

Augmented reality furniture and other signs we're living in the future

November 2 2017, by Dr Kate Raynes-Goldie, Particle

Liked Pokémon Go? Wait till you see what's next.

You need a new couch, so you grab your phone and browse some of the options. There's a minimalist, bright red couch with wooden legs that looks nice. You go to your living room, hold up your phone to where you're thinking of putting it. On the screen, the couch appears, right next to your bookshelf.

"Hmm," you think. "Maybe it would work better in the other corner." You turn the screen and the couch appears in the new spot, next to the window. Perfect! And you didn't even have to go to the store.

Something cool that might happen in the future? How about something you can *do right now* with IKEA's new augmented reality (AR) [IKEA Place app](#).

Augmented reality

If you played Pokémon Go, as many of us did around this time last year, you're already familiar with [augmented reality](#) even if you didn't know it at the time. IKEA Place works in a technically similar way, generating 3-D and true-to-scale models of real IKEA furniture so that you can figure out if that new table is the right size and style for your kitchen.

AR [works by using your phone's sensors](#) (such as the built-in camera and

gyroscope) to find and remember horizontal surfaces. It then fixes 3-D objects in and around these surfaces.

Some other futuristic things you can do right now are to [try out a new tattoo](#), [take photos with holograms](#) or [quickly and accurately measure anything](#). You can even [play a round of mini golf on your coffee table](#) while being proud knowing you're playing a game created right here in WA by [Ezone](#).

The next big thing?

These AR apps are just the tip of the iceberg in terms of what [many are predicting](#) as one of the next big tech transformations. Facebook is [all over it](#). Both Google and Apple recently released AR development kits ([ARCore and ARKit, respectively](#)) to make it much easier for developers to create AR [phone](#) apps.

In fact, Apple is so excited about the technology, they appear to have skipped right over AR's sister technology virtual reality (VR) to focus entirely on AR.

The future of the future

Soon, AR will be as commonplace as [social media](#) and smart phones. In fact, some smart people are predicting AR will *be* the [next smartphone](#). And they mean this both in terms of how big and disruptive the technology will be and also how we use it.

[Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg has already decided that, by 2022](#), we'll all be wearing AR glasses instead of using that ancient technology of phones with—*gasp*—screens. This would mean having things like all your social media notifications, navigation and weather always on, right in front of

you. It would also mean we're all walking around with cameras, recording each other 24/7.

While other [smart people disagree](#) with Zuck's prediction, there's already some pretty cool early AR glasses available right now. Microsoft's HoloLens lets you [Skype in AR](#) or defend your [living room](#) from [aliens bursting through your actual walls](#).

And if it does happen? Everyday life could be way cooler (or [more terrifying](#)).

This article first appeared on [Particle](#), a science news website based at Scitech, Perth, Australia. Read the [original article](#).

Provided by Particle

Citation: Augmented reality furniture and other signs we're living in the future (2017, November 2) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2017-11-augmented-reality-furniture-future.html>

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