

New technology allows shoppers to pay with their faces

Chinese shoppers will soon be able to free up their hands, thanks to new technology that enables consumers to pay with their faces.

“We have finished an experiment for facial recognition payment and it will be used in the near future,” said Chen Jidong on Monday, who is in charge of biometric identification technology at Ant Financial, the affiliate financial service of Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba.

Alipay is now testing the technology. According to a video demonstrating the facial recognition payment system, shoppers can complete payment in just two steps: facial scanning and entering the last four digits of their mobile phone numbers.

While many viewers marvelled at the technology, some web users were worried about security.

Chen told Xinhua that Alipay will ask users to blink, smile, shake their heads or make other movements while using the service to differentiate real people from photos or videos.

Chen said that user authorization will be required to use facial recognition payment, but didn't give an exact date for when the service will debut.

Facial recognition payment was listed among 10 breakthrough technologies by the MIT Technology Review earlier this year.

In 2015, Alipay started using a face-detection system for customer log in. The technology has also been used by other Internet companies such as Baidu and Tencent.