Consumers more likely to use virtual apparel try-on software if interactive

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While more and more people are shopping online, purchasing clothes on the internet poses a unique challenge: What if it doesn't fit? The apparel industry's latest solution is virtual try-on sessions that allow consumers to share photos or measurements of themselves to create a similar-sized avatar.

While some consumers have significant concerns about the new technology, especially young people, new research from the University of Missouri found that qualities such as the perceived ease of using the technology significantly diminishes privacy concerns.

"This is something that virtual try-on companies should take note of," said Song-yi Youn, an assistant professor of textile and apparel management at the MU College of Arts and Science and lead author on the study. "The way our society is moving, personal information is becoming a valuable and important commodity, and people, especially young people, are very careful with their personal information because this phenomenon is not going away any time soon."

To reach her finding, Youn asked participants to create an avatar by submitting body information such as height, weight, bra size and body shape. Once the avatar was created, participants were asked to virtually try-on a jacket and take a screenshot of their avatar. Finally, they were questioned about their experiences and the likelihood that they would shop virtually again using an avatar.

"When the participants in the study found that they had control over their own experience, they were able to personalize that experience and the technology was easily responsive, they were much more likely to use the technology," Youn said. "In fact, it had a direct impact on the privacy concerns the users were voicing."

Youn said companies can use these findings to help inform their business models to provide better trade-offs for people's personal information, like interactivity, ease of use and versatility. Youn was surprised that these features had such an impact on people's privacy concerns.

"I knew that interactivity and positive aspects of the applications would

make people want to use it more," Youn said. "However, I was shocked to discover that the level of interactivity was connected to people's privacy concerns. That has huge implications, not only for businesses using virtual try-on software, but also for businesses utilizing consumer information as part of their business model."

"Privacy paradox in 3-D body scanning technology: the effect of 3-D virtual try-on experience in the relationship between privacy concerns and mobile app adoption intention" was published in *Nature: Humanities and Social Sciences Communications.*

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