

Platform lets consumers add products to online baskets from anywhere



Breaking down the boundaries between online and offline retail spaces is something that China's virtual [Ultimate Yihaodian](#) is currently aiming to do. Similarly, UK-based [Slingshot](#) is now offering a platform that enables consumers to place items found around the web or in real-world locations into their online shopping accounts.

Those browsing the web may sometimes come across a product they want to buy and then navigate to a retailer's site – perhaps a supermarket where they have an existing account – to purchase the item. However, with Slingshot, shoppers don't have to leave the page they're on. Companies taking part in the scheme – which so far includes major UK retailers such as Tesco, Sainsbury's and Boots and Superdrug – can team up with brands to place the button either on the brands' own sites, web banners or Facebook pages. Users already registered with Slingshot can then simply click to add the items to an existing account with a retailer. If they are not, then clicking the button will prompt them to link their existing accounts with Slingshot. Most interestingly, QR codes – which act as real-world versions of the buttons – can also be added to the actual products themselves, making it easier for shoppers to instantly purchase an item online that they have seen on the shop shelf. The following video shows the system in action:

While many bricks-and-mortar retailers have benefitted from launching digital versions of their stores, the two have – for the most part – been separate entities for consumers. Could this kind of innovation bridge the gap between in-store and online shopping?

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