

# Amazon Phases Out Checkout-Less Grocery Stores

news

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Amazon has announced the discontinuation of its checkout-less grocery stores featuring "Just Walk Out" technology, revealing the hidden exploitation behind its automation. This decision marks a significant shift in the company's approach to retail automation, but also generally sheds light on the ongoing reliance on human labour in AI-driven systems. In capitalism, innovation is pursued not for the betterment of society, but for the maximisation of profit - which is inversely proportional to the wealth of workers.

So-called artificial intelligence operates on the principles of machine learning, where algorithms are trained on vast amounts of data to perform specific tasks. This training process requires significant human labour, as workers are needed to label data, correct errors, and refine algorithms. Despite advancements in AI technology, the role of human labour remains indispensable in its development and operation. In the capitalist system, this labour is often extremely tedious and very lowly remunerated, with workers bearing the brunt of the costs and risks associated with automation.

The "Just Walk Out" technology, which initially seemed like a breakthrough in grocery shopping, relied on cameras and sensors to track customers' purchases without the need for a traditional checkout counter. However, it has come to light that this seemingly automated system depended heavily on the labour of over 1,000 low-paid workers in India. These workers were responsible for monitoring and labelling videos to ensure accurate checkouts. It was revealed that 70% of "Just Walk Out" sales required human review. This exploitation is inherent to the capitalist system, where profit is made by the exploitation of labour.

Amazon's attempt to replace "Just Walk Out" with alternative solutions such as Dash Carts and self-checkout counters reveals that the reality of human labour - and its costs for the capitalist - behind automation cannot be ignored. The layoffs within Amazon's Physical Stores Technology team further underscore the precarious nature of employment under capitalism, where workers are treated as disposable commodities, because in the eyes of the capitalist that's exactly what they are.

The phase-out of checkout-less grocery stores by Amazon exposes the inherent contradictions of capitalism, where the pursuit of profit leads to the exploitation of workers. To end the exploitative system that is capitalism, workers must unite and organise under a communist party to bring about a society where the means of production are owned in common. Socialism makes it impossible to buy and sell human labour power, freeing the worker from their current status as a commodity. The ever-increasing growth of the working class paves the way for a socialist society where automation is used to reduce human labour, especially so for the most tedious and dangerous jobs - not to increase the exploitation and tediousness of human labour.

Source: <https://gizmodo.com/amazon-reportedly-ditches-just-walk-out-grocery-stores-1851381116>