

High Street UK 2020

Information Sheet

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Topic	Summary of Document	Title, Source or Link
High Street	<p>Industry unveils plan to transform digital health of high streets by 2020</p> <p>Retail industry leaders have unveiled a five-year strategy to ‘reinvigorate’ UK high streets with a host of digital schemes. The report can be found at: http://thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk/digital-high-street-report-2020.</p> <p>The Digital High Street Advisory Board has proposed to implement four significant digital initiatives in a bid to transform high streets across the UK by 2020.</p> <p>The blueprint includes meeting targets for town centre connectivity by improving broadband, mobile and wi-fi access and laying on programmes to improve basic digital skills of individuals, small businesses and charities.</p> <p>A High Street Digital Lab will be set up to provide 1,200 UK towns with ready-to-use digital capabilities and town-specific skills training.</p> <p>The board will also establish the High Street Digital Health Index, which it said will provide ‘an interactive benchmark’ for towns and local authorities to ‘drive assessment and change’ in infrastructure, digital skills, high street attraction and digital engagement.</p> <p>The four objectives form part of the Digital High Street 2020 report, which sets out how town centres, and in particular small independent retailers, can benefit from integrating digital technologies into their high streets and ‘compete more favourably’ with national and international retailers.</p> <p><u>‘Vibrant’ digital future</u></p> <p>The report suggests that ‘new solutions in retailing, logistics and traffic management’ are needed for towns and cities to regenerate their high streets, ‘take advantage of technological changes’ and offer ‘genuinely new and attractive shopping experiences’.</p> <p>Digital High Street Advisory Board chairman and chief executive of Home Retail Group, John Walden, said: ‘The digital revolution is arguably the most disruptive factor affecting our communities, but its effects are not often considered central to high street revitalisation.</p> <p>‘Many members of UK town centres are struggling to keep up with consumers in terms of their digital capabilities, and given the pace of digital growth many towns lack sufficient infrastructure and basic digital</p>	<p><i>Retail Week</i> — 9 March 2015: http://www.retail-week.com/technology/industry-unveils-plan-to-transform-digital-health-of-high-streets-by-2020/5072749. <u>article</u></p>

skills.

'I believe that the business-oriented board has provided recommendations that, taken together, can restore our high streets to vibrancy in a digital future, into 2020 and beyond.'

Six in 10 adults now use mobile phones to access the internet on the move, with more than £150bn of retail sales now influenced by digital, the report says.

But the board are concerned that retailers with services that fail to meet customers' digital expectations risk losing a combined £12bn in sales every year.

Only half of small businesses and charities have a website and only a third of SMEs have an ecommerce offer.

Estimates published in the report reveal that digital technology could unlock £18.8bn of revenue for SMEs, while reducing their costs by up to a fifth.

Future success

Board member and Google UK director Peter Fitzgerald said: 'Today, the vast majority of UK shoppers research online before they buy from a store. This means that every business is a digital business because every consumer is a digital consumer.'

'We hope that this report will be a first step towards improving digital access and expertise among small businesses and help them grow faster and reach more customers.'

British Retail Consortium director-general Helen Dickinson added: 'British high streets have weathered sweeping changes in society, economic cycles, property development and retail expansion, and the seismic impact of digital technology on communications, entertainment and commerce.'

'Our communities have survived these changes to varying degrees but while what makes a successful high street has not fundamentally changed, the ability to achieve wider future success is now absolutely dependent on embracing the impact of digital and the recommendations of this report provide a strategy to do just that.'

In response to the report, High Streets Minister Penny Mordaunt said: 'High streets contribute billions of pounds to the economy and we know digital is the way forward, so it is vitally important traders and town

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centres keep up with the way people shop if they are to continue to thrive.

‘The new digital laboratory is one idea that could ensure small businesses have the tools and skills they need to compete with the big players. We want to future proof our high streets so they can remain at the heart the community for decades to come.’

High Street	<p>Google Shop: can it reinvent the high street?</p> <p>Is the internet – which has spent the last 10 years trying to shut the high street down – finally throwing a lifeline to our town centres?</p> <p>There was a fascinating announcement this week from Google. The search giant has opened its first shop. Not an online shop, a virtual store or a web outlet. A real shop. With bricks and mortar and real-life sales assistants.</p> <p>The world’s first Google Shop is in London’s Tottenham Court Road. It officially opened this week and promises what the internet company describes as a ‘unique try-before-you-buy experience’.</p> <p>Such a claim of uniqueness might surprise anybody who has visited an Apple Store, but the venture is certainly a step change for Google, which only moved into the world of hardware three years ago with the launch of its Nexus phone range. It has since followed with tablets, laptops and a device that lets you watch internet-streamed movies on your TV.</p> <p>It’s these gadgets that Google is hoping to shift in its new London shop. But whether or not other technology firms got there first, is Google’s move part of a bigger movement on the web? An acknowledgement that while many of us are happy to buy many things online, there are some purchases that we need to hold in our hands before we know if we want them or not? And might this, and other recent developments on the web, offer a small degree of protection for the high street?</p> <p>Already firms such as made.com, the online furniture company, offer small showrooms for folk who are too nervous to buy a sofa sight-unseen. Indeed, some years ago I ordered an entire bespoke wooden kitchen from an online manufacturer, having visited a ‘showroom’ that was no bigger than a fish and chip shop.</p> <p>And then there’s the rise of the ‘click and collect’ concept. This is where you order an item online but ask</p>	<p><i>Daily Telegraph</i> — 11 March 2015: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/google/11463784/Google-Shop-can-it-reinvent-the-high-street.html</p>
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for your goods to be delivered to a shop, rather than your home, so that you can pick it up on the way back from work.

Andy Street, managing director of John Lewis, revealed last week that more than half of John Lewis's online sales last Christmas were delivered this way. And even the supermarkets are at it: Sainsbury's, rather late to the party, has just announced that 100 of its stores will offer click-and-collect by the end of the year.

Meanwhile, a specialist firm called Duddle allows you to have all your online purchases sent to its shops – real shops, with real people inside – so that you can pick up your items from them, rather than risk them being delivered while you're out of the house. Duddle aims to have 250 stores within three years.

James Elias, marketing director of Google UK, says that his company's retail empire will be more modest than that – for the moment. Aside from the Tottenham Court Road outlet, there are plans for only two more Google Shops in the UK, 'and we want to see how they go'.

Elias, as marketing folk tend to do, says the Google Shops will provide a 'magical experience'. He says the aim is not high-pressure salesmanship but a fun, relaxing environment where there's no guilt in popping in just to mess around on the phones and the tablets. (Just like an Apple Store.) The shop will also, he says, be a place where Google device users can seek expert advice, even attend classes. (Again, just like an Apple Store...)

So what is the shop actually like? First things first. When you hear that one of the world's biggest companies – Google earned total revenues of US\$66 billion last year, even if its tax bill wasn't quite so impressive – is opening its first ever shop, you'd expect a little razzmatazz, wouldn't you? A big jazzy shopfront. Signs shouting 'new!' and 'the world's first'?

In fact, the first Google Shop is supremely low-key. Why? Because it's a shop within a shop, tucked away inside a branch of Currys PC World.

None of the branding on the street says anything other than 'Currys PC World' – in fact, there's precious little sign of Google's presence from the pavement, beyond a modern sculpture in the window made out of bicycle wheels and cogs that spells out the name of the

company, if you squint at it for long enough.

Meanwhile, the Google Shop occupies, by my rough estimate, less than 600 square feet – not much more space than a perfume concession inside Selfridges. And whereas an Apple Store might have many hundreds of laptops, tablets and phones to play with, here there is just one long desk and a single round table – in total, a dozen devices.

I can't pretend that business is brisk on the morning I visit (its first official day of trading). I spend around 90 minutes here and fewer than 30 customers wander in to the Google area of the PC World store. But nearly everyone I speak to – they're mostly male and mostly young – is very enthusiastic about the place.

Elias won't go into details about the financial arrangements between PC World and Google, but the one sale I witness – a Chromebook (Google's laptop) – is not rung up by a Google Shop person; instead, a PC World employee is ushered over to accompany the customer to the PC World cash desk. That's where the money changes hands.

There are lots of jolly diversions here, however. There's a 'Google Doodle' screen on which customers can 'spray' drawings using an amusing electronic 'spray can'. (There's also a button in the shop assistants' pockets that lets them instantly delete anything vulgar or offensive.) And there's a huge bank of screens that uses Google Earth, the company's zoomable geographic software, to let you pinpoint any spot on the planet.

It's a surreal moment when a Norwegian businessman, in London, brings up the picture of a rooftop 4,000 miles away in Delray Beach, Florida, and says gleefully: 'Look! I just sold those two condos this week!' And an even more surreal moment when a uniformed nun wanders over to the tablets and cheerfully starts messing around with them.

It transpires that Sister Miriam Joseph, of the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth, is a huge fan of technology. 'You mean I've walked into the first ever Google Shop in the world? This is my lucky day!' she exclaims.

This is not what I expected to see when I got out of bed this morning. But Sister Miriam has seen the surprise in my eyes many times before.

She's here from Rome, she explains, where she runs a very busy convent that needs to keep its

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	<p>data management and communications up to date: 'When I'm in London, I try to see what's happening in technology.'</p> <p>She senses that I might need a little persuading about the merits of this brand new shop.</p> <p>The 74-year-old gadget-happy nun flashes a big smile in my direction. 'What was once seen as modern is now mainstream,' she says. 'You have to live in the present with an eye to the future.'</p>	
High Street	<p>John Lewis Boss Refutes 'Death of the High Street'</p> <p>While the coming years for retail will be one of polarisation, the need for busy town and city centres means live retail is still able to thrive, according to Andy Street, John Lewis chief executive and chairman of Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership.</p> <p>'The 'death of the high street' is complete and utter nonsense. Customers, even those 18–25 year olds, want a social experience, because spending a Saturday shopping online is deeply unsatisfying,' he said.</p> <p>'The problems are for secondary and tertiary locations – those places that aren't Birmingham, Manchester or Leeds – whereabouts they fall in the shake-out. But the UK is leading the way in combining "clicks and bricks" – and is exporting those skills.'</p> <p>David Atkins, chief executive of Hammerson, said: 'Experiential' locations are the ones that thrive. Local authorities need to have a plan that stands up to scrutiny.' He added that click and collect facilities within the company's shopping centres are returning 'modest' returns, but said: 'The cost is low, and it's a good service to provide – so why not offer it?'</p>	<p><i>InsiderMedia</i> — 13 March 2015: http://www.insidermedia.com/insider/midlands/135579-street-refutes-death-high-street</p>
High Street	<p>Can the high street survive without large chains?</p> <p>The varying fortunes of shop owners in Stroud highlight a wider battle to keep town centres alive.</p> <p>In Stroud, a former mill town on the edge of the Cotswolds, local shop owner Simon Powell is putting the finishing touches to his new shoe shop at the top end of the high street. He already owns a clothes shop and a toy store in the high street and has been trading since 2002.</p> <p>'There's a whole string of very good independent shops along this street, and many have been here</p>	<p><i>Daily Telegraph</i> — 14 March 2015: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/retailandconsumer/11471236/Can-the-UK-high-street-survive-without-large-chains.html</p>

for at least five years,' says Powell. 'We're all mature businesses and understand the local market.'

Stroud typifies the tension between two types of retailer. At the top of the hill, independent businesses such as Powell's are thriving. There are around 20 independent shops, with a strong community spirit among owners and customers. A Saturday farmers' market has been named the best of its kind in the UK, and pulls in customers from surrounding towns.

Yet at the bottom end of town – home to mainly chain stores and large retailers – it's a different story. Four retail units have become empty and landlords are struggling to fill them. The vacancy rate for Stroud is 12.9%, data from the Local Data Company suggest, which is higher than the average for similar towns.

'Three recent vacancies have been in the prime part of the town centre and last year we lost Dorothy Perkins,' says Andrew Watton, of local property firm Montgomery Watton, who has managed commercial property in Stroud for more than a decade. 'Rents are around £40,000 a year at this end of town, which isn't so bad, but the big retailers want to concentrate on bigger towns – there's not enough for them here.'

Matters came to a head when a local management consultant, Marcus Green, wrote in a weekly newspaper column that more needed to be done to attract high street names to Stroud, which was recently voted only 493rd in Britain's 500 most vibrant towns.

'The retail offering just isn't that good and the town is becoming ghettoised. Down the hill from Kendrick Street has become increasingly grotty and up the hill has become increasingly twee.

'There are some vociferous independent retailers, councillors and activists who are against everything and are off-putting to investors and developers,' he wrote.

His views upset traders. 'His solution is that the town needs some sort of big redevelopment project,' says Powell. 'But that costs a lot of money. And it probably wouldn't work anyway as the nationals aren't interested in being in our town. It's too small for them.'

'It's difficult enough for independents. We don't need someone slating us,' adds Denise Ballard, owner of neighbouring lifestyle shop Fourteen. 'We don't need more chains. Small, quirky shops are what make Stroud.'

The economic downturn has left Britain with an

insatiable appetite for discounts and bargains, with the number of charity shops, pound stores, betting outlets and tattoo parlours trebling in the past decade. Online retailers have tapped into this, leaving traditional stores struggling to compete.

Independent traders initially struggled to adapt but, armed with local knowledge, a number of tax reliefs, and the ability to quickly react to trends and demands, many are finding ways to attract new shoppers to the high street and to retain loyal customers.

At the same time, retail chains are rethinking their strategies. Where the ambition once was a presence in every town, many retailers are now burdened with large store portfolios, which have become a heavy weight on the bottom line.

Many are ditching unprofitable sites as their property leases expire, and this is set to intensify. A recent report suggested 80% of contracts are due to expire by 2019, a hangover of an earlier trend to rent shops on 25-year leases.

Green says his aim was to get people talking about the issue and to see the benefits that larger retailers could bring to the area.

‘Other town centres are clearly busier than Stroud. Retailers tell me that business isn’t great. I don’t see a decisive approach among city officials or businesses in getting more visitors to the town,’ he told *The Telegraph*.

‘It’s great to have independent retailers, but we need other types too. A third of women part-time workers in Stroud are paid less than the living wage. We therefore need a wider range of shops that sell more affordable items.’

There have been numerous reports about ‘saving’ Britain’s high streets. Closure rates remain stubbornly high, with 16 stores closing daily in the first half of 2014, according to the Local Data Company. In the first six months of 2012, 20 were closing every day.

The problem is that footfall is falling as more and more consumers turn to online shopping or go to out-of-town retail parks, which offer benefits such as free parking.

A report last week by the Digital High Street Advisory Board suggested that many towns lack sufficient Wi-Fi infrastructure and mobile data speeds to keep up with what consumers expect. It said council officials should

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put more focus on turning town centres into digital hubs.

Pete Blythe, owner of homeware shop Cornflower & Calico, says local traders in Stroud are working hard to improve the high street’s offerings. ‘We generally all sell different things and there’s an unspoken rule to avoid selling stuff other shop owners are stocking. There’s no point trying to go into price competition war with your neighbours.’

He says he’s noticed an increase in footfall during his five years in business and the town is gradually becoming better from the point of view of running a shop.

‘So I don’t understand why Stroud has ranked so low. During the week there is a gradual flow of regulars, but the farmers’ market draws in a lot of customers at the weekends, and business also picks up over the school holidays,’ says Blythe.

Powell adds that although there have been challenges, high street shops still provide an important service.

‘We really believe in this town and what we’re providing. We think it’s got real potential to be even more special than it is, and the town centre plays a big part in that,’ he says.

Digital Technology and Retail

Retailers told to adapt or die in an asteroid strike of technological changes

Dixons Carphone’s Seb James says rise of household gadgets connected via the internet means new services will be needed to meet shift in consumer behaviour

Retailers will be hit by an ‘asteroid strike’ of technological change that will kill off those that fail to adapt, according to Dixons Carphone boss Seb James.

The arrival of household technology that communicates through the internet – the so-called internet of things – would bring a shift in consumer behaviour and the retail landscape as dramatic as that caused by the advent of the internet itself, which led to the closure of thousands of high street stores.

‘We are coming to the era of the connected customer, the latest in a series of shifts created by technology,’ he told the Retail Week Live conference in London. ‘This shift is going to bump off as many retailers as the last. It will be a total asteroid strike at the heart of retail.’

The Guardian —
11 March 2015:
<http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2015/mar/11/retail-adapt-or-die-technological-changes-dixons-carphone-household-gadgets-internet>

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The new technology, from health monitoring smartwatches to washing machines that can tell engineers when they need repairing – will mean retailers need to offer services to help consumers with the new products and keep them operating correctly.

Today the average home has about 12 connected devices, mostly phones, laptops and TVs, but this could rise to as many as 70 within two or three years, said James.

Tech group Cisco Systems thinks the ‘internet of things’ could be worth \$14.4tn (£8.5tn) by 2020 when 50bn objects will be connected online.

That changing landscape fuelled the merger between electrical goods retailer Dixons and mobile technology business Carphone Warehouse last year.

Retailers will need to find ways of handling the stream of data about their customers so that they can serve people effectively.

‘Your connected home will know when you’re in, what mood you’re in, your temperature preferences and family members. They’ll know the state of health of your dog, how far you jogged this morning and what brand of toothpaste you like and how much you have left.

‘It’s a little bit creepy but we’re all going to have to get used to it as information which used to be so hard to get is now going to be so easy to find new skills and tools [to deal with it].’

Technology and Retail

It’s personal: how technology will change the way we shop

The dramatic progress we’ve seen over the past three years in the world of technology is starting to have material effects on the ways customers experience retail. The speed at which technology is innovating and developing is so fast that many of today’s fringe ideas could well become mainstream.

There are four technology trends in particular that will fundamentally drive these changes to retail and they’re all centred around personalisation: data science, the internet of things, the back office and personal production.

Data science

Increasing volumes of data and improved techniques to hold, merge and act upon that data in real-time

The Guardian —
21 August 2014:
<http://www.theguardian.com/media-network/media-network-blog/2014/aug/21/personal-technology-retail-internet-3d-printing>

is driving personalisation via the more traditional marketing levers: price, promotions, product and place.

Tesco and Ocado, for example, are the experts at personalising promotions via offers made specifically to an individual at a specific moment in time. Price personalisation has been pioneered (crudely) by Ryanair, easyJet and others. While they won't reveal their methods, it's widely believed airlines raise prices based on your flight search history to create a sense of urgency. On the product front, think of all those 'you might also like' sections you find on big online marketplaces. In terms of place, Marks & Spencer is personalising clusters of products by merchandising outfit propositions – for example, shirt, trousers and socks – to encourage cross-shopping and category awareness.

Micro-location technologies – most famously iBeacons – will have a big role to play in this area. Beacon technology is increasingly being used to pinpoint precisely where a customer is browsing in store. This is achieved by the beacon communicating with your smartphone, however in future wearables are likely to be the conduit for that data.

The key to mastering beacons will be merging, in real-time, the context of a customer shopping trip in the store (what mission are they on?) with predictive analytics based on their past purchase behaviour (will they buy a sandwich or salad today?) with their location in the store (how long have they spent in the lunch food aisle?). Many retailers in all sectors are grappling with this challenge: Safeway, Waitrose and Macy's have all deployed various micro-location technologies to provide customers with notifications, offers and inspiration.

The internet of things

The internet of things – the interconnection of everyday objects – is continuing to emerge. For example, in South Korea LG has demonstrated a fridge that is aware of its contents and their freshness, so the fridge itself can help plan shopping or even communicate with a smartphone while a customer is in store.

There are also startups who have imagined and created products that are both connected to the internet and provide a technical capability previously

unachievable. For instance, Vessyl is launching a cup that is both internet connected and aware of its content: sugar, caffeine, even the brand and flavour. It is easy to see how the data from this device can be merged with a shopper's purchase data to fine-tune drinks based on individual preference.

The back office

The back office is often seen as the unglamorous brother of the customer-facing experience, but improvements in technology implementations in the supply chain will create personal experiences here too. Volvo, for example, is launching Volvo on Call, a service integrated into its cars that allows delivery couriers to access the customer's vehicle using a smartphone key and smartphone location services (which the couriers will need to have). This will allow customers' orders to be delivered (or returns picked up) from their vehicle. An accompanying app allows shoppers to track this.

Personal production

Personal production has focused very much to date on 3D printing, which Amazon has brought into the mainstream. A whole host of fashion houses and retailers are experimenting with 3D printing, including Cubify, which is 3D-printing shoes for the luxury end, while Tamicare is aiming at the mass-produced underwear market.

Clues to the future might lie more with Coca-Cola's recent tie up with Keurig, allowing for customers to make Coca-Cola at home in a machine. Again, it is not hard to imagine how this could combine with shopping or other consumption data to personalise the production of the Coca-Cola drink, tweaking the content to a specific individual, even if they're in a certain mood – perhaps adding caffeine for those feeling down at the end of a tough week or reducing sugar for people on a health kick, evident from purchasing behaviour.

The four technology trends described are far from discrete: each trend provides significant opportunity for retailers, manufacturers and marketers to engage customers in new ways and with new propositions. Those that ultimately win out will be the organisations that are able to bring technology development across

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	these trends together.	
Retail Trends	<p>Millennials' demand for instant gratification is shaping the future of retail</p> <p>Online is a fast growing, vital channel for brands but the speed of logistics hasn't quite caught up - leaving consumers frustrated and businesses facing the big challenge of how to turn things around.</p> <p>As Future Laboratory trends researcher Victoria Buchanan says: 'The idea someone would want to sit in and wait all day for an Asos package is ridiculous.'</p> <p>Poor customer experience at delivery can ultimately negatively impact brand image and businesses are taking steps to carve out the future of online shopping.</p> <p>So in this multichannel age, what does the future of retail look like? And what are brands doing to make online shopping a seamless experience?</p> <p>Click and collect is already impacting the shape of retail. Significantly, stalwart John Lewis outlined the strength of its own click and collect performance over Christmas – when it overtook home delivery for the first time ever, accounting for 56% of online orders.</p> <p><u>Millenials have a one-click mentality</u></p> <p>John Lewis has the benefit of strong store locations, but other companies are experimenting with different delivery options – from small pods with changing rooms that offer immediate returns for clothes, to click and collect counters at local shops.</p> <p><u>Millenials are creating a shift in the retail landscape</u></p> <p>Brands including Asos, Boden, Amazon and New Look are all investing in innovative ways to make delivery cheaper and more convenient. Supermarkets like Asda are also experimenting with click and collect lockers at underground stations.</p> <p>Buchanan says millennials are creating this emerging shift in the retail landscape.</p> <p>'What's really driving this is the need for instant gratification, which really chimes with a millennial audience. Even when ordering online they crave immediacy.</p> <p>'Millennials are twice as likely to pick up online groceries on the same day as purchase and 46% will pay higher for same day delivery,' she says.</p>	<p><i>Marketing Magazine</i> — 28 January 2015</p>

Fundamentally there is one thing shaping the future of retail: the desire for convenience – and within that the desire for immediacy in a multichannel world.

‘A brand like Amazon is designed to make life as easy as possible for consumers – and other retailers are now borrowing this idea – they can’t wait three days to deliver.’

Brands can't wait three days to deliver

Doddle is a joint partnership between Network Rail and Traveler founder Lloyd Dorfman. Since launching in 2014 it has opened 30 shops at major railway stations including London Waterloo and London Victoria, it aims to open around 300 over the next few years. As many as 40,000 parcels can be held between the 30 stores currently open in the UK.

Marketing director Paddy Earnshaw says Doddle is an agnostic service that allows consumers to select a Doddle shop as the delivery location on a package from any online site. It then holds the package in the manned shop – open all year, seven days a week, for collection.

With close proximity to railways, the idea is that commuters can pick up packages to or from work. An important element for retailers, he claims, is that consumers can return unwanted items immediately.

Anticipatory shopping is the future

Doddle has partnered with Asos, and can bulk returns back to the depot, stripping out the cost of multiple deliveries. This helps to answer an ‘important question for the future of retail’ – which is how businesses strip out some of the costs of returns.

‘We see click and collect as being one of the central tenants of online shopping. People want online shopping to fit into their lifestyles,’ he says. ‘Our locations are pivotal to the success of our business, if we are any more than 30 seconds out of the normal commuter route, it’s too far.’

The challenge is educating consumers about the brand. It’s taken out print ads in the London press – including Stylist and Shortlist, and implemented ‘station domination’ at Waterloo and Victoria station, emblazoning the brand name at points across the space to tap into a commuter audience.

Earnshaw has the ‘classic start up marketers challenge

– how can I a) change behaviour, b) make people aware of the service and c) ensure brands adopt us.’

The connected shopper will shape the future of retail

Gazing into the future, the idea of the connected consumer will play an even bigger role in shaping online shopping, and is a big opportunity for brands, Future Laboratory’s Victoria Buchanan says.

‘The idea of pre-emptive retail [is gaining traction] and Amazon is already planning for this.

‘Anticipatory shopping using data and analytics could send something to you before you’ve ordered it – if they crack it you could get your product before you knew you needed it.’

Already, offline bricks and mortar retailers are already being forced to take learnings from ecommerce sites as well as vice versa – and they need to, she claims.

The sharing economy is making us more trusting

‘Millenials have a one click mentality – that’s the way they shop in store and they expect digital to be the same.’ Brands need to innovate to make this a reality.

‘The sharing economy is making us more trusting of other people and I think this is an area that could definitely take up,’ she says.

The concept of the sharing economy could really disrupt retailers in the not too distant future - with the idea of an Uber driver delivering a package whilst collecting a passenger not too implausible.

But as for drone deliveries? Could we really expect our packages to be delivered via automated drones in the not too distant future?

Whilst brands like Amazon are testing Prime Air drone deliveries, it is unlikely this will be viable in the near future. It’s more of a PR stunt to show off its delivery capabilities, she says, given of course its ‘still illegal to use drones in the US.’