Technology enables digital "fitting room"

By Millet Enriquez | Posted: 22 March 2013 2012 hrs

Zalora's mobile app set to launch.

SINGAPORE: A technology that allows online shoppers to virtually try on clothes using a web camera, is one of the innovative web tools that online fashion and beauty retailer Zalora hopes to introduce in the next three to six months.

More than half a million users log on the Zalora site per day. And its team of 35 software developers in Singapore is working double time to keep pace with the growth rate.

Zalora's mobile app that will be compatible with Apple devices is within weeks to launch and it's got several projects in the pipeline to improve web browsing, speed and delivery for online shoppers.

Chief product officer for Zalora, Karthik Subramanian said: "This is really the crux of it: user-centric, smooth, fast customer experiences, being able to get as many products as quickly as possible. Ensuring operations are lean, being able to ship stuff out as quickly as you can because once you have bigger, more serious competition, this becomes a key differentiator."

Founded just early last year, Zalora currently spans eight countries and carries more than 20,000 items online.

And the introduction of a digital "fitting room" - a web camera which can superimpose the images of the garments on shoppers - could be a game changer that could help it compete with brick and mortar stores and social media to influence purchase.

Mr Karthik said: "It's quite a challenging thing to design and implement at this point. So we're looking at it in the next three to six months sort of time frame. This is patented stuff that's been out in the market for a few years now, so we need to evaluate a bunch of integration partners and see what would suit our purposes best."

Director of Institute of Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Singapore Management University, Desai Narasimhalu said: "There is always an opportunity to build on top of the current innovation. Like the internet itself was an innovation and people built e-commerce sites on that. Any company that wants to sustain its presence and grow its market share

will have to innovate."

For now, Zalora is making the most of open source technologies and its pool of young engineers to keep the innovation wheel rolling.

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