

Amazon is Reportedly Developing a Hand-Scanning Payment Option

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Amazon is reportedly developing checkout terminals that will allow shoppers to pay by scanning the palms of their hands.

That's according to the Wall Street Journal, which cited people familiar with the matter.

Amazon did not respond to a request for comment.

The WSJ said Amazon is targeting the terminals, which link credit and debit cards to consumers' hands, to coffee shops, quick-service restaurants and other locations that "do lots of repeat business."

It also reported the platform is working with Visa to test the technology and is in discussions with Mastercard. Visa and Mastercard did not respond to requests for comment.

This follows a September 2019 story from the New York Post, which said Amazon was testing pay-by-hand scanners at vending machines in its New York offices and planned to roll out the payment option at some Whole Foods locations in early 2020.

A patent application dated Dec. 26, 2019 from Amazon Technologies, the company's Mumbai-based electronic manufacturing arm, for a "non-contact biometric identification system," describes a hand scanner, which can capture images of users' palms with wrinkles and "deeper characteristics" like veins.

The document suggests applications in stores, libraries, hospitals and offices and notes it can be used in conjunction with point-of-sale devices.

“The user may present their hand to a scanner to provide an indication of intent and authorization to pay with an account associated with the identification data,” the application says. (It also says the scanners may be used in conjunction with robots to facilitate package deliveries.)

The news comes after similar efforts from Amazon to eliminate friction at checkout and push into financial services, including checkout-free Amazon Go stores, which now number 24 in four U.S. cities, and its Amazon Pay service, which is hoping to capitalize on consumers’ increasing willingness to pay with their voices.

Meanwhile, Chinese ecommerce platform Alibaba debuted similar smile-to-pay technology, which allows users to authenticate payments with facial scans, at a concept restaurant from fast food holding company Yum China in 2017.

<https://www.adweek.com/retail/amazon-is-reportedly-developing-a-hand-scanning-payment-option/>