New Software Makes Every Image Shoppable

New Visual Search software, from UK company, Cortexica, makes images instantly shoppable. Used by Macy's, Zalando and Style Thief. Soon to launch in UK.

LONDON, SOUTH KENSINGTON, UK, October 20, 2014 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Whether it's bloggers at Fashion Week, that impeccably dressed celebrity that you follow on Instagram, or even just your best friend – now the images that we use as style inspiration can be made shoppable, thanks to recent advances in visual search technologies.
For fashion brands, being ahead of innovation pays off in terms of engagement and interaction with a brand, but does this show in the profits? The trick to increasing return on investment is making shareable content shoppable, and this is something that global retailers are beginning to implement into their strategies.

In 2014, Zalando became the first European retailer to implement visual search into their app – their new 'FotoSearch' iOS app lets users upload wild images and find similar products in the Zalando Inventory. Both online and offline, the customer journey is made seamless at every point of contact, and by linking images of, well, anything back to a retailers inventory, they are making anything shoppable. This kind of visual search technology is beginning to gain traction as a more-than-viable way of converting browsers into buyers. The FotoSearch application proved so successful at converting browsers into buyers, that Zalando have now rolled out the application to 14 countries, and created an Android version too. The application was the result of a hackathon, and the retailer chose to work with UK company, Cortexica, to provide the visual search software.

Visual Search software is also changing shopping habits in the US, where Macy's have launched image search on their website, and their 'showroom busting' Image Search app. By enabling app users to snap a photo of any item of interest with their smartphones and easily search for and purchase a similar item from Macys.com, the retailer takes impulse buying to new heights. The new visual search software, also created by Cortexica, is part of the retailer's plan to expand a host of omnichannel capabilities, including several that underscore mobile commerce as a way for the retailer to attain its goals. The US department store is also looking into iBeacon messaging and smart fitting rooms.
Kent Anderson, president of Macys.com explains the photo search application: "When our customers see a look that they like on friends or on a celebrity, they can directly shop for corresponding products from macys.com and buy them without a lengthy search."

To date, Cortexica have performed over 2 million commercial searches. Explaining the software behind both the applications, Iain McCready CEO of Cortexica said, "The visual search technology is a product of a decade of Bio-Inspired research at Imperial College in London. The software mimics the way the human eye interprets images that we see every day. This makes our image recognition using a mobile device much more robust to real life conditions as it tolerates bright or poor lighting, rotations, small image size and quality, often a problem when taking a picture with a mobile phone or tablet. By searching for products based on color, texture and pattern, as well as shape, the software leverages sophisticated algorithms that make it the most accurate system on the market today."

McCready continues to say that the company is 'responding to the increased use of photo sharing, and using photos as a conversation.' With instagram seeing 60M images uploaded each day and over

400m images shared daily on SnapChat, photo sharing has become the cultural norm for how we converse online.

Cortexica have revealed that this type of application will be available through UK retailers before the end of the year, and as we are already embracing visual discovery on platforms such as Instagram and Pinterest, it's no surprise that consumers are demanding this experience when shopping online and from mobile.

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