



## Store mannequins spy on shoppers

Ever get the creepy feeling that department store mannequins are watching you? You just may be right.

By [Shannon McCarthy](#) Nov 22, 2012 10:02PM

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Sure, it's way past Halloween, but we've got a brand new report from [Bloomberg](#) that puts a slight chill in our holiday shopping sales jaunts. Mannequins are no longer simply mute witnesses to the sea of passing humanity, but active participants in information gathering and consumer profiling. ([The Daily Mail](#) has video of them in action [here](#).)

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We assumed these stylish spies sport an embedded camera behind one eye to help with loss prevention (aka shoplifting), but the main purpose, according to Italian manufacturer Almax, is to send images back to closed-circuit TVs for retail buying trend analysis. Through the mannequin's fixed gaze, people are monitored as they browse and choose items. Facial recognition software then specifies the age, gender and race of shoppers. While this sounds way too much like that *Twilight Zone* episode that freaked us out as kids, the "Eye See" mannequin is already parked in five companies in the U.S. and Europe, and more orders arrive all the time at a whopping five grand a piece. The next update involves tweaking the mannequins so they can hear folks' chatter. Color us creeped out.

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**Tell us:** What do you think of these new spy mannequins? Cool or creepy?

Photo: Courtesy of Almax

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