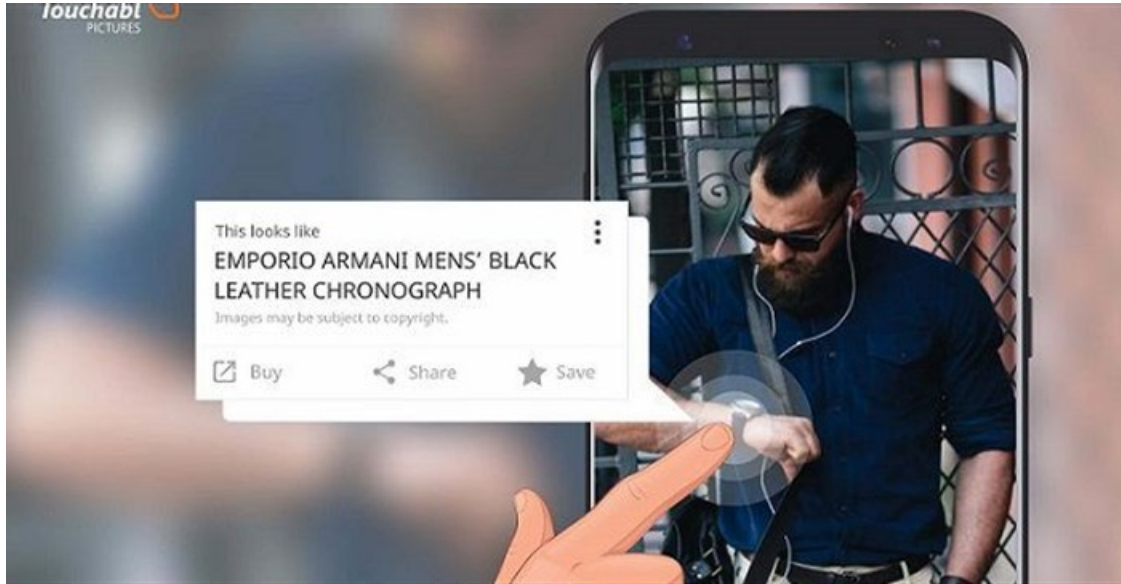


Nigerian startup Touchabl launches picture-searching app

Port Harcourt-based startup Touchabl has launched its app, which uses artificial intelligence (AI) to enable people search and shop for items in any picture just by touching it.



The [Touchabl](#) app allows a user that sees something they like – such as a shoe, watch or car – in any picture, whether on their timeline in the app or in their phone photo gallery, to simply touch it and receive more information about it.

“We believe that this will revolutionise how we discover things in any of the 675 billions photos shared online every year. Though this solution is tailor-made for fashion and lifestyle, the technology can be adapted for education, medical sciences and diagnostics, and to assist visually impaired persons to ‘storify’ any picture just by touching it,” founder and chief executive officer (CEO) Gabriel Eze told Disrupt Africa.

Released on Android in October, Touchabl is looking to tap into the growth of online shopping in Africa and the rest of the world,

“By 2025, online shopping for fashion and lifestyle goods will be digital-first, and young people all over the world are projected to represent nearly half of luxury goods consumers. In 2017 alone, these millennials purchase more than 30% of their luxury goods online, a significant change from how traditional luxury goods consumer shop; and social media represents a key channel for discovering fashion trends,” Eze said.

“By helping these millennials search-and-shop for fashion and lifestyle stuff in a picture just by touching it, we realised that these touches were a better indicator of user interest when compared to the traditional comments and likes. With more people discovering fashion and lifestyle using Touchabl, we can help brands and businesses target user interests more accurately and further improve their product offering respectively, thereby increasing their conversion rate of sales online.”

The self-funded startup has already seen growth of nearly 200% in downloads, and has a 60% rate.

“The reception has been exceptionally good,” Eze said, adding that Nigeria, the United States (US) and India make up 95% of its user base currently.

“We have also seen uptake in Ghana, Kenya, Russia, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom (UK). We are focused on capturing the Nigerian market first, then expanding to other markets. We have an opportunity to partner with a couple of retail giants in the US and China, and we are also making in-roads with major fashion retailers and e-commerce platforms in Nigeria. We are working on making it possible for fashion bloggers and just about anyone into pictures to make their pictures touchable without having to download our app, use our web app or visit our website.”

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