Disrupting online fashion shopping

Tim Kindberg
The fashion industry:

*Produces 10% of all humanity’s carbon emissions and is the second-largest consumer of the world’s water supply*

- [World Economic Forum](https://www.weforum.org), 2020 (true?)

*Releases over two billion tonnes of greenhouse gases annually*

- [McKinsey](https://www.mckinsey.com), 2020 (true?)
Fashion

About **25% bought online** in UK (ONS, Feb 22)

Plenty of consciousness & activism
Disrupt online fashion shopping

Empower consumers to make more sustainable choices
Motivate brands to sell more sustainable goods
NEW HERE? Get 15% off almost everything!*
With code: HIFRIEND

SALE

NOW UP TO 80% OFF

Our motto? Go BIG

Limited time only. Selected styles marked down as shown.
#SHEINWeeklyDeals

Kids Category Sale

Starting From

£1.8

Shop Now >

Shop by Category

- Dressess
- Tops
- Co-ords
- Sweatshirts
- Bottoms
- Lingerie & Nightwear
Online shopping expands choice, drives consumerism

- Fashion is culturally ingrained – drivers to be ‘fashionable’ outweigh drivers to be sustainable or ethical
- Fit, comfort, price-performance ratio, quality are of higher relevance to (most) consumers than sustainable attributes when shopping online
- Consumers don’t necessarily have capacity or desire to invest extra energy into finding sustainable fashion
36 *sustainably-minded participants* in 3 phases: their background, research methods, responses to SUST mk I
Consumer activism

- boycotts (goods made with slave labour, late 1700s+)
- standing in front of shops etc. (Barclays bank, 1970s)
- co-operatives (early 1800s+)
- petitions
- switching investments
- media campaigns
- online action – Sust
Many fashion consumers want to minimise their personal impact, but find it difficult to shop sustainably

Would like to:

1. be better informed about clothing impacts and alternatives
2. help one another be informed
3. engage in a constructive dialogue with brands

37 sustainably-minded participants in 2 phases: background, focus groups
Three intersections as opportunities for change
Individual choice in a brand-dominated landscape

Online

Nudging, scripting, greenwashing, ...

Research, search

Offline

Local shops, repairs, upcycling

Sustainable fashion “experts”

How can we share this individual knowledge? Trust?
Value Tension

The “scroll”

Pleasure vs pain of finding alternatives

Sustainability

Emotion
Labour
Motivation
Brand-provided information

Lack of transparency

Consumer-provided information

Items for sale online

Third-party, crowd-sourced, own metrics

Power of collective action & reward on brands’ own territory
sussed
/sʌst/

adjective · informal
1. shrewd and well informed.
Effecting change

Small clear steps based on good practice
Build on strong ethical motivations; accommodate confusion
Bring sustainability to the routine point of purchase
Grow a community of sustainable consumers

(Chip & Dan Heath, *Switch*)
The browser extension
sust.earth

- Find new alternatives
- “Stitch” brand and product metadata (e.g. materials)
- Petition brand with a question
- Publicly ask the crowd a question
- Upvote, downvote posts, products and brands
- Encourage and reward brands that behave responsibly
- Be part of a community for change
Let’s make the information we need to make sustainable decisions be part of our digital commonwealth
👉 Join the Sust community (sust.earth) (download, register, sign up)

👉 Do you know someone who might want to join Sust as a business partner?