



## Can Augmented Reality Save Toys “R” Us?

Toys “R” Us — a staple of many childhoods — has fallen on tough times. After [laying off 15%](#) of its home office employees in February 2017, the once-mighty toy seller [filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy](#) in September 2017 and announced the closure of 182 stores in January 2018. The shifting sands of modern retail have proved tricky to navigate for many, and Toys “R” Us has been no exception.

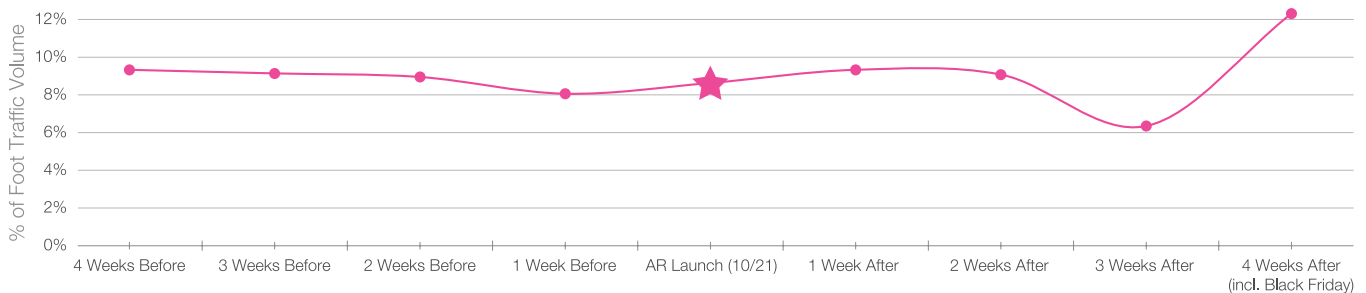
Despite the turbulence, Toys “R” Us still introduced an [augmented reality \(AR\)](#) experience in all U.S. stores in October 2017. While AR has been a hot topic, the question remains: Does it actually drive store visits?

inMarket, through its first party location data platform, can provide an exclusive glimpse into the real world movements of consumers at scale.

### Toys "R" Us Foot Traffic Volume



Based on inMarket Location Data from 50 Million Verified Consumers

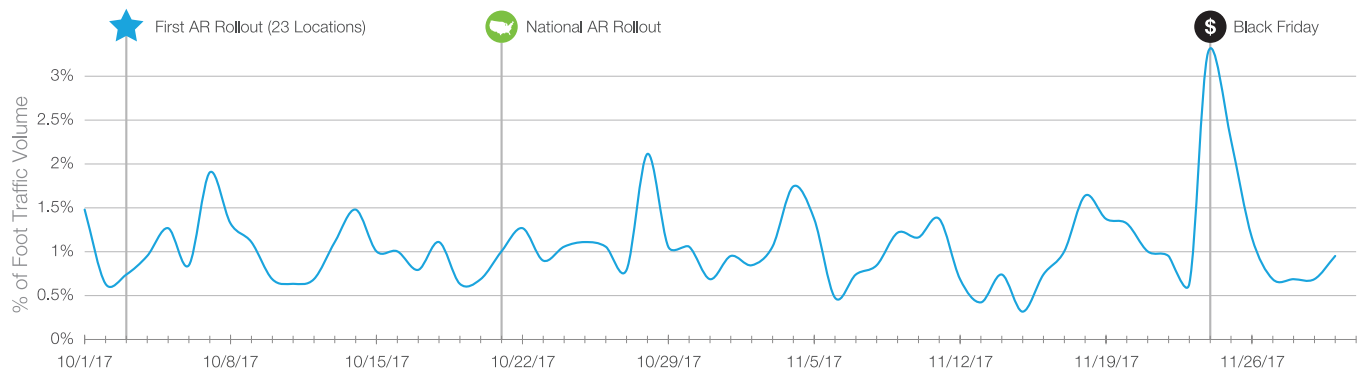


This chart shows foot traffic volume to Toys “R” Us in the four weeks before and four weeks after their AR launch on 10/21/17. These are weekly volumes starting on Saturdays. Overall, the data is flat, save for the week of Black Friday — indicating that the AR launch did not create much of a stir among potential Toys “R” Us shoppers.

## Toys "R" Us Foot Traffic Volume



Based on inMarket Location Data from 50 Million Verified Consumers



The second chart illustrates a daily breakout of foot traffic at Toys "R" Us for October - November 2017. There are natural Saturday spikes at the chain on 10/7 and 10/14. Interestingly, the 10/21 AR launch appears to be a low point for Saturday foot traffic. However, the following Saturday 10/28 shows a traffic spike that is second only to Black Friday in this data set. It seems shoppers heard about the AR launch and then went to try it the following weekend. The increase did not sustain itself and traffic was similar to other weekends on 11/4, 11/11 and 11/18, before spiking on Black Friday.

Overall, it appears that the AR launch at Toys "R" Us did not significantly move the foot traffic needle beyond normal levels for the toy retailer, and it certainly doesn't look like a single digital initiative such as AR can save Toys "R" Us from reality.

## Needle in a Haystack

Is it AR that did not work, or something more? As of this writing, the "Play Chaser" app (required to participate in the in-store AR experience) was the 24th result when searching for "Toys "R" Us" in the App Store — lagging behind retailer apps like Old Navy, Gap and Target. This tremendous disconnect is likely contributing to lack of traction, consumer engagement and contribution to the retailer's in store traffic.

On Android, "Play Chaser" has received only 100,000 total downloads and is the 4th result when searching for "Toys "R" Us" — with Walmart owning the first result via a paid digital advertising campaign. Much has been reported about Walmart's pivot from legacy retailer into a modern strategist, likely the only one equipped to compete with Amazon's dominance. This small extension to Walmart's digital strategy has likely pilfered search traffic generated via broadcast media buys, potentially paying only a small fraction of Toys R Us's cost in the process.

---

At inMarket, we analyze location data from a comScore verified 50 million device integrations to understand real world trends, and to power one-to-one marketing with consumers at every point during the shopping cycle. We are the only location intelligence company with 3rd party verified reach, and our one-to-one relationship with customers at scale allows us to speak directly to the right audience in the moments that matter.

To view additional Report Cards, please visit [inMarket inSights](#). For more information on inMarket inSights, or to learn about how inMarket's advanced segmenting and one-to-one in-store and out-of-store advertising programs can help you drive business, please [contact us today](#).