

Retailers take on Silicon Valley

November 15 2013, by Anne D'innocenzio

(AP)—Software engineers wearing jeans and flip flops test the latest smartphone apps. Walls and windows double as whiteboards where ideas are jotted down. And a mini basketball net is in the center of it all.

At first glance, this workplace resembles any Silicon Valley startup. There's just one exception: Target's trademark red bulls-eye at the entrance.

Target, Kohl's and home-shopping network QVC are among a half dozen retailers opening technology test labs in the San Francisco area to do things like improve their websites and create mobile shopping apps. They're setting up shop in modern spaces and competing for top Silicon Valley talent to replicate the creativity, culture and nimbleness of online startups.

The goal is to stay on top of tech trends and compete with online rivals like Amazon.com.

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