

# The Guardian Fashion Store ? a healthy balance?

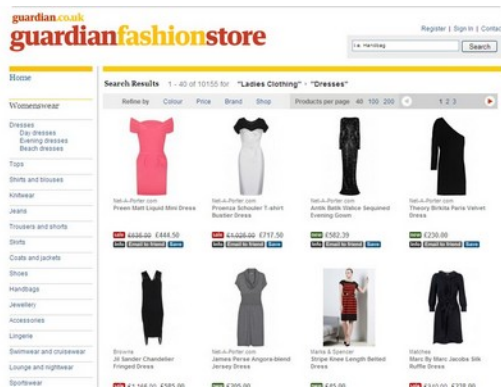
Thu, Jan 14, 2010 | Posted by [jo-ann.hodgson](#)

In October 2009, Guardian News and Media launched its [online Fashion Store](#), allowing users to browse from over 300 retailers and once again proving its ability and willingness to evolve. With this have they hit upon a business model which works for advertisers, publishers and users alike?

## Cutting out the middle-man

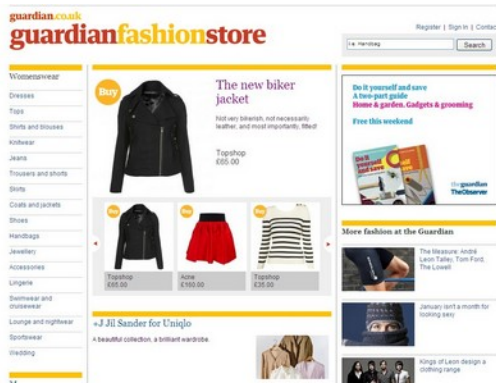
With publishers increasingly looking to advertising and sponsorship deals to replace lost revenue from dwindling newspaper sales, the Guardian has effectively cut out the middle-man to provide a useful service for its readers. Given the choice I, personally, would much rather a dedicated area within which I can browse a number of brands and 'shop the look' championed in this week's style section, than sidebars full of promotion boxes for brands I may have no interest in.

Indeed, online retail analysis has suggested that people shop for fashion online in a different way to how they might shop for other products. Most clothes shoppers know what stores and labels stock what they're looking for. So, rather than searching for a particular item, they would look for their favourite clothing brands and then search for the item within the brand's site. As the Guardian Fashion Store offers the choice to search by brand, it fits with this shopping model much more snugly than side-bar advertising could.



## Mutual promotion

Many online retailers now create editorial, discussion or community areas on their sites to help build context for their products. But by tying its style editorial in with the Fashion Store, The Guardian has turned the tables somewhat, using products to promote its content.



With items that compliment editorial pieces featured on the home-page or 'shop-window' of the online store, users can link through to an article to find out why they should be buying this look? promoting both the relevance of the editorial and the products. And such timeliness is intrinsic to the fashion industry.



## Link-happy?

Compared to promotion boxes that link out to retailer sites, hosting a site-contained fashion store should mean that users have less incentive to leave the guardian.co.uk to shop the look championed in online editorial.

However, at the minute they could be missing a trick by failing to link to the store, or specific items, within editorial. Of course readers would soon become cynical if all editorial solely featured items sold on the site, but in cases where it is relevant and appropriate to mention such items, user experience may be improved by being able to link straight through to and buy or browse products.

There is a delicate balance between banging the sales-message drum and being useful, and it is this power struggle between advertorial and editorial which sees the publishing landscape change shape so frequently.

*What do you think of the Guardian's online Fashion Store? has it got the balance right?*