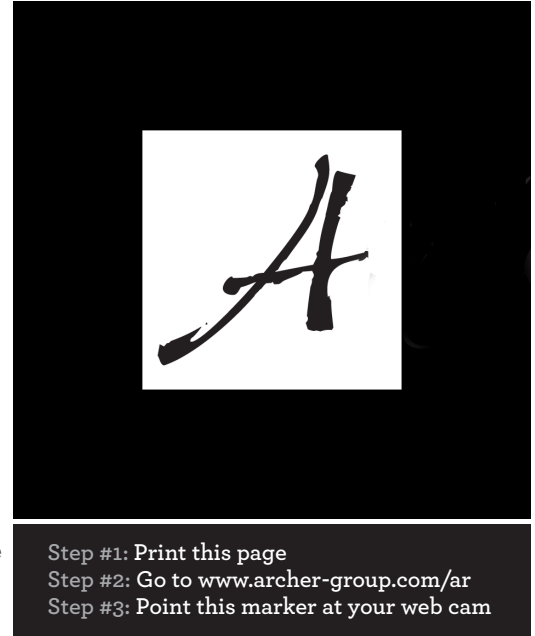
Early adopters have marketed with AR in a variety of ways:

- Utility: [USPS Virtual Box Simulator](#)
- Fun & Games: [Topps 3D Trading Cards](#)
- Experimental: [BMW Z4 in 3D](#)
- Product Trial: [Fashionista Social Shopping Tool](#)

In all these examples, there was a compelling reason for the user to spend time interacting with the brand's AR experience. It's definitely important to understand your audience and what compelling stories you want to illustrate about your brand. Also, you need to keep the interactions simple. Most AR applications fail when the user is asked to do too much. Setup and instructions need to be simple and intuitive.

But, even if you don't have a compelling story to tell, there are still opportunities to be aware of. Mobile platforms are now developing virtual billboards and ads within their AR apps. These billboards not only make your customers aware of your location or services, but also can physically guide them to your location and show reviews and important information about you as they stroll down the street.

Opportunities abound as Augmented Reality continues to mature. It's definitely important to experiment and keep your mind open as technology continues to make its way into our marketing arsenal.



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