

Retailers introduce beacon technology to mannequins

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House of Fraser and two other British retailers have introduced beacon technology to their mannequins this week, enabling customers to receive information on their smartphones about the clothes on display.

House of Fraser has rolled out the VMBeacon technology at its click and collect store in Aberdeen, as has London-based shirtmaker Hawes & Curtis and Bentalls in Kingston upon Thames.

The mannequin technology, produced by technology and design company Iconeme, allows retailers to engage directly with consumers who are shopping in, or passing by, a store, as long as they have downloaded the free iOS or Android app. Information provided includes details about the clothes and accessories displayed, such as price and links to purchase the items directly from the retailer's website, or where they can be found within the store.

Shoppers can also see more detailed photos and descriptions of the products and save looks for later, share with friends and access additional offers and rewards. The beacons work within a 50 metre range.

The retailer can choose what information is made available and access analytic reports, including shopper details, such

as age and gender, their location, what outfit was viewed and whether a purchase was made online. Shoppers can choose which of their details are made available, via their own privacy settings.

Jonathan Berlin, co-founder of Iconeme, said the technology would “change the way people shop on the high street, as it brings together both on and offline retail”.

“Research shows that customers already use their smartphones while shopping in store, but, until now, the retail industry hasn’t realised the full potential of this,” he added.

Andy Harding, executive director for multichannel at House of Fraser, said: “We are always looking at ways to integrate new and innovative technology to help maximise customer shopping experiences. With such demand from mobile devices, it’s important we continue to bring new technology to our stores.”

Edward Smith, brand manager of Hawes & Curtis, added: “Our visual merchandising team help bring our product to life in the windows and now we can have a better understanding of how this impacts the man and woman in the street.”