

PRESS RELEASE

Digitalization as a way out of the returns trap – Avalution launches research project

Kaiserslautern, 12.12.2018 **If you shop online, you often order several sizes or articles to choose from – and returns are guaranteed. The transport to and from the customer and the processing – or even partial destruction – of the garments pollute the environment. Avalution, Assyst GmbH and the DITF Denkendorf are currently developing a solution based on the world’s largest database of human body scans. The joint research project will significantly improve sizing & fitting predictions in online shopping. The goal? Reduced return rates!**

The high level of environmental pollution caused by the production and the sale of clothing is always in the headlines. Together with Assyst GmbH and the DITF Denkendorf, Avalution GmbH is creating a solution to reduce the amount of clothing that is unnecessarily returned and recycled. The research project is funded by the Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt (German Federal Foundation for the Environment). “We want to start at the beginning of the ordering process and develop a solution that allows customers to avoid ordering different sizes for trial fitting. The reduction of these 100% returns alone can considerably reduce the load on the environment,” says Michael Stöhr, Managing Director of Avalution GmbH. The software solution will be based on Avalution’s database of human body scans, which is the largest in the world.

Facts and figures about online trading

86% of online retail returns are due to sizing & fitting issues. People who buy clothing online often order several sizes to choose from – and it's guaranteed that some of the garments will be returned. If nothing fits at all, everything is returned – and according to a study by the EHI Retail Institute, the rate of returns is between 25 and 50 percent, depending on the product group. Customers say sizing & fitting problems are the reason behind 86 percent of returns, and “sizing & fitting” returns are still significantly higher than “I don't like the garment” returns (68 percent) – so customers usually often order several variants of a garment in different sizes to give themselves a better choice.

Customer-friendly determination of sizes without a tape measure

Avalution uses the world's largest database of human body scans to provide the customer with an individualized recommendation for the right size when ordering clothing online. The customer doesn't have to take his or her own measurements and this is particularly customer-friendly. “We only ask four simple questions – and we use the answers to create a statistical avatar that the customer can alter and adapt even more,” says Michael Stöhr.

Using information from 3D simulations

Synergies that arise from the simulation of clothing in 3D will be exploited thanks to the cooperation with Assyst in the project. The advantage of simulation with 3D Vidya is that the digital design is based on a real cut, so the clothing simulation contains valuable information that can be used for e.g. a digital fitting.

Identifying environmental impacts at a glance

A sustainability assessment is being developed at the DITF Denkendorf as part of the project. It will show customers how their ordering behavior is going to affect the environment before they complete their order. The customer can then see at a glance that ordering several sizes for selection is much more damaging to the environment than choosing just one size.

Merger for a new shopping experience

“We want to merge the expertise of Avalution, Assyst and the DITF to create a completely new shopping experience for customers in online shops. They’ll be able to find a perfectly-fitting product much faster. At the same time, the effort involved in returning goods is reduced, lightening the load on the environment – and that’s also an important further development for e-commerce,” says Michael Stöhr.

The project has a duration of two years and will end on July 15, 2020.

About Avalution

Avalution puts the human being at the heart of product development. The company has the world’s largest body dimension database. It contains the body scans of around 100,000 persons. Avalution also carries out serial measurement surveys and is a leader in the field of body scanning. The 20 employees at the company headquarters in Kaiserslautern make size & fit and ergonomics measurable for product development in various industries.

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