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BOTS FOR SHOPPING: MERCHANTS LOOK TO NEXT-GEN TECH AMID RISING SMARTPHONE USE



By Martin Kovacs | 11 Oct 2016



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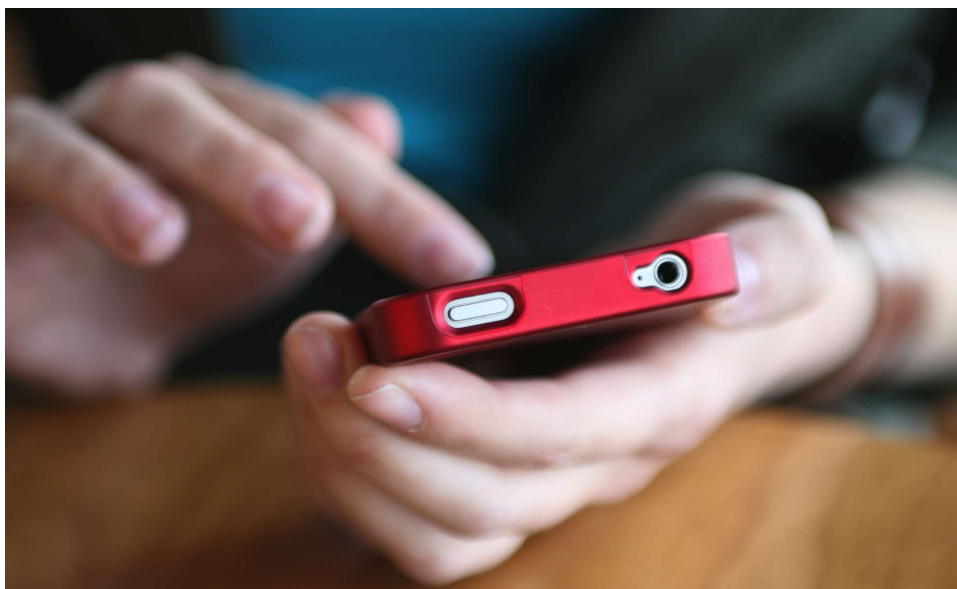
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Merchant integration of technologies including bots and natural language interfaces will drive mobile remote purchases to a total of US\$2.1 trillion by 2021, up 100 per cent from this year's projection for spend on physical and digital goods, according to new Juniper Research findings.

Juniper's new study found that rising digital retail smartphone use is the underlying cause for stakeholder development of bots, natural language processing and disruption at the payment gateway.

The study "found that shoppers would be driven away from merchants where keyword search and menu-driven systems were in place".

"It suggested that where merchants deployed conversational interfaces, such as bots and natural language search, they would be able to far better understand the consumer's intent," Juniper states of the study.

Juniper cites The North Face as an example, with it having developed an intelligent digital assistant to help consumers, while also noting that Facebook, Google and storefronts including Etsy "are investing heavily in similar solutions".

"Product search and discovery is a key stage in the shopper journey," research author Steffen Sorrell commented.

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“Offering a conversational consumer interface, then marrying intent with contextual product data will drive merchant differentiation.”

The research also found “that substantial activity is taking place to improve the experience at the point of payment”.

“Disruptive players are simplifying the consumer experience by challenging tried-and-tested but frustrating checkouts,” Juniper states.

By way of example, Juniper notes that “Klarna eschews card number entry and usernames and passwords”, with shoppers able to enter information such as their email address and postcode.

Juniper additionally notes how machine learning is being utilised to minimise the chance of payment rejection, citing the example of Adyen, which is employing the technology to “avoid payment rejection due to bad formatting or misrouted connections to the acquiring bank”.



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