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Net-A-Porter allows physical window shopping during Fashion's Night Out

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By KAYLA HUTZLER

Online luxury retailer Net-A-Porter is taking an active role in Fashion's Night Out with pop-up digital displays in two major cities.

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Luxury Daily

Net-A-Porter will have vinyl digital projections in New York and London Sept. 8 that will coincide with a special mobile application. The online retailer also recently reached 500,000 Facebook fans and launched a Facebook video app to reward its loyal customers.

"If there is enough buzz and the existence of the experience becomes widely known, this could be successful [for Net-A-Porter]," said Emily Connor, conversation manager at [Media Logic](#), Albany, NY

"The opportunity to win luxury items at Fashion's Night Out will draw people to the vinyl graphics, while the available goods will ensure that purchases are made," she said.

"If consumers make the effort to download the app and visit the pop-up, they are invested enough in the brand that they will undoubtedly purchase from Net-A-Porter."

Ms. Connor is not affiliated with Net-A-Porter but agreed to comment as a third-party expert.

Net-A-Porter declined comment for this article.

Not just window shopping

Net-A-Porter is looking to bridge the gap between online and in-store retail with a one-night-only digital shopping experience that bridges window displays with a mobile app.

The online retailer will have two digital displays on vinyl graphics at 55 Mercer Street in New York and 19 Mount Street in London.

"I think the window is a super idea because if you can get people to try your product, however you define product, you are building a relationship," said Chris Ramey, president of [Affluent Insights](#), Miami.

"There is still a skepticism to online retailing among many people and the more engagement a brand provides, the more equity they gain," he said.

To shop the window, a consumer must download the new Net-A-Porter app and then hold her mobile device in front of the digital screens.

The digital displays use Aurasma technology, which recognizes surroundings and devices without using barcodes or tags.

By holding the mobile device up to the digital screens, the consumer can obtain more information about items and buy them through the device.

"The technology used in 'The Window Shop' app is unique because it allows you to engage with the physical world on your smartphone device without the need for barcodes," said Laura Woolston, marketing manager at Velti Mobclix Exchange, San Francisco.

"I imagine this will offer Net-A-Porter a huge advantage because it will reach a broader audience – consumers won't have to get up close and personal with the item to find more details," she said.

Mobile users are also entered to win the products they look at through the digital windows.

Everything purchased through the app will be delivered the very next day.

The aptly named "Window Shopping" app is available in Apple's App Store and Android Market.

Net-A-Porter is hoping to further galvanize Fashion's Night Out in a way that stays true to the brand's innovative use of digital media, per the retailer.

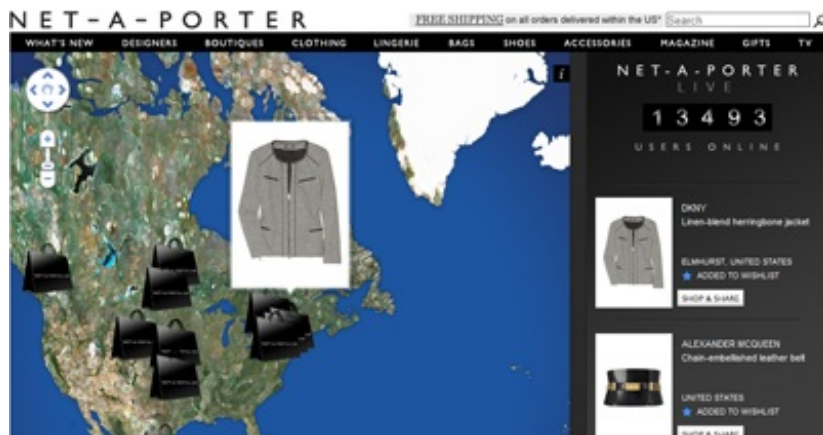
"With the technology available to do so today, it is silly not to [do this]," Ms. Connor said.

"So many brands and designers are capitalizing off of the success of Fashion's Night Out, so it is important that an online retailer attempt to do the same," she said.

Not playing around

Net-A-Porter is no amateur when it comes to digital and social innovation.

For example, Net-A-Porter's Web site now offers a real-time, global map that displays what products people are buying around the world (see story).

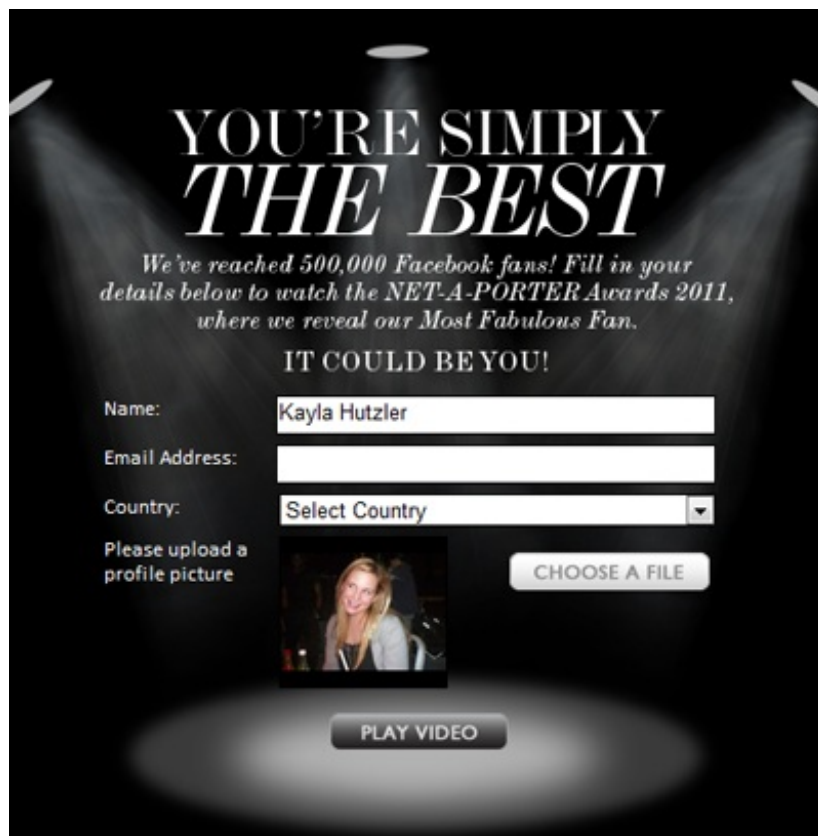


The online retailer also has a strong social media presence, and recently reached 500,000 Facebook fans.

"Social media is not just important for an online retailer, but necessary," Ms. Connor said. "In the wake of Web 2.0, consumers today check the Facebook and Twitter pages of a brand before checking the official Web site.

"Not only should all online retailers maximize the use of Facebook and Twitter pages, but they should also be actively listening to other forms of social media including YouTube accounts, Tumblr accounts and message boards," she said.

The online retailer has been rewarding fans with a new Facebook app.



The "Net-A-Porter Awards" video contains an introduction from the red-carpet in typical celebrity-reporter style, with the reporter saying that she "can't wait to see who the Net-A-Porter most fabulous fan is."

The video then goes inside the building and displays an on-stage host who is announcing the most fabulous Facebook fan.

The consumer's picture then pops-up in the video and the fake audience applauds.

Net-a-Porter has assembled a slew of fashion designers to describe the fabulous fan, who they refer to as "she."

Designers include Donatella Versace, Matthew Williamson, Angela Missoni, Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana.

The app, while it does not offer fans any type of monetary gain, is fun and will most likely be effective in attracting even more Facebook fans.

"While the idea is nice, albeit somewhat silly, I doubt there is much reason for the existence of the app besides bringing to attention the large number of fans," Ms. Connor said.

"In social media, followers typically follow the logic that there is a reason why a person or brand has a lot of followers, and therefore will be more likely to follow that account as well," she said.

"By announcing that the brand had reached 500,000 followers, Net-A-Porter can say that half a million people find this page worth while to 'like,' so why haven't you begun to follow?"

Final Take

Kayla Hutzler, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York