

# NOT SO FAST

Bill Barol

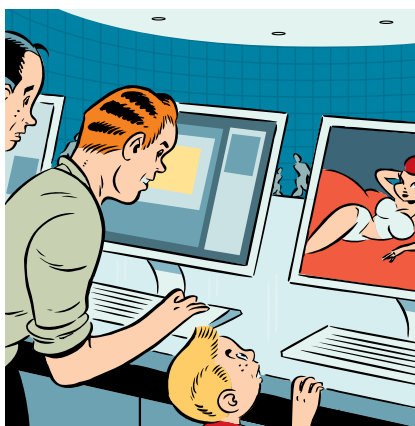


## BELLY UP TO THE [FILL-IN-THE-BLANK] BAR

Apple Stores' Genius Bar has merely whet consumers' appetite for faux interactivity over a long marble or wood counter. Not everyone can afford Geniuses, so how about a bar piled crazily high with products? Try the Denim Bar at L.A. Fairchild in Cardiff-by-the-Sea, California, or the "bra library" at Abercrombie & Fitch's fictively eponymous Gilly Hicks lingerie boutiques. Step right up! Get in there and feel the goods. (If you need help, Apple is now color-coding its employees, and others may follow. So learn this simple mnemonic: Grab for the yellow, not the other fellow!)

# Little Shop Of Horrors

Retail sales are struggling—and the economy isn't the only reason. "Innovative" efforts to revive the shopping experience have been, let's say, uninspired.



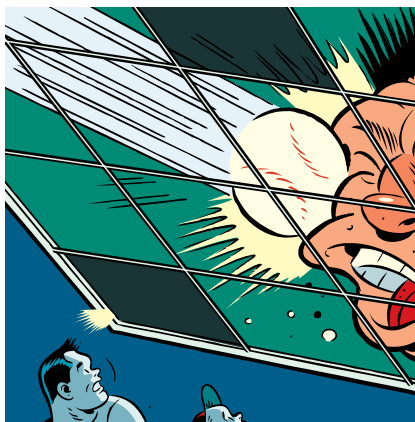
## NOW WITH INTERWEBS!

The great thing about the Internet is, it's so convenient to drive to a store to use it. At Blockbuster, you can download movies from its futuristic kiosks right to your Archos media player. (You know, your Archos. You've got one, right?) Or visit the Verizon Wireless concept store in North Kingstown, Rhode Island, where a My Account interactive kiosk lets users review account status and make payments . . . *just like they can at home!*



## THE 4TH (OR 5TH) PLACE

Why be with family and friends when you can join a retail-based interest group in a carefully themed in-store setting? Perch precariously on Helio's futuristic couches, "socialize and get away from the game" at the Transition Zone lounge in the NBA-Adidas store in Istanbul, or dig your cocoa-stained fingers into the luxe pink-and-brown upholstery at Mars Inc.'s Ethel's Chocolate Lounge. Be sure to enjoy the sales-fostering illusion of community.



## MONITOR THE MONITORS!

Love big-screen TV? Then you might find a wall of interlocking video monitors fantastic . . . especially if up to 75% of them are operational. Next year, Meadowlands Xanadu in New Jersey will broadcast NFL action on a three-story video wall, but if you can't wait to trigger vertigo, try the 63 plasmas at New York's Quiksilver Boardriders Club. For a different kind of footage fetish, the Michael Kors store in Dallas's NorthPark Center plays an endless loop of Kors's fashion shows—couldn't you just die?