# Amazon doesn’t care if you accidentally shoplift from its cashier-less store

Amazon Go, the e-commerce giant’s new cashier-less grocery store in downtown Seattle, opened today to a mix of general curiosity and incredulity. How can a store function without cashiers? How do you pay, and how does the business know who’s buying what?

Amazon has done a sound job of explaining many of the particulars of its new concept store, one the company hopes brings more online customers into contact with its increasingly important offline presence. There are cameras and sensors, to detect when you’ve walked in and when items are removed from shelves, and there are check-in kiosks near the entrance for scanning your phone to register your presence via Amazon Prime. Regardless, Go will likely remain an alien concept for many.

And one the most pressing questions people seem to have is: what happens if you try to steal something? That was put to the test today when CNBC tech correspondent Deirdre Bosa accidentally left the store without being charged for one cup of Siggi’s yogurt.

Amazon took the error in stride, with Go VP Gianna Puerini telling CNBC, “First and foremost, enjoy the yogurt on us.” Puerini goes on to say that accidental shoplifting “happens so rarely that we didn’t even bother building in a feature for customers to tell us it happened.” Puerini said she hasn’t personally seen that error in the past year she’s been using the store, but that Amazon “tried to make it super easy on the rare occasion that does happen either to remove it or enjoy breakfast on us.”

Revealing that there’s not even a feature to tell Amazon you’ve taken something without paying is rather telling. It suggests the company is so confident in its system that it hasn’t built out any protocol for or safeguard against missing items. And it’s not just that, but Amazon also isn’t drawing a distinction between those who accidentally leave without paying for something and those who may be actively trying to steal. All of this raises some interesting questions about how robust this system is and whether it really is the bolder and more convenient future of retail.

We’ve reached out to Amazon for comment on how rare it anticipates this situation might be, and whether it has any methods for detecting, penalizing, or tracking one-off or habitual shoplifting. We’ll update this story when we hear back.

*Amazon’s system may be so robust that purposefully shoplifting is near impossible*

On one hand, it would seem that Amazon is playing a bit of a numbers game here. Sure, one cup of yogurt lost is not going to affect the Go store’s bottom line. And when it’s Amazon’s system at fault, for not detecting that Bosa had the yogurt with her and charging her for it, it makes total sense to comp the customer. All forms of retail also deal with shoplifting as a built-in cost of operating a brick-and-mortar business, and Amazon’s immense size, scale, and financial war chest means it can weather those costs more than any comparable company in the retail sector.

The other factor to keep in mind is that perhaps Amazon’s system is so good that stealing just isn’t an option. How would somebody go about shoplifting from Amazon Go anyway? You’d still have to check in with your Prime account, and you’d still have to purchase items to make it not look suspicious that you were wandering the store, then leaving without a bag. With cameras watching your every move and sensors detecting even subtle changes in inventory, I doubt

even the most bold shoplifters could reasonably find a loophole.

Still, Amazon seems to be inviting people to exploit Go by publicly announcing that it has no way of either knowing or easily detecting items that are removed but not paid for, and that it doesn’t even care about the loss at the end of the day. It will be fascinating to watch how customers acclimate to the Go experience and whether any good faith (or bad faith) experimenters find ways to undermine it.

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