

## Press2

From Internet Retailer-Apparel and Accessories - Bringing Merchandise from the Store to Online Shoppers. December 2007 [www.internetretailer.com](http://www.internetretailer.com) When it comes to categories of products sold, apparel & accessories is the biggest kid on the Internet retailing block. E-retailers in this category account for 80 of the top 500 retail web sites, according to the Internet Retail Top 500 Guide. The category, however, also has one of the biggest hurdles on the web: merchandise that shoppers really like to feel, hold and try on, actions impossible to achieve via an Internet connection. But that's not stopping the apparel & accessories e-retailers named to the Hot 100 from using web tools and technology to come as close as possible to helping shopper "feel" merchandise and have an online experience similar to one they would have in store. Coach.com, for example, has introduced Try It Online, a site feature designed to help dampen worries shoppers have when purchasing a handbags online. Shoppers can use the Try It Online feature to see where the bag falls on their body. They enter their height, and the web site displays a model of similar height wearing the handbag. Compare with handbag, shoes present a much bigger challenge to e-retailers looking to reassure shoppers buying online. 6pm.com lets customers soothe each other's concerns. The site offers a Fit Survey, where shoe buyers say such things as whether their shoes "felt true to size," "felt true to width" or provided "moderate arch support." Shoppers can review the survey results when considering a shoe purchase. At Gap.com, a Quick Look web tools enables shoppers to magnify any part of a product image by mousing over it, giving shoppers as close a look as they could get in a store. "It lets people know what it would be like if they were actually holding it in their hands," says Scott Kincaid, a consultant at Usability Sciences Corp. Other Internet retailers are not just focused on giving shoppers the feel of merchandise, they're also making online shoppers feel more like they're in a store. JCrew.com, for instance, boats a personal shopper program that brings shoppers and retail associates together online. And Swell.com encourages conversation about surfing via e-mail that unites customers and Swell staff.