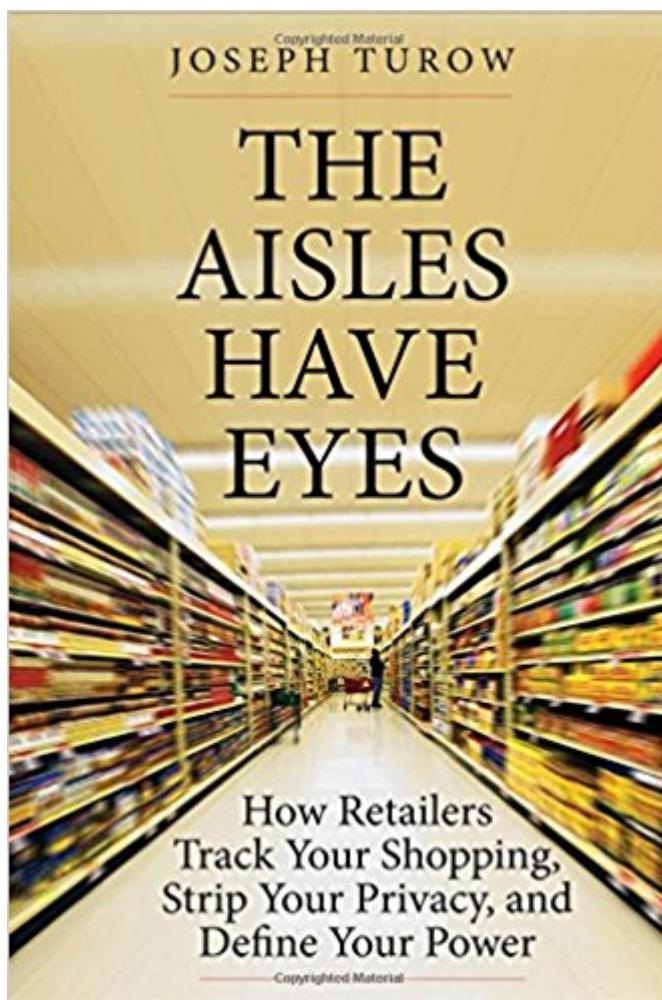


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# The Aisles Have Eyes: How Retailers Track Your Shopping, Strip Your Privacy, And Define Your Power



## **Synopsis**

A revealing and surprising look at the ways that aggressive consumer advertising and tracking, already pervasive online, are coming to a retail store near you. By one expert's prediction, within twenty years half of Americans will have body implants that tell retailers how they feel about specific products as they browse their local stores. The notion may be outlandish, but it reflects executives' drive to understand shoppers in the aisles with the same obsessive detail that they track us online. In fact, a hidden surveillance revolution is already taking place inside brick-and-mortar stores, where Americans still do most of their buying. Drawing on his interviews with retail executives, analysis of trade publications, and experiences at insider industry meetings, advertising and digital studies expert Joseph Turow pulls back the curtain on these trends, showing how a new hyper-competitive generation of merchants—including Macy's, Target, and Walmart—is already using data mining, in-store tracking, and predictive analytics to change the way we buy, undermine our privacy, and define our reputations. Eye-opening and timely, Turow's book is essential reading to understand the future of shopping.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

"Turow shows shopping today to be an exercise in unwitting self-revelation" and not only online."—Wall Street Journal"Thoroughly researched and clearly presented with detailed evidence and fascinating peeks inside the retail industry. Much of this information is startling and even chilling, particularly when Turow shows how retail data-tracking can enable discrimination and

societal stratification." "Publishers Weekly" Revealing. . . . Most retailers . . . hope future generations will simply accept surveillance and tracking as part of the American shopping experience. Valuable reading for shoppers and retailers alike." "Kirkus Reviews" A trenchant, timely, and troubling account of the data-mining, in-store tracking, and predictive analytics . . . retailers are using to gather information about shoppers." "Philadelphia Inquirer" Turow is the best kind of trail guide for those who care about the widespread commercial, cultural, and political implications of these developments. Take heed." "Lee Rainie, Director, Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, on *The Daily You*" The store is a battleground for new contests over privacy and individual autonomy. This fact-filled book performs a genuine public service and should put every shopper on high alert." "Shoshana Zuboff, Harvard Business School" Turow shines light on extremely provocative and important questions about the balance between personalization and privacy in the new, technology-fueled retail world. A great read for any retailer, brand marketer, or shopper." "Ethan Goodman, SVP, Shopper Experience, The Mars Agency" A revelatory look at the new forms of surveillance in the seemingly mundane world of brick-and-mortar stores. We are indebted to Turow for teasing out the privacy implications of our everyday shopping experiences." "Ira Rubinstein, New York University School of Law" Turow deftly triangulates an imminent retail future, for better or worse. The aisles have eyes indeed. But given consumer-empowering mobile technology, so will we." "Mike Boland, Chief Analyst, BIA/Kelsey

Most Americans move through stores unaware of the beacons, lighting, sound signals, bar codes, and purchase histories that retailers use to track them and to decide how to treat them. In this timely and eye-opening call to attention, media expert Joseph Turow details this unfolding shopping revolution and assesses its repercussions.

That large amounts of data are being collected about ourselves and our lives is hardly new. All our digital financial transactions are collected, our telephone calls (if not their content,) are collected, so are our driving patterns, and so much more. How this affects our lives is possibly something we are now alert to, until we get the call from our bank querying "unusual purchases" of large quantities of make-up and running shoes. What is startling about this book though, is the rigour and sophistication with which retailers are gathering data on our private and public lives. It would be absurd to suggest that this gathering of data and turning it into information is evil: we want our credit card company to know when our credit is being used in ways that are unlike us, or the driving pattern of our car does not match our driving style. Similarly, it is useful to know of specials that

would interest us, or that products we have been using are being replaced by something better. The second chapter of this thoroughly researched book covers the evolution of retail. Little has changed in the principles of successful retailing, though much has changed in how these principles are applied. The salesman who travelled through the village or between farms had to comply with the same basic principles as does the modern retailer. You must know your customer, buy your wares well, sell your wares well, and maintain your customer base while growing it. The travelling salesman had to know the villagers' interest in the products he had to offer: he had to buy these goods at prices that would allow him to cover their cost and to make a profit. He had to know his customers well enough to be sure of whom to offer credit to, and who not. He had to maintain his wares so that they were attractive, and present them to customers so that they would be desirable. Without external rating systems, he either had to insist on immediate payment or to be able to extend credit, make the assessment of the buyer's financial strength. With the advancement of the retail system and the growth of retailers, stores began to develop their own credit systems, offered only to financially strong families. Wares were able to be advertised in newspapers and pamphlets, and their quality began to be assured through brands. More goods were available on display, giving the shoppers a better view of what they were being sold. As towns and cities grew, retailers could grow too. Competition became keener and the elements of retail needed to be addressed differently. The purchasing power of retailers lay in quantity, and the attracting, knowing and keeping customers became more difficult. In the absence of the sophisticated technologies we have today, various ingenious methods were employed to keep track of what was sold and to whom. One of the most enduring methods was the voucher. There was the discount incentive to buy the goods, and a method of knowing if the discount-offer changed behaviour. Vouchers offered a way of knowing at which outlet the goods were being bought, and so on. It was a time-consuming process and a clumsy one, but one of the best on offer. Technological advances made the basic idea of vouchers much more cost-effective and powerful. In the forefront of the sophistication of retailing was Walmart. It was Walmart that embraced technology in its quest for ever-increasing efficiencies, with an eagerness never seen before. Launched in 1962 by Sam Walton, the chain grew systematically from its first store in Rogers, Arkansas. One of the reason for Walmart's success was its obsessive focus on cost-control throughout its supply chain, which resulted in Walmart growing to a point where few other retailers could buy in larger volumes and at lower prices. Through its size, Walmart could cease buying from wholesalers, and buy only from manufacturers. Their computer systems at the time were reputed to be larger than the Pentagon's. Their use of barcoded boxes of goods, not only goods themselves, made for ever-greater efficiencies and controls of their

processes. Today, pervasive technological advances can enable stores to identify loyal customers. The value of these customers is deemed to be high, because the store doesn't need to attract them, only retain them. Perhaps the most powerful piece of technology available to the retailer since the advent of the super-powerful computer, is the ubiquitous cell-phone. This always-on, always at-hand device, offers benefits so necessary for the growth of retail stores today. When each store had only a few customers it was the duty of store serving staff to know their customers, what they liked, and how valuable they could be. Today, in a supermarket or clothing chain that would be impossible. On entering a clothing store your cell-phone can identify you, your picture can be sent to a store manager who can then greet you by name, and guide you to the new range you have looked at carefully on your home computer. If you commented on how good a friend looked in that new-cut suit on Facebook, you could be guided to one on the rack. Similarly, having purchased locally made pasta on each of your last visits, you could receive a discount voucher to try the imported Italian version. As technology advances, ever more opportunities to entice, reward, and promote are available to retailers to get a greater share of your spend. Do shelves have eyes, staring at you? Of course. Does everything you interact with in the internet-of-things have this capability too? Of course. The value of this book lies in its comprehensive and insightful overview of the evolution of retailing, and its intriguing expose of the sophistication and use of advanced technologies today. And yes, you will be surprised at how everything is looking at you. Readability Light ---+ Serious Insights High +--- Practical High ---+ Low\* Ian Mann of Gateways consults internationally on leadership and strategy and is the author of the recently released Executive Update.

As a technology entrepreneur and attorney in the world of beacon technology and proximity marketing for local retailing, I am consistently searching for well written authoritative books, articles and blogs on the topic. Tremendous growth in this area is a forgone conclusion, for instance, most of the high powered forecasters of the world are predicting that beacon use in the US, will jump from about 7 million in service at the end of 2016, to over 400 million by 2020. I am sad to say, however, that there are very few really good publications on the topic (believe me I have looked). In this Dr. Turow's "The Aisles Have Eyes" stands out as one of, if not the best book on the subject as it relates to the retail environment. The book has the most valuable information on latest developments on what some of the larger retailers and information gatherers are doing today with derived tracking inputs, and it puts this in historical context, based on the evolution of merchant retailing (this I found particularly enriching, as, if you know "where you have been" ).

it's much easier to envision where things might be going). For a non-technical book, it does a good job of relaying the most up to date technologies recently piloted and deployed by the most advanced retailers (this in itself, to me is worth the price). Also, in addition to a well-researched and clear account of where things are now for the largest data miners, (outside firms and retailing empires), Dr. Turow does an excellent job of laying out both the benefits and the downside to the consumer of this proximity tracking. In one respect (and the way I tend to look at it), on site, location based proximity marketing equips the small local merchant with the ultimate tools to survive *showrooming* and the ever expanding online monopolies (not only from the s of the world in direct sales competition, but the Googles, Facebooks, etc. that want to claim every advertising dollar), with the ability to promote a coupon or discount to an in-store (or passing by) shopper at the point of contact. The dark side though (which I have to admit I never really deeply thought about, until I read the book), is the ability to use this last piece of on-location data, match it with thousands of other bits of data, and, indeed, have such a complete profile that discriminatory pricing will be the norm (imagine, all items priced the way airlines price their wares, in subterfuge). In summary, if one has any interest at all in where location based proximity marketing (beacons, geo-fencing, camera identification) is today and where it is rapidly heading in the future, either as a retailer, a technology fan, or just as a conscientious consumer, this is a must read book, and in this is unique in the field.

This is an eye-opening and easy, must read for consumers, marketers, and privacy experts alike. Consumers need to know that almost everything we do in-stores and online is tracked by retailers (and others) in the name of providing us with better service, better prices, more convenience, personalization, discounts, coupons, etc. And, we need to better educate ourselves about what's being done with all the data we share intentionally or without our knowledge. Yes, without our knowledge from our beloved smartphones! Marketers need to know that they are pushing boundaries and taking advantage of what consumers should know, but don't. Books like this one help educate consumers and let retailers know that they may very well be going too far and that we are onto them. As an avid shopper (in-store and online) and former retail executive responsible for efforts and programs like some of the ones Turow describes, I couldn't put the book down until I finished it. It was scary good!

Book was excellent and very scary.

Interesting subject some great things to think about and how the world knows everything you do and where you go. Sometimes quite dry and tedious.

Very Detailed and lots of information on being a consumer.

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