

Quick Biz Reading

A new way to pay: Just smile

SHANGHAI (Reuters) - Customers at a KFC store in the Chinese city of Hangzhou have a new way to pay for their meal. Just smile.

Customers can use a “Smile to Pay” face recognition system. This new store wants to attract younger people. The customers look at a computer screen. The computer can recognize the person’s face. It charges their account for their food order. The system’s 3D camera and “liveness” system keeps the account safe from people cheating by using photos or videos.



Yum China, KFC’s owner in China, is trying to increase growth in the world’s second largest economy. Food safety scares and changing consumer tastes have hurt sales since 2012.

Yum is the largest fast food chain in the market. It has over 7,685 outlets. Sales in stores have also been slowly improving.

The new outlet in Hangzhou is targeting a younger generation of Chinese. They are expected to be the cause of China’s business growth over the next decade.

Joey Wat, Yum China’s president, said the store was aimed at young, tech savvy consumers who are eager to embrace new tastes and innovations.

The Hangzhou store involves a tie-up with Ant Financial, the company behind the facial recognition software. Ant said this is the first commercial use of the technology worldwide.

- ❶ Work with a partner. In Japanese, talk about this story. How much do you remember?
- ❷ With your partner, try to tell the same story in English.
- ❸ Face recognition technology is an example of a new technology – it didn’t even exist a few years ago – that is entering business. What are other examples? Do you like them or not? Why?
- ❹ **Take it deeper.** Cameras are everywhere. This means companies and the government can always know where you go. Is this a good thing or a bad thing? Why?