

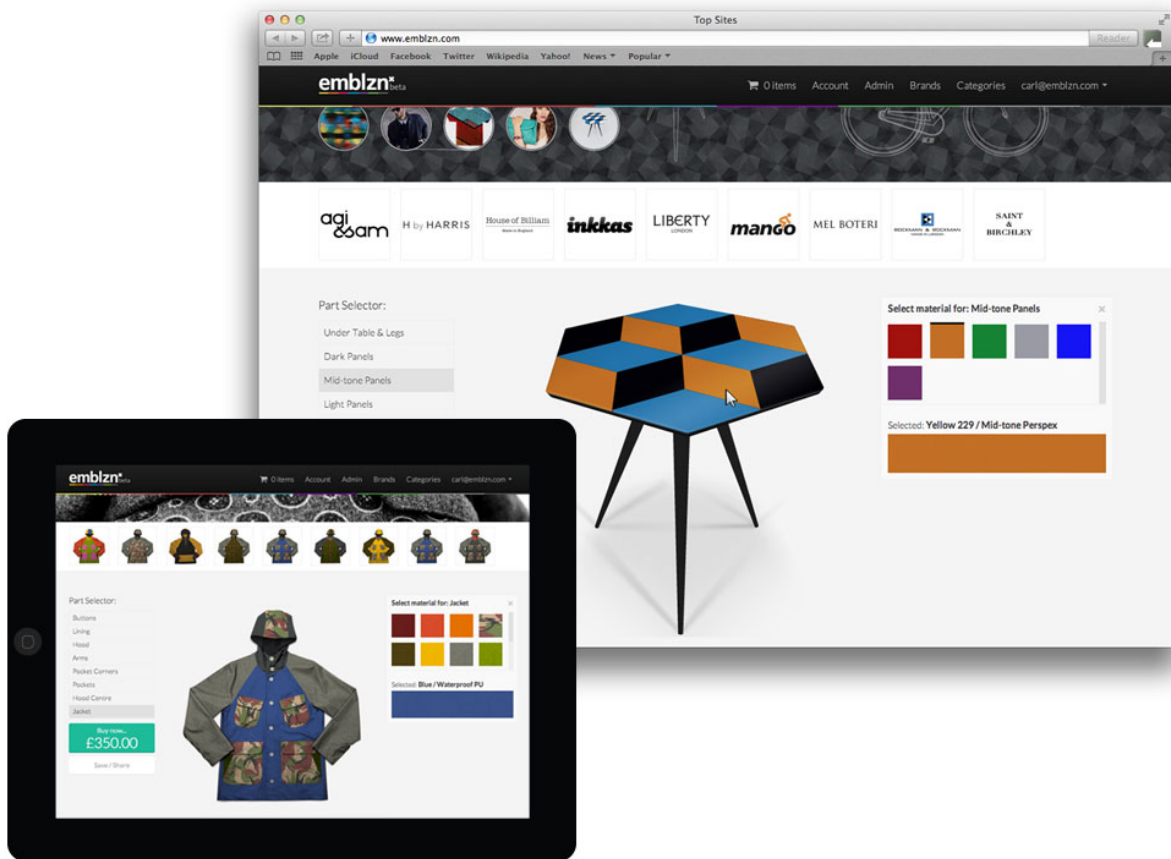


What is Emblzn?

Emblzn is solving the problems with online retail, product development and mass customisation.

The internet start-up, based in London have a bold mission to solve a multitude of problems with buying, selling and creating products. The service is currently in a public beta at www.emblzn.com, and has already been adopted by a variety of different brands and designers.

The Emblzn team have big plans to revolutionise how brands make products, how consumers buy products and how both interact with each other online.



How does it work?

In simple terms, Emblzn provides any brand or designer-maker the tools to engage their customers with mass customisation. The service helps brands visualise their products in the fabrics, materials, options and colours the customer may want to see the product in and then allows them to order it directly. This gives the customer a realistic vision of what they are creating, and ordering, without the brand having to provide much more than a sample product.

So, is this 'a thing' then?

This form of manufacturing, whereby brands only create the product once it has been ordered, is a growing alternative to the traditional model of wholesaling and retailing. Companies like Made.com are creating products only when they reach enough pre-orders. Brands are using Kickstarter to grow their audience and drive "pre-sales" for a product, before they produce it. Big brands like Burberry, Nike, Vans and Converse moving more and more into the made-to-order space. It is clear that a shift in the relationship between customer and brand is changing.

But if it ain't broke... or is it?

There are several reasons why the current model is unsustainable and made-to-order is the future:

- The inherent risks of making products without a purchaser
- The growing costs of manufacturing in the Far East means production margins are moving closer together etc.
- The shipping costs from manufacturer to retailer
- Mass produced products incur larger mass marketing costs.

The advantage once offered by mass production still exists but, it is not what it was and soon the disadvantages may outweigh the advantages. Making a product you know the purchaser wants means almost no wastage on dead stock, with no unnecessary production and easing of cash-flow.

Shopping for the Facebook generation

Customer created made to order products hold a huge amount of marketing value. Users are much more engaged online, creating the product as a collaborator, which is a far more personal and social experience. By engaging the customer through mass customisation, brands can give a greater sense of ownership to their customer.

It is early days for Emblzn and for this area of retail but the signs all point to a change in the way we buy products.

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