IBM and FIT Announce Collaboration to Help Build the Creative Fashion Workforce of the Future

The [Fashion Institute of Technology's](#) (FIT) FIT/Infor Design and Technology Lab (DTech Lab) and IBM (NYSE: [IBM](#)) today announced a collaboration that will transform how the fashion industry operates, and will help build the creative fashion workforce of the future.

FIT will leverage IBM's artificial intelligence (AI) for fashion capabilities – a suite of application programming interfaces (APIs) developed and trained for the fashion industry that leverage deep learning, natural language processing, and computer vision to help fashion companies improve customer experience, enhance their product design, development, and merchandising/planning activities, and augment merchandise performance analysis.

These APIs can be delivered individually, incorporated into existing applications, and/or be leveraged to develop new retail applications, such as trend identification or analysis, product design, development, and merchandising.

FIT's initial experience with IBM AI for Fashion was in 2018 when Tommy Hilfiger teamed with IBM and the DTech Lab on "Reimagine Retail," a project to show how AI can give a fashion brand a competitive edge with market insights, product design, personalization and supply chain optimization. The tools also equipped the next generation of retail leaders with new skills using AI in design.

"Reimagine Retail was a powerful example of what happens when fashion partners with a global tech leader to advance challenging innovations," said Michael Ferraro, director of the FIT/Infor DTech Lab. "Embedding emerging technology into our lab where faculty and students are solving industry problems is the next step in our evolving relationship with IBM. We're leveraging the fresh perspectives and new ideas of talented creative students in an agile research environment."

Due to the success of Reimagine Retail, FIT and IBM are taking the collaboration further, to encompass:

- **DTech Lab:** FIT will use IBM AI for Fashion capabilities within its DTech Lab, an innovation center that partners with industry to engage in innovative research that drives changes in the $2.5 trillion fashion industry. Through projects that combine coursework with professionally guided learning, the lab leverages the fresh perspectives and new ideas of talented, creative students. Here, FIT students from Fashion Design, Textile Development and Marketing, International Trade and Marketing for the Fashion Industries, and Fashion Business Management will work directly with the APIs, developing new use cases and providing input on end user functionality and experience.

- **Partner Projects:** IBM and FIT will work together to help leading fashion companies develop solutions to address challenges in product design and development, merchandising, planning and allocation, and customer sales and service. Because the DTech Lab can help to "de-risk" innovation for large brands by testing in a safe environment, it helps enable companies to explore new emerging areas that they'd like to develop into and gain direct experience. Working with IBM's AI and related tools and technologies provides opportunities to explore projects that address specific brand challenge(s) in customer experience and engagement, supply chain, and/or enterprise operarions.

- **Enhanced Curriculum:** FIT faculty are currently exploring opportunities to integrate IBM's AI tools into existing courses in Math, Science, Creative Technology and Design, Fashion Design, and Fashion Business Management, helping students throughout the college prepare to lead the workforce of the future. IBM will contribute to this coursework, and offer opportunities for students to engage directly with its industry and AI team.
- **Joint Research:** FIT faculty and students will collaborate with IBM Research to solve key industry challenges in areas such as supply chain effectiveness, fashion sustainability, and the development of fashion ontologies. Specific examples may include identifying whether or not children's products contain lead or other harmful materials, recognizing silhouettes in pattern and texture, or using AI tools to identify and develop new approaches to fabric combinations.

"FIT is an educational force that continues to innovate and ensure the future of the creative industries, including fashion," said Dr. Joyce F. Brown, president of FIT. "We are proud to partner with IBM. Together we can look forward to many breakthroughs in resolving the challenges of today and tomorrow."

"After a successful IBM-FIT project for Tommy Hilfiger last year, formalizing our relationship with FIT is a natural next step to accelerate our development of AI solutions for the fashion industry," said Luq Niazi, IBM's Global Consumer Industry Managing Director.

Since its inception in the summer of 2017 through the current spring 2019 semester, the DTech Lab has taken on 19 projects involving 76 students and 21 faculty. "I learned how interesting and rewarding it is to try new things," said Amber Saca, an FIT Packaging Design student. "Working with the Lab gave me the confidence to design on a wide range of subjects that are outside of my comfort zone."

About IBM
For further information please visit: www.ibm.com.

About FIT
FIT, a part of the State University of New York, has been a leader in career education in art, design, business, and technology for almost 75 years. Providing its 9,000 students with an uncommon blend of hands-on, practical experience, theory, and a firm grounding in the liberal arts, the college offers a wide range of affordable programs that foster innovation and collaboration. Its distinctive curriculum is geared to today's rapidly growing creative economy, including fields such as computer animation, toy design, production management, film and media, and cosmetics and fragrance marketing. Internationally renowned, FIT draws on its New York City location to provide a vibrant, creative community in which to learn. The college offers nearly 50 majors and grants AAS, BFA, BS, MA, MFA, and MPS degrees, preparing students for professional success and leadership in the new creative economy. Among notable alumni in fashion are Calvin Klein, Michael Kors, Reem Acra, Brian Atwood, Dennis Basso, Francisco Costa, Norma Kamali, Nanette Lepore, Bibhu Mohapatra, Ralph Rucci, John Bartlett, and Michelle Smith. Other prominent graduates include Leslie Blodgett, creator of bareMinerals; international restaurant designer Tony Chi; and Nina Garcia, editor in chief, *Elle*. Visit fitnyc.edu.

About FIT/Infor Design and Technology Lab
The FIT/Infor DTech Lab is a public-private partnership between Infor, an industry leader in Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software, and the Fashion Institute of Technology, with a mission to engage faculty and students as the solve industry problems with design and technology. The Lab was created to explore the impact of emerging technology on design, manufacturing and retail. It is organized around four core initiatives: enhance

education with experiential learning, engage industry through innovative partnerships, empower entrepreneurs by directly engaging emerging designers, and envision the future through projects that explore new ideas for business and creativity.

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