# Retail Innovation Shout Out: Technology Infused Apparel

by Anasuya Biswas

The retail, footwear and apparel industry changes frequently and abruptly, making it nearly impossible to keep up with the latest fashion trends. With a growing focus on the internet of things (IoT) across all industries, the latest fashion innovations are starting to incorporate IoT functionality. From a self-warming jacket, to a smart bikini, there are smart apparel options available for any season. As I look at the sheer number of smart-connected clothing and accessory options available, I find myself wondering if they are gimmicks or provide tangible value.



One smart garment in particular recently caught my eye - the Vollebak solar charged jacket. Vollebak is an adventure clothing brand known for their unorthodox, out-of-the-box designs. Their solar charged jacket is completely waterproof and looks like any other windbreaker hoodie during the day. But in the dark, this ultra-thin and packable jacket lights up like kryptonite, which makes it ideal for late night or early morning runners, cyclists, or climbers. Embedded in the jacket's waterproof membrane is a phosphorescent compound that absorbs light throughout the day and then releases it in the dark. Contrary to what the name suggests, any source of light can charge the jacket - including artificial light. Bicycle commuters can rest assured knowing that it is charging while in the office or at home.

Technology is increasingly invading our closets to create new consumer experiences. While I'm still wary of the smart-connected gimmick, I'm excited for the day when I can use my clothing to perform gesture controls.

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