

A TikTok From China Shows Facial Recognition-Equipped Vending Machine

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In a TikTok video a young woman pays for a drink with facial recognition
Matt Brennan/Twitter/TikTok

- **Chinese technology expert Matthew Brennan shared a TikTok video which appears to show a woman in China paying for a drink from a vending machine using facial recognition — with no sign of card or cash.**
- **The video shows the woman standing in front of the vending machine, being verified through facial recognition, and then opening the vending machine door to pick up a drink.**
- **Facial recognition technology has become extremely prevalent in China, to the extent where protesters against the Chinese government in Hong Kong have been using laser pointers to thwart it.**
- **A previous video spotted by Brennan showed that non-Chinese people weren't able to use the facial recognition payment system on the machine.**
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A TikTok video spotted by Chinese technology expert Matthew Brennan shows how facial recognition is seeping into everyday life in China.

Brennan posted what appears to be a Chinese TikTok video to Twitter, showing a young woman buying a drink from a vending machine using only facial recognition as payment verification. At no point does she pay with card, cash, or her phone.

The video shows the woman walking up to the machine, standing in front of it for her identity to be verified, then opening the vending machine door to retrieve a drink.

| —Matthew Brennan (@mbrennanchina) [August 21, 2019](#)

Business Insider has contacted Brennan for confirmation.

Facial recognition is widely used in China [by law enforcement](#), and has been [tied to China's social credit system](#). It has become so ubiquitous that protesters against the Chinese government in Hong Kong have been [using laser pointers to prevent government cameras from identifying them](#).

[Read more: Video shows Hong Kong protesters using lasers to disrupt government facial-recognition cameras](#)

Although buying a soda from a vending machine may seem a pretty innocuous by comparison, another video previously spotted by Brennan shows that non-Chinese people are not able to access the payment system on the machine, and so can't buy anything from it. The reasoning, according to Brennan, is that person doesn't hold ID issued by mainland China.

| —Matthew Brennan (@mbrennanchina) [July 30, 2019](#)

The use of facial recognition payments has been picking up speed according to [a July article from the South China Post](#). These are in part facilitated by the ubiquity of apps like WeChat and Alipay, which are used on a day-to-day basis by the population. According to the South China Post (which is owned by Alipay's parent company Alibaba) Alipay has now installed its Dragonfly facial recognition system in over 300 cities in China after rolling it out late last year.