



By decreasing the reach from marketing of unsustainable companies, the “shADe” plugin aims to provide an antidote to greenwashing | Photo source [shADe](#)

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WEB PLUGIN BLOCKS DIGITAL MARKETING FROM UNSUSTAINABLE FASHION BRANDS



By applying AI to identify and block digital advertisements from unsustainable brands, the plugin hopes to encourage responsible fashion choices

Spotted: Students at the Imperial College in London and Royal College of Art have designed a free-to-install, AI-powered web-plugin that identifies and blocks users from the digital marketing of unsustainable fashion brands during online shopping and internet browsing.

Digital marketing occupies 66 per cent of the total marketing budgets of fashion brands. By decreasing the reach from marketing of unsustainable companies, the “shADe” plugin aims to provide an antidote to greenwashing.

“We’re excited to explore how shADe can evolve from a browser plugin to a platform that can foster collaboration between consumers and companies” [say the creators](#) of shADe – Fatimah El-Rashid, Jenny Hu, Joy Zhang and Sille Eva Bertelsen.

shADe uses machine-learning to recognise brands and logos while a user is browsing the internet in real-time. A selection process is carried out, during which identified companies are compared to a trusted database of company sustainability scores. The web plugin then blocks the digital marketing from companies with poor sustainability scores, whereas the content of companies that score highly remain unblocked.

An additional feature allows all content, blocked or not, to be expanded on for more information and suggestions of alternative, sustainable brands. For example, through the shADe platform, users can directly inform fashion companies about their values.

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Takeaway:

E-commerce is growing 3 times faster than traditional retail. A 2018 report found that 51 per cent of consumers prefer to shop online, while 49 per cent would rather go to a brick and mortar store. It is important that we close the information loop in consumer needs and company practices and make it easier for shoppers to be more responsible. Whilst the initial focus is to counter fast fashion, this effort shows huge potential and could expand into other industries.