

Taking You From Drab to Fab with Tailored Recommendations

The Hunt Cures Outfit Envy with Cognitive Computing

Tim Weingarten, CEO of mobile app maker ShopTap, had a fashion emergency. Well, perhaps not so much an emergency as a fashion hurdle. The designs he wanted most were on social media. Users on Instagram, Tumblr and social sites, however, rarely labelled the clothes they wore or provided pricing or store information.

It was a problem, sure, but also an opportunity. Weingarten figured there were others who must be frustrated by fashion items they couldn't find in catalogs. And here had to be a better way to identify those items than by reaching out to social media users.

In 2013 he not only found that way, but he also brought it to the world when he and ShopTap CTO Simon Peck launched The Hunt, an iOS and Android app that brings together the best of both social media and cognitive computing technology from IBM Watson Developer Cloud. Using the app, fashion hunters and experts alike can post photos of outfits and accessories they find online (or in stores), along with the brands and where to purchase.

The app attracted high-profile celebrity investors like Tyra Banks, Ashton Kutcher and major producer RedOne. But, with four million users and more than three million searches processed each week, it's fair to say that The Hunt's appeal goes beyond its celebrity endorsement. In fact, it may just be transforming the way people shop online.

How does The Hunt work?

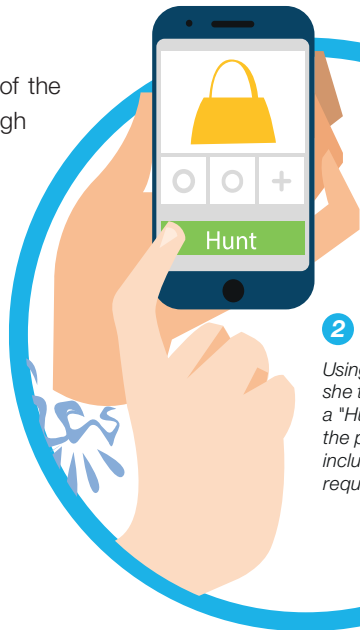
When a user spots a dress or handbag—whether at a store or online—she takes a picture of it using The Hunt app. She then creates a “Hunt” based on the photo and includes specific requirements such as her desired budget and size.

When the app was first created, the only way to match a product to the user-submitted photo was through direct communication between other Hunt users. While that option is still available, ShopTap has boosted the power



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of the The Hunt with the integration of the **AlchemyVision API**, available through IBM's Watson Developer Cloud Vision Services. AlchemyVision analyzes the user-submitted images and mines a database of five million-plus photos to locate similar ones. Forty percent of the time, it returns one within two seconds. If a match isn't automatically returned, the user can still tap the app's community, where members can chime in with recommendations based on the submitted requirements and add more photos.



2

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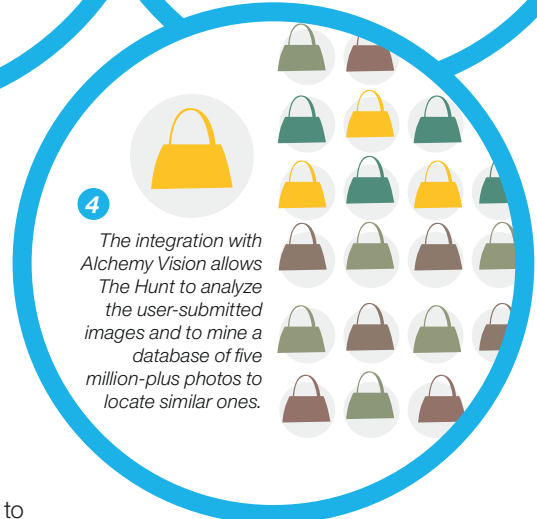
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With the addition of Watson Developer Cloud Vision Services, The Hunt has added cognitive capabilities to its original community-input-only offering to increase its level of accuracy and speed. The app's push notifications that are driven by AlchemyVision get opened 71 percent of the time, says Peck, and day one retention rates for users have increased by **52 percent overall**.

Peck says The Hunt team selected AlchemyVision from a dozen competing image recognition solutions because of the power of its cognitive abilities, which not only MATCH images, but EVALUATE them, regardless of IMAGE distortion. "We were looking for something that could compare two images and give us a score that determined how similar they were," explains Peck. To appeal to users, this all had to be done very quickly. The visual recognition capabilities of Alchemy Vision, says Peck, provided his team with an API that solved their problems.

The Hunt highlights just one of the many ways that IBM Watson Developer Cloud is transforming businesses with a suite of APIs that enable visual recognition, speech and language recognition, along with a host of other capabilities. Using these APIs, companies can enhance ad-targeting, organize libraries of images, monitor their brands, better understand consumer markets and improve research and consumer experience. To learn more about the Watson Developer Cloud, click here.



4

The integration with Alchemy Vision allows The Hunt to analyze the user-submitted images and to mine a database of five million-plus photos to locate similar ones.