Asos deploys ‘Style Match’ visual search tool internationally

By Matthieu Guinebault - March 7, 2018

After the UK launch last August, British fashion e-tailer Asos is deploying its ‘Style Match’ visual search tool worldwide. The tool operates through the Asos mobile app, and matches pictures to items in the Asos catalogue.

The system taps a database of 85,000 products featured on the Asos catalogue and is designed to exploit the fact that 80% of the e-tailer's website visits are made from mobile devices. The 16 million visitors of Asos's eight local websites, plus its Android and iOS app users, reportedly spend on average 80 minutes per month on the websites.

The concept of an apparel search system using visual images is not new. French mail order/e-tail company La Redoute developed its own solution in the early 2010s, and the Shazam app introduced a dedicated tool in 2013. Zalando launched a similar tool a year later, as cross-mobility-shopping initiatives became increasingly widespread. Asos's new search tool continues in the same groove, as does the Pinterest Lens "inspirational search" tool, presented at the end of last year.

In the fiscal year closed at the end of August 2017, the annual revenue of Asos was €2.168 billion. In the same period, overseas sales leapt by 47% (+36% at constant exchange rates) and are now worth €1.328 billion. Notably, the UK pure player reportedly has a market capitalisation higher than Marks & Spencer, the long-established dominant force on the UK's apparel retail market.