Wayfair expands virtual-staging tools in mobile app

Wayfair, a popular online furniture and home goods retailer, has expanded and centered 3-D tools in its mobile app that let users visualize how products would look in their homes.

The app refresh underlines an ongoing shift to home-shopping and viewing experiences that rely on new visualization technologies. Amazon, Walmart and Sotheby's are among other firms that serve up similar tools — the likes of which are sometimes powered by third-party 3-D providers such as Matterport and RoOmy.

Wayfair was one of the first companies to let mobile users view projections of furnishings and other items through their smartphone cameras — an application of "augmented reality" (AR).

Now users can snap photos of a room and outfit 3-D renderings of the images with furniture, designs and housewares. This lets shoppers see how products would look in their home from wherever, not just through their camera lens when they're present there.

"With the Wayfair mobile shopping app, consumers have the flexibility to discover and visualize their favorite products among millions of options, then design their rooms from start to finish, no matter where they are," said Matt Zisow, vice president of product at Wayfair, in a statement.

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Wayfair is also making the photo-based tool, along with its existing AR feature, a more prominent part of its mobile shopping experience. It's doing this by providing access to the feature through an icon beneath its product search bar.

The company's dabbling in 3-D doesn't end there. Wayfair has also equipped its app with a "room planner" tool.

It allows users to create an entire interactive 3-D room — not just a 3-D rendering of a photo. Shoppers can view the room from any angle and outfit it with different styles, layouts, dimensions and products.

Wayfair has forged partnerships with some industry players. For example, it provides some of the virtual furniture and decor that can be played with in Sotheby's International Realty's virtual-

staging app.

In September, Wayfair announced that it was selling curated collections of furnishings for entire rooms — an offering that targets landlords and property managers.

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