

Future tech gets premiere at CES Vegas show

Associated Press

Nest and other home security systems let you spy on your home if something seems awry. Now you can spy on your groceries.

British company Smarter is launching the Fridge Cam, a small round camera for your fridge. It takes a picture every time you close your fridge door, so you can see if you need bread or sundries if you're at the store. It also uses visual recognition tools to alert you if you need to replace something. You can sign up for automatic reorderers via the app, and it can alert you when products are due to expire.

Similar technology is already built into smart refrigerators, but those are pricey — Samsung's Family Hub starts at \$5,600. Smarter's Barnaby Sellars says you can instead "spend \$149 and turn your refrigerator smart."

The product is among those being demonstrated at the CES gadget show in Las Vegas this week.

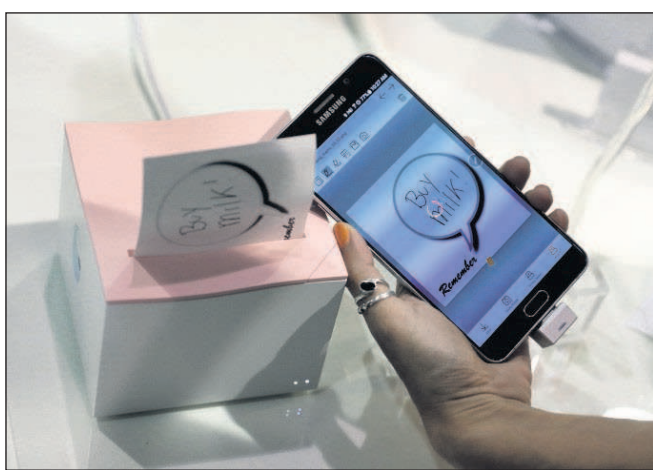
Gap is testing a smartphone app that will let customers try on clothes without stepping foot in a dressing room.

Gap's DressingRoom app uses avatars to help people understand how products will fit. People can then buy what fits online.

Gap calls this augmented reality, a technology that involves overlaying virtual images — such as clothing — on top of a real-life image. But in this case, the choices are limited to five pre-determined body types, rather than the actual photo of the potential buyer. The AR part is just the ability to physically walk around the avatar to see how clothing looks from various directions.

The app will come out this month, but will work only with phones sporting Google's Tango augmented-reality technology — namely Lenovo's Phab2 Pro and Asus' just-announced ZenFone AR. The clothing chain, which also operates Banana Republic and Old Navy stores, unveiled the app Wednesday at the CES gadget show in Las Vegas.

Wayfair, Home Depot and other retailers have been embracing virtual reality and augmented reality to help shoppers figure out ways to decorate homes. But clothing retailers have been slow to embrace the technology. The question is whether it will be something more than just a gimmick.



AP Photo/John Locher

The Nemonic sticky note printer is on display at the Mangoslab booth. The small printer prints sticky notes from a smartphone.

The move by Gap comes as shoppers spend less on clothing and more on experiences like beauty treatments. When customers do buy clothes, they're increasingly going online. Gap has also been struggling with a lack of compelling clothing, resulting in a long-standing sales slump.

A startup carmaker, Faraday Future, is promising again to have electric cars roll off a new \$1 billion assembly line in southern Nevada in 2018.

Faraday showed off a prototype at the CES gadget show in Las Vegas. Tuesday's demonstration had the company's four-door, 1,050-horsepower FF 91 model clocking 0-to-60 mph in just under 2.4 seconds.

Faraday Future officials say the car's battery allows a travel range of up to 378 miles, and a modular design will allow for a faster rollout of future models.

Company executive Nick Sampson didn't say when construction would resume at the factory site, where work was suspended in November. Nevada pledged up to \$335 million worth of incentives to attract Gardena, California-based Faraday Future to North Las Vegas.

Carnival, the operator of such cruise lines as Princess, Holland America and Carnival, is unveiling new concierge technology designed to help crew members anticipate and respond to passengers' needs.

A waiter, for instance, could bring a guest's favorite cocktail before she asks, or someone could remind a lounging guest that a yoga class is about to start.

Carnival hopes to boost loyalty and ultimately sales.

The development comes as the leisure-cruise industry plays catch-up with travel peers like hotels and airlines,



AP Photo/John Locher

The FridgeCam is displayed at the Smarter booth during CES Unveiled.

It's scheduled to debut on the Regal Princess cruise ship in November.

Research firm Gartner says it expects worldwide shipments of PCs, tablets, phones and other gadgets to

remain unchanged in 2017.

Gartner says it expects 2.3 billion such devices to ship this year, the same as in 2016. This finding comes as gadget makers unveil all sorts of new products at the CES tech show in Las Vegas

this week.

Looking ahead, Gartner says the embattled PC market should return to growth in 2018, thanks to a natural cycle of upgrades. That's mostly driven by an increase in premium "ultra-mobiles" — including ultra-slim Windows 10 devices and Apple's MacBook Air.

Smartphones are expected to grow just slightly; much of the growth is in emerging Asia and Pacific markets.

In a report Wednesday, Gartner research director Ranjit Atwal says consumers have fewer reasons to upgrade or to buy traditional devices. Rather, he says, "they are seeking fresher experiences and applications in emerging categories such as head mounted displays, virtual personal assistant speakers and wearables."

Thursday Morning

Table with 12 columns for stations and 12 columns for time slots (6 AM to 11:30 AM) showing program schedules.

January 5, 2017

AFTERNOON

Table with 12 columns for stations and 12 columns for time slots (12 PM to 5:30 PM) showing program schedules.

EVENING

Table with 12 columns for stations and 12 columns for time slots (6 PM to 11:30 PM) showing program schedules.

Macy's to close stores, cut 10,000 jobs amid weak sales

Associated Press

Macy's says it is eliminating more than 10,000 jobs and plans to move forward with 68 store closures after a disappointing holiday shopping season. The department store chain also lowered its full-year earnings forecast.

The retailer said Wednesday that sales at its established stores fell 2.1 percent in November and December compared to the same period last year. Macy's Inc. pointed to changing consumer behavior and said its performance reflects the challenges that are facing much of the retail industry.

As if to underscore that point, Kohl's Corp. also reported disappointing holiday shopping numbers Wednesday. Macy's said the 68 store closures, which span the nation, are part of the 100 closings it announced in August. Of the 68, three were closed by the middle of 2016, 63 will close in the spring and two will be closed by the middle of 2017.

Some employees may be offered positions at nearby stores, but Macy's estimates that 3,900 employees will be affected by the closures.

Macy's also said it plans to restructure parts of its business and sell some properties. This will lead to the reduction of 6,200 jobs. The moves are estimated to save \$550 million annually.

The company, which has been under pressure from investors to sell some of its valuable real estate, is selling or has sold three locations. It is leasing the properties back and will keep operating those stores.

Overall, Macy's said, the job reductions represent about 7 percent of its workforce.

The company, which owns the Macy's and Bloomingdale's brands, has been struggling with declining traffic in its stores, where the bulk of its business is still conducted.

Longtime CEO Terry Lundgren, who is stepping down early this year and will be succeeded by Macy's President Jeff Gennette, said in a statement the company is closing stores that are "unproductive or are no longer robust shopping destinations" as well as selling those with highly valued real estate.

Macy's has seen sales growth slow as it and other traditional department store chains face competition from online and off-price rivals. It has tried new ways to attract shoppers, such as by offering more exclusive products, designating areas featuring "smart watches" and launching an Apple shop at its flagship New York store in Herald Square. The company said Wednesday it plans to invest some of its savings in growing its digital business.

Large table with 12 columns for stations and 12 columns for time slots (6 PM to 11:30 PM) showing program schedules.

NIGHT OWL

Table with 12 columns for stations and 12 columns for time slots (12 AM to 5:30 AM) showing program schedules.