

Snappy tailoring: 3D scanning is a perfect fit for the fashion industry

CASE STUDY



The fashion industry is under pressure to reduce waste and Aistetic, an innovation business, could soon make a big impact.

Oxford-based Aistetic, has a solution which may provide part of the answer: clothes which fit you perfectly, offering online recommendations tailored to your size – all generated from a photo taken on your mobile phone.

The tailoring software has been developed by Phil Torr, a Professor at University of Oxford and Duncan McKay. It uses computer imaging and deep learning. It makes online clothes ordering and garment-manufacturing more sustainable.

How it works:

Duncan explains: “We can be your tailor wherever you are by making use of the camera in your mobile phone. Effectively your phone becomes the tailor, measuring you very accurately.”

After the images are uploaded, the Aistetic app creates an exact 3D body model using deep learning and computer vision. From this, all the measurements required can be generated digitally.

How has ISfB helped the business?

Aistetic has been able to develop more quickly as a business because of the support it received from the Innovation Support for Business (ISfB) programme, run by OxLEP Business. “The overall experience has been a time-saver for us. It has accelerated our progress” Duncan explains. “It was made clear that the onus was on us to develop our ideas and make it all happen, but having support meant we made quick progress.”

The company has been encouraged to tell a clear story and to articulate more precisely what it is offering. This has improved their approaches for funding and conversations with the fashion and garment industry. In addition, OxLEP Business has been able to introduce Aistetic to innovation networks in Oxfordshire and to people qualified to help them shape their business and its approach to marketing and managing a start-up business. According to Duncan McKay they now feel more actively part of the Oxfordshire business community. "Our ISfB advisor has introduced us to some great contacts and has been a sounding board for ideas. We have attended training on making a pitch and other skill-based workshops. We have had funding too from another programme which helped because finance in the pre-revenue stage of a business is always a challenge."

What is next?

The inventors had assumed the specialist made-to-measure tailoring market would be the main users. However, their thinking has pivoted, and they are taking their technology straight to the main fashion brands as an answer to the issue of wasteful online ordering and high levels of returns. This is the biggest motivation for potential buyers who stand to save money and reduce environmental costs.

Duncan McKay explains: "People ordering online are in the habit of placing an order for two or even 3 different sizes, choosing the one which fits best and then returning the unwanted sizes. Return rates can be as high as 50%."

"It is a major change to the market, but the problem of wastage and time delays is the Achilles' Heel of the whole fashion industry. Aistetic's process is more sustainable, reduces wastage, saves money throughout the whole logistics chain and increases service levels."

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A premium UK menswear brand is testing their commercial prototype in a year-long pilot. Aistetic hopes the growth of their bespoke and standard sized clothing will make their range more appealing at a time when there is such a squeeze on high street retailers' margins.

Aistetic is finalizing its seed round of financing having been awarded an Innovate UK Smart Grant. They will then move into the next stage of development and commercialisation. "There are major changes coming to the clothing industry and we expect to be part of that. With the support we have had, we're now more confident this will happen sooner than we had expected."

About Aistetic

Aistetic is based in Abingdon.

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Find out more about OxLEP Business' Innovation Support for Business (ISfB) programme and how it can help your Business to achieve its own goals.

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