

# OVERSEAS

海外

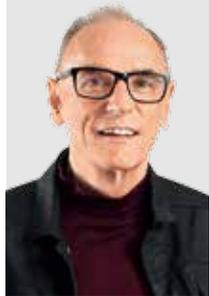
Overseas Feature

海外·特稿

## 还做O2O呢？O2V时代就要来了！

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### O2O只是一种快时尚

如今令人兴奋的新技术层出不穷，其中有些新技术并非缺乏深度和生命力，但它们确实只能时髦一阵子。这类新技术的性质和Zara、H&M时装差不多，可以称之为“快时尚”。

我认为O2O就是一种快时尚技术，正如上文所说，这并不意味着O2O不重要。确切地说，属于快时尚技术的O2O，是一种重要但没有持久生命力的技术。

还记得客户端服务器吗？这种技术在本世纪初非常流行，那时候每家公司都有专门为客户端服务器架构编写的软件，不这么做就不会有VC给你投资，公司也不会受到外界的重视，至于公司本身是不是真的需要这东西就没人在乎了。这种潮流并没持续太久，基于服务器端的技术很快成为新的潮流，再后来大家又转而钟情于基于网络的技术。说到这里，你明白我所说的技术的快时尚是什么意思了吧？

以前还流行过一阵子所谓精简客户端的概念。持这种观点的人认为，用户完全不需要智能手机或功能完善的电脑作为客户端，所有工作都可以通过网络终端机在网上完成。这种观点很快就被淘汰了，如今客户端非但没有精简，反

而愈加复杂，功能愈加强大，现在一台客户端的运算能力堪比几年前的一台大型机。

所以，我们不妨带着疑问去审视那些当下流行的技术。世事变迁，技术一直在进步，现有的技术无论怎么酷炫性感，它终将会被更新的技术取代。我对时下大热的O2O技术就持这个看法。

### O2O≈化简为繁

O2O是Online to Offline的简称，它的意思是商家打通线上线下，把线上的客户引流到线下，在网上购物的消费者可能被商家引导到它的实体店去购物，或者是消费者先去实体展示店体验之后再到网上下单购物。总而言之，O2O意味着以往在网上购买产品或服务的消费行为加入了与线下有关的内容。

人们都追求少花成本多办事，如今的人，能在家上网解决问题就绝不出门，甚至连路都很少走了。这种少出门、省时间的行为特点，给O2O商业模式的发展制造了巨大障碍。让我们来看个例子，我老家的一家百货商场开的网店，以前对网上订单是送货上门，现在则允许顾客在线下单后到商场自提货物，顾客因此能减少



运费支出。但我很少这么做，因为感觉这很不方便：我得专门安排一个时间去商场，到那儿之后还得花上至少15分钟才能在仓库里找到我下单买到的东西。商场提供这种服务的本意可能是想吸引顾客去店里买更多的商品，但这是行不通的。我会因为在这事上浪费了时间而感到恼火，我更喜欢在网上下单之后在家里等着收货，这要方便得多。

我不知道在网上订座然后去餐馆吃饭不算一种O2O模式，如果是，这种O2O还是有用的。但是我在网上查的资料表明，大多数给O2O下的定义都是指消费者在线订货之后去商店取货，或是在实体店体验店选好商品之后在线下单，回家等着收货。

### O2V 便利买卖双方

上文举的例子说明了O2O会给顾客带来不便，我认为这种技术很快就会被O2V所取代。所谓O2V，是Online to Virtual的缩写，意为线上与虚拟现实技术相结合。显然，如果我能借助虚拟现实眼镜在一个虚拟的商场里选择商品，就不用费事去实体店了。我可以在虚拟环境里毫不费力地到处溜达，选中商品之后直接在线下单就行了，整个过程中我可以大门不出，二门不迈，更不必开车去商场，找车位停车，或是在人群里挤来挤去。

可能有人觉得O2V只是方便了消费者，不会给商家带来什么好处，其实不然，从商家的角度看，虚拟商场能给她带来巨大好处。首先来说，实体店的面积总是有限的，而在虚拟世界里，店面想要多大就有多大。虚拟店能省去实体店的清洁维护成本，还能展示在实体店摆不下的商品，甚至于展示商家没有存货的商品，只要在网店里注明商家与供应商有供货协议，顾客下单就能买到即可。虚拟店甚至可以大到能在里面开飞机，只要愿意，顾客完全可以开着飞机逛商场。

O2V可以带来场地租金、仓储及用人成本的大幅下降。另外，为了赶上时代潮流，实体店一般每过几年就要重新装修一次，通过改变

营业空间布局、装饰色彩等元素来营造新的购物氛围，而虚拟店可以随时根据需要重新“装修”。总之，商家从O2V模式中能够获得的好处其实远远大于消费者。

### O2V 好玩又实用

虚拟购物还有一个实体店无法比拟的优势，那就是娱乐性。当顾客戴着虚拟现实眼镜逛商场时，不仅可以像在逛实体店那样选择商品，还能随时观赏商家组织的秀场演出。也许有的顾客戴上虚拟现实眼镜不过是想买条毛巾，但商家可以邀请他去南美雨林来场探险，或是站在珠峰上一览众山小；喜欢音乐的顾客，随时可以听上一曲柏林爱乐乐团演奏的“贝五”。在虚拟现实的世界里，消费者的购物体验完全可以像观赏一场太阳马戏团的表演那样精彩，对此我非常期待。

O2O模式肯定无法做到如此精彩，O2V则可以创新出吸引和留住顾客的诸多方法，消费者提出的各种娱乐化购物需求也很容易实现。比如想买服装的消费者，商家可以在虚拟世界里专门办一场时装秀，为其展示一些魅力难以抗拒的服装。如果顾客觉得从这家虚拟商场获得的愉悦是其他商家不可取代的，也可能去它的实体店逛逛。如此说来，O2V可以成为商家们新的竞争工具，在这个商业模式之下，O2O做得再好的商家也会因为受到实体店运营成本的拖累而失去竞争优势。

把O2O与O2V放在一起比较，人们会猛然发现O2O竟然是那么地有局限并且无趣，所有的O2O购物行为都不免会与耗时、费钱甚至不安全扯上关系。在O2V面前，O2O显得非常过时。我认为，将来有一天，O2O和“无趣的购物”之间将画上等号。

很多人都认为购物将变成一件可以完全在线完成的事，O2V实实在在地开创了这样一个不与实体店发生任何联系的购物新时代。可能会有人反驳说，虚拟购物缺乏逛实体店的实感，有的顾客就是喜欢触摸实物，喜欢进试衣间的感觉。但实际上，随着虚拟现实技术的发展，在



**O2V 就是线上与虚拟现实技术相结合。虚拟店甚至可以大到能在里面开飞机，只要愿意，顾客完全可以开着飞机逛商场。**



虚拟店里试衣的感觉很快将变得与在实体店完全相同,到那时候,这种实感的差异也就不存在了。

如今虚拟触觉技术有了长足发展,有些机器人已经具备触觉,有些智能手机也用上了触觉反馈技术,让用户在使用过程中能够获得丰富的触觉体验。O2V商业模式能够有效地吸收整合这些最先进的科学技术,将其用于购物体验,使虚拟购物越来越像是真地在逛商场。与虚拟现实技术能够带来旅游方式革命一样,O2V将彻底颠覆人们的购物体验。

### O2V 时代就在眼前

新技术的应用成本不断下降是一个普遍规律,与之相伴的是新技术普及率大幅提高。随着新款的虚拟现实眼镜相继面市,这类产品的价格在不断下降,最新款眼镜花20美元就能买到,这显然有助于提高其市场普及率。此外,未来一年里,新款智能手机将应用到3D显示技术,加上网速的不断提升,实时3D视频交互所需的技术环境将不断成熟。毫无疑问,众多商

家很快就会提供与虚拟现实眼镜相配套的网店,网购将比逛实体店更加安全快捷,从而节约更多成本,消费者还将获得在实体店和普通O2O模式中无法获得的购物体验。

虚拟现实技术在智能手机上的应用也将实现突破,Oculus公司与三星公司联合研发的Gear VR虚拟现实眼镜已经上市,售价约为200美元,可与三星的Galaxy Note 4手机配套使用。我估计,具备虚拟现实功能的智能手机将在未来一年内问世,它们甚至不需要与之配套的眼镜。手机制造商们肯定都正在为此而忙碌。

面对这样的前景,O2O真的只是一个快时尚技术。作为处于线下、全在线以及虚拟现实之间的一项过渡技术,它能保持热度的时间已经很有限了,最多也就再持续两三年,我们将见证它被淘汰。智能手机和虚拟现实眼镜的制造商们已经迎来了产品的价格点,也就是说,产品价格已经可以为广大消费者接受,产品可以全面推向大众市场了。无论从成本还是从竞争角度看,商家都是时候转入O2V商业模式了。■

## **“Fashions in Technology – O2O to O2V”**

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### Fast Fashion

Just because a lot of technology is new and exciting doesn't mean that other new technologies aren't just superficial and transitory. Technology also has its fashions and some of these won't last. You can call them fast fashion, like the clothes you get at Zara and H&M.

I think O2O might be one of technology's fast fashions. That again doesn't mean it might not be important. If I am right it would just mean that it's also a fast fashion; doomed to be important but not for long.

Do you remember client-server? That was a fashion in the early 2000s. At the time it was absolutely vital that every company had its software written to conform to the client server architecture. If you didn't do that you wouldn't be able to raise money from investors and venture capitalists and no-one would take you seriously, even if you didn't need a client-server approach. Unfortunately that fashion didn't last very long. Then you had to be server-based, instead of just the server-side. Then you had to be web-based. Get the idea?

Another fast fashion was what was called at the time, a thin or a dumb client. This was the idea that you didn't need a client – wither it is a PC or a phone – with any intelligence in it. Everything would take place on the web. That went the way of the dodo too. Instead of clients being thin, they are very thick now and ultra-smart. Today's clients have much more intelligence than the mainframe computers of years ago.

So it pays to be questioning and skeptical when you evaluate current technology trends and fashions. Everything changes, and technology marches on, no matter how cool and sexy the current buzzwords are.

### Is O2O OMG?

That is my view of the current hot topic, O2O or Online-to-Offline. This is the idea that you can induce customers who work with you online to also work in an offline mode with you. People who buy online can be persuaded to pick up their purchases at a store for example. Or people will go to a physical showroom to see a product and will then go online to buy it. That is, they

will use real physical energy to consummate a transaction with you once you have managed to attract them to your product and service online.

Here's the fundamental problem I see with the O2O model. It's that the inexorable trend I see in humans is always to spend less effort to do something. That's why most people don't even walk at all these days, or use a smartphone to get information instead of having to go physically somewhere to get it. That's why people are getting overweight and sometimes obese; because this trend inexorably reduces physical activity and the drive to save time is so powerful.

Let me give you an example. One of the local department stores in my hometown will allow you to pick up products in their store that you ordered online and once it has been delivered. I guess this must save some money on delivery fees.

I rarely use this service because it is inconvenient for me. I have to make a special trip to the store to pick it up. Usually once I go to the store and present them with the receipt number it takes them at least 15 minutes to find the product in their warehouse at the back of the store.

Maybe this is a cunning move to make me shop for more products but it doesn't work that way. Instead I get very annoyed because I am wasting time and then I decide that the next time I purchase a product online from this store, I will just have it delivered to me at home. It's so much more convenient.

I'm not sure if O2O also covers the act of selecting a restaurant online, making a reservation and then visiting the restaurant. If that's O2O, that part is here to stay. However when I check out O2O online, most of the definitions seem to apply to retail and getting people to pick up in-store, or to browse products in a store and then get it delivered. So I think that's what most people mean by O2O.

Who Has the Biggest Showroom?

If that's the case I don't think it's going to last, for the reasons I have outlined. Here's what I think will quickly take its place: O2V.

What is O2V? It's online to virtual, as in virtual reality. If I am given a complete virtual environment I don't need to go to a real store. If I use virtually reality (VR) glasses such as those from Oculus, Apple or Google I don't have to go to any showroom physically. Instead I can go to the showroom virtually.

Then I can wander around the showroom and see what I like without making any effort. Once I see something I like I can purchase it online. I never had to walk a single step. I didn't have to get in a car, park it, and walk around a busy shopping mall. Instead I can do this all from my home or from my place of work (if the boss allows me, of course).

You might think that although this has advantages for the buyer, for the seller there are not so many. But, not so fast. Let's look at the benefits for the merchant.

If I am the merchant my virtual showroom has some huge advantages. It is never us out of products, unless I choose that to be the case. In most normal showrooms I have a limited amount of space. But in my virtual showrooms I have all the space I want.

I can fit in products I couldn't fit into to a physical showroom, even products I don't actually sell I don't need to spend money for cleaning and maintenance. I can show the products of other merchants with whom I have an agreement just by clicking on their inventory, if I am the merchant. And even if my virtual showroom is so big that it would take a plane to get around it, I can give the shopper their own virtual plane so that they fly around it as fast as they want.

That means my costs of storing and showing inventory plunge. I don't have rental costs, expenses for shop assistants. And look at this. If I have a real showroom or store, every couple of years I have to refit it to make it look up to date. That means I have to redecorate it in different colors, different internal physical styles and environments and different types of ambiance. In O2V I can redecorate as frequently as I want. In an O2V model this is all vastly less expensive than having a real store or showroom. For the merchant O2V is an even more compelling value proposition than it is for the consumer!

Wanna Have Fun?

Now here's another thing you might not think about O2V. It's all about entertainment.

If I go shopping with my VR glasses I don't just have to go shopping. The merchant can put on a show for me. Maybe he can get me to go to his virtual showroom by having a performance by Cirque du Soleil. I would definitely want to go to that.

Maybe he can take me on a quick tour of some Colombian jungles with some amazing wildlife footage. Maybe I can climb Mount Everest and look around some nearby mountains, just before I go for a showroom tour to look at towels. If I like music, maybe I can listen to the German Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra playing Beethoven's Fifth Symphony.

I can't do any of that with an O2O model. With an O2V model I get amazing new ways of attracting and holding customers. I can tap into information I have on them to bring entertainment to them that they would have thought of on their own.

If I want to buy some clothes the merchant can entertain me with some particular show that they know I cannot resist. If this merchant brings me entertainment that no other merchant provides, then I am going to shop in that merchant's showroom. So O2V gives the merchant totally new ways to compete. In fact in this model, having any physical showrooms at all is a huge, burden that makes me less competitive, no matter how great the linkage is between the online and offline portions of my shopping process.

Once you consider the characteristics of O2O compared with O2V it suddenly looks terribly limiting and unexciting. All O2O has to offer is the ability to go to a physical location which is generally time-consuming, costly, somewhat expensive and maybe even unsafe. Viewed from the perspective of O2V it suddenly looks very old, very 2010. I think in future we might well call O2O, shopping without the fun.

Many people have always had the vision that shopping would become totally online. In fact, O2V could well become the new era of shopping without any showrooms or any stores at all. Some people might argue that it still lacks certain qualities such as the experience of actually being there, especially including the ability to touch and feel products and to try on clothes for example.

But the ability to try on clothes online is already here and becoming quite common. Soon it will become universal. So that issue goes away.

And the ability to touch and feel is almost here. Haptic feedback is now a real technology and has been incorporated into many products already. Robots can now be given the sense of touch. Some smartphones have been given forms of haptic feedback which provide the sensation of touching and feeling. So O2V provides a mechanism to integrate these more advanced technologies into the shopping experience to make it just like the real thing. In other words, O2V will improve dramatically on the experience of shopping, as well as other activities such as virtual traveling and touring.

It's Time!

Right now new types of VR glasses are coming out. These VR glasses are dramatically falling in price, just as other technologies before than have also become dramatically cheaper. This will soon spur rapid consumer adoption of these glasses. Moreover in a year or so, many smartphones will have the ability to display 3D and will have the power to offer real-time video at a speed necessary to be able to interact with a 3D environment.

Whenever technologies have become very cheap, they spread rapidly. The latest Oculus VR glasses cost around \$US20. So now anyone can buy them. You can be sure that soon many merchants will be constructing online showrooms that can be viewed with these glasses so that an online visit to them is vastly quicker, safer and less costly than visiting a real showroom. And it will offer an experience you can't even get in the real world or in O2O.

Smartphones are getting close to liftoff too. The Gear VR glasses, from by Samsung and Oculus cost around \$200 and are on sale now. This works with Samsung's Galaxy Note 4. I would expect that smartphones which have VR, with or without VR glasses will be here in a year. So I think we can expect that all smartphone makers are working on the same technology.

When we look at O2O in this perspective, at best it looks like it has a limited time horizon. It really is fast fashion. It really is a transitional phase between full online and virtual, a limited time of maybe 2-3 years. We are in that phase now but we are rapidly getting to the end of it. The smartphone and VR glasses manufacturers now have products at the price-points needed to get them into the mass market, and retailers have compelling cost and competitive reasons to switch to an O2V business model.

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