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Textil & Design

# Internet Fashion Map: the web representation of certain fashion hot spots.

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# List of Contents

List of Tables .....	2
List of Figures.....	3
1 Abstract .....	4
2 Introduction.....	5
3 Literature review .....	6
4 Methods, how data is collected and analyzed .....	13
5 Results of data collection and analysis.....	17
5.1 Procedure .....	17
5.2 Findings.....	23
6 Research Limitations .....	25
7 Discussion of relevance .....	26
8 Conclusion .....	27
List of References .....	31

**List of Tables**

Table 1: Global Language Monitor ranking of 2015 ..... 10

Table 2: Google Search Results of 35 pre-elected cities – Top 10 marked in grey..... 15

Table 3: Instagram Results..... 18

Table 4: Google Results ..... 19

Table 5: Facebook Results ..... 20

Table 6: Twitter Results ..... 21

Table 7: Overall Results ..... 22

Table 8: Comparison of Ranking ..... 23

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Instagram Results Chart.....	18
Figure 2: Google Results Chart .....	19
Figure 3: Twitter Results Chart.....	21
Figure 4: Overall Results Chart .....	22

# 1 Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this study was to investigate the value of the web representation of certain fashion hot spots and how these results can be shown on fashion maps in an illustrated way.

**Design/methodology/approach** – A new ranking was created, which was evaluated with a self-instructed index, to gain solid results. Numbers were collected from Google, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and web.alert.io. Additionally, fashion maps were created for an illustrative visualization of the results.

**Findings** – Compared with the ranking of a trend forecasting agency, called Global Language Monitor, which concepted a ranking of non-virtual fashion cities, the web representation and therefore the ranking of the research project, differs mainly in the situation of the cities among the first 10, viz. the rank on which a city occurs, but fewer in the actual cities mentioned.

**Research limitations** – The research was limited to subjective analysis of data, leading to partly subjective results, as well as the selected number of Social Media Platforms, that had been used.

**Originality/value** – This is the first study to explore the web representation value of fashion metropolises in comparison to their non- virtual ranking. The results are partly based on results that already existed, concerning transformations of fashion cities or in general which cities own the status of a fashion city.

**Keywords** – Fashion hot spot, fashion map, Global Language Monitor, fashion cities, internet fashion Google, Social Media

## 2 Introduction

By the time the Internet was established and developed, it became part of our daily life and is inevitable for nearly every single person all around the world. Wi-Fi or internet access already seem to count as basic requirements. Whether you are connecting with your friends via email or social media, get information about any topic, you can merely imagine, or use it for online shopping, it is an all-round invention and helps us every day. According to the given research project, dealing with the topic “Internet fashion map”, it is the aim to get an overview about international fashion hot spots, focusing on their web representation. The gathered information will be summarized in a paper, as well as additionally in a creatively illustrated so called “fashion map”, to get a more sophisticated view on this topic, and the relations between the results for different cities, countries or areas can be amplified and pointed out more easily.

Getting started with the research, it is important to clarify some terms, being related to the topic, as well as the way of undertaking research. As the topic concentrates on the web representation of each fashion city, the German- and English-speaking Internet will be used, with all its various possibilities, like search engines, Social Media, blogs or WGSN, a fashion trend forecasting agency, as main sources to get information from. To ensure reliability and validity of the collected data and facts, articles, being found on the databases, provided by the Reutlingen University, will be used for the research as well. The collected data must be compared constantly, to ensure an extensive and coherent research results. The main point should be the comparison of the hits and results you get by searching the same term in different sources and related to various areas.

But first of all, it needs to be discussed what can be understood by using the term “fashion hot spot”. What are the criteria for a hot spot and how is a good web representation measured? All these questions should be clarified proceeding through the literature review, in which not only the Internet can provide necessary information, but it is inevitable to examine some literature about fashion metropolises. This can be any information of a travel guide, reports, journals or books, that could be useful to interpret at the end, before starting to write the actual paper. The concentration will be on a time period of the last two years, which means 2015 and 2016.

As the research methods are determined, which can be extended or changed during the project, we want to come back to the idea of the actual research question and its

relevance to our daily life, the importance for companies, as well as the whole aim of this research project. The main purpose of this research project should be the demonstration of the different values, how fashion hot spots are represented on the Internet, in form of a creative “Internet fashion map”. As well as the reasons for these differences and how this presentation has been undertaken so far, which will be recorded in chapter seven and eight, where all results are summarized and discussed.

Another main point should be the relevance of this research project for international fashion companies, which is discussed at the end of the paper. During this research project, we want to figure out how companies, and mainly their decision of opening up headquarters, the place of production and retail stores, are influenced by the different values of a fashion hot spot, represented on the Internet.

Finalizing the research paper, a conclusion will be added at the very end, discussing the lessons learned, including obstacles and pitfalls, that might have occurred. As well as the intention of the whole research project about the web representation value of cities, countries and areas.

### **3 Literature review**

In advance of the actual Literature review it need to be made note of the fact, that the topic, covering this research project, concentrates on the Internet. This is on the one hand the reason, why web pages are listed under the term of literature review, beside the actual literature, and on the other hand, it was quite hard to find a lot of literature dealing with this topic.

#### **Google**

Most well-known and used search-engine for searching and finding anything on the web. If you are not on Google, you are not found on the Internet. The ten most relevant hits are shown on the front page, with a descending order. Companies can also pay to be listed in the ad area for relevant search words.

Moreover, it is the most important tool to get a first impression of the online representation of a city, which built up the basis of the research process, creating a first

order of cities, being used and developed as a fundament to carry out further investigations concerning other Social Media Platforms.

## **Facebook**

As the biggest social media platform with 1.71 billion users (Statista, 2016), it is the place to share almost anything from text, pictures, videos to links. It is inevitable to not be represented as a city, brand or fashion leader. There are several possibilities, besides keeping in touch with everyone all over the world, like posting new content, creating your own site, taking part in discussion groups or sharing any other form of media.

## **Instagram**

As an image-sharing social-media platform it may be the most relevant tool for fashion representation and style. Users share their pictures with the world and tag them with relevant words, so-called #hashtags. Also possible is a geo-location tag, which can be set by the users for others to see where they are, respectively where they took the photo.

## **Twitter**

Twitter, which is a text-based online diary limited to 160 characters per tweet, is getting more and more important. Contrary to Facebook and Instagram it is more relying on the written word than on pictures itself. Therefore, it is not tremendously important for fashion, because twitter is mainly relying on words, in which pictures, videos or other media can also be linked in the text.

## **Snapchat**

Snapchat is an upcoming and very important Social Media platform. The main function is, to share a short video with your selected friends or on your timeline. Filters can be added, as well as texts or emoticons. More and more users and even businesses try to represent themselves. As there is no searching feature and persons can only be added by their Snapchat name or phone number, you cannot analyze all the content and search for relevant fashion components. Therefore, it is not relevant for our research.



## **Pinterest**

Pinterest is a form of an online friendship book or diary, where you can archive and save snippets of Internet content such as recipes, online links to fashion, images, etc. As there is no relevant search option which shows the hits, it is not relevant for the research as there would be too much content to be filtered manually.

## **Tumblr**

Tumblr is an easy-to-use Micro-Blogging-Software. Users can create their own website, respectively their own blog, within five minutes. It is possible to share texts in form of diary entries or any kind of multimedia. "Tumblers" can follow each other, discuss and comment on their blogs and share content in their own blog.

## **WGSN**

WGSN describes itself as "The World's Trend Authority" on the Internet, with the following attitude: "We define what's next so you can make smarter decisions today." Anybody who is working or interested in the fashion business knows about WGSN, which is an international well-known trend forecasting agency, that provides data about fashion trends of all continents. Never mind if you use the platform, as in the position of a consumer or retailer. The staff of WGSN "obsessively decode[s] the future to provide the authoritative view on tomorrow." (WGSN, 2017)

Although WGSN seemed to be full of expectations and very useful at the beginning of the research process, it turned out to be not really handy in this case. It does give information about different styles coming up in countries all over the world or continents, but the provided information cannot be filtered and marked in an objective way. Thus, the use of WGSN as a reliable source was impossible and in turn unnecessary.

## **YouTube**

YouTube, also owned by Google, is a video sharing platform on the Internet. With more than 1 billion users (YouTube, 2017) nearly everything related to video happens on YouTube. As the content is also hard to filter, and even harder to analyze if it is

relevant or not, as it would be necessary watching all the movies or at least skimming through it, YouTube was not relevant for the research either.

## **Others**

There are also many other smaller or regional limited Social Media Platforms, which cannot be all minded in our research. The research is relied and based on the most important ones, which also have the most users and most relevance, when it comes to representing fashion in form of media.

## **Global Language Monitor**

Global Language Monitor, is a media-analytics company, which was founded in 2013 and based in Austin, Texas. Each year, the company releases a ranking of the world's fashion capitals. Its results are based on global press and news media, the Internet, Blogs and Social Media. (GLM, 2017)

The following table shows the ranking of the media- analytic-company, Global Language Monitor, concerning international non-virtual fashion metropolises:

<b>Ranking</b>	<b>Global Language Monitor (2015) - worldwide fashion hot spots</b>
<b>1</b>	Paris
<b>2</b>	New York
<b>3</b>	London
<b>4</b>	Los Angeles
<b>5</b>	Rome
<b>6</b>	Milan
<b>7</b>	Barcelona
<b>8</b>	Berlin
<b>9</b>	Madrid
<b>10</b>	Tokyo

**Table 1: Global Language Monitor ranking of 2015**

### **John Friedmann - The World City Hypothesis**

Released first in 1986, the work of John Friedmann, segmented into seven hypotheses, created a ranked list of at these times 30 world cities. This list has been updated over the years by several authors and experts, in order to cover changes in the economics and new insights in research.

The World City Hypothesis defines world cities in their importance of intercultural connection, economic system and their influence to surrounding regions. The Top 3 world cities, defined by John Friedmann as global financial centers, are London, New York and Tokyo. Friedmann defines them as centers, which link the national, regional and interregional economies to the world economy. They are also big, urbanized places of a huge amount of economics and social activities. Followed by multinational financial centers, such as Miami, Los Angeles, Frankfurt, Amsterdam and Singapore which are responsible for their, more than regional and across borders, financial sphere. Third, national financial centers, which only dominate their domestic financial system such as Paris, Zurich, Mexico City, Sao Paulo, Madrid, Seoul and Sydney. And

Last, sub-national financial centers, which are responsible for only a region of a country's financial order such as Osaka-Kobe, San Francisco, Seattle, Houston, Chicago, Milan and the Rhine-Ruhr-region. (Friedmann, 1986)

### **Fashion City / Fashion Hot Spot**

Fashion Cities are worldwide famous for their specific style, remembrance and major influence on the fashion industry. You do not have to be a fashion addict to be aware of London, Paris, New York or Milan as a fashion hot spot. These cities are known over all ages and classes for carrying their individual thumbprint and distinctive design. That is why they are also called the “Big Four” (FashionDays, 2014). Or as Jess Berry (2010) proposes: “The concept of a fashion city suggests an international metropolis at the forefront of style”. Therefore, the list of fashion cities is in many parts congruent to the list of world cities by John Friedmann. Explanatory, because fashion takes part at the places where economies are driving at the peak. Of course, there are also a few exceptions, like Frankfurt. Which is a worldwide financial center, but plays almost no role in the fashion world. Most fashion houses have their headquarters in one of these world cities, most designers work there and also the most important fashion fairs - Fashion Shows - are held there. Creating a big amount of production and service industry. In addition, these cities also have a fair amount of businesses, financial and entertainment industries, being related to fashion. (Gemperli, 2010) But how did they become a “Fashion City”? What is necessary to qualify for a “Fashion City”? According to Jess Berry (2010) these cities have been historically established by a complex dynamic of economic factors and the emergence of a modern fashion media system.

Cities like London and Paris already started in the late 17th and early 18th century to becoming fashion capitals. Promoted through a great extent by the urban consumer revolution, benefitting from the status of taking part in the world trade. And additionally, due to the fact of a densely population, forcing the people to see each other and being influenced by what others wore on the street. This could be seen as an early form of advertisement or marketing. Logically, greater and higher populated cities had an advantage in comparison to smaller towns, concerning fashion trends, that were merely presented on the streets.

Later on, in the 19th century, the imperialism strengthened the already strong fashion cities like London and Paris. The royal households were a bright example and role model of high fashion, defined by overall excellent quality of materials and the everlasting indication of trends. By exporting textiles, clothing and designs into the world, these imperial cities could reinforce their already obtained status of fashion leaders from the earlier centuries. Both cities had a strong statement as metropolises, at that time, in comparison to the rest of the colonized world. Especially for Paris, already known for their Haute Couture, French colonies were an important factor for spreading the French fashion. A competition started between cities, not only limited to economic and political power, but also in forms of fashion. Cities could compete in forms of high fashion and technical advancement. In the late 19th and early 20th century, the world came closer together, because of a globalized networking and tourism was more and more affordable. Not only for Americans visiting the fashion hot spot number 1 - Paris - was made possible, but also for America itself, new cities - New York - played a more and more important role in the world fashion scene. Early fashion shows began to take place, combining the fashion and the city even more. New York gathered and finally obtained more and more importance in the fashion world, as America's most important and significant economic city, and therefore more solvent citizen could and wanted to afford the high and exclusive fashion from Europe. Fashion Press gained in importance and significance. Vogue, founded in the USA in 1892, and followed by Paris' editions in 1916 and the Italian version in 1920, was one of the first fashion magazines on the globe. After World War II, international editions were published, creating and strengthening the images of certain fashion cities in the world. (Bruzzi & Gibson, 2013)

It can be said, that the traditional fashion press has constructed a set of traditional fashion cities, which are seen as a standard. However, often not the size of the fashion economics or the true amount of designers is considered to be relevant to become or remain a fashion city, being represented in the media. Furthermore, a list already exists, including considered fashion cities, which have been developed to an almost legendary status, which is hard to even shake, viz. it is hard to become part of such a list as an uprising fashion metropolis. Often the city's name is even branded for or after the company's name or even integrated into the name itself - e.g. Shanghai Tang, DKNY or ic! Berlin eyewear, just to name a few. Even though, there are new uprising cities, which have the potential to become new fashion cities, and reach the same status as New York, London or Paris, they are not regarded by the traditional fashion press. For example, although the fashion magazine "Vogue" has twenty-one different

national magazine titles, the content is almost the same and does not represent the local circumstances precisely and appropriately.

In contrast, therefore the Internet is marginally regulated. The fashion press surely has an internet representation, but the amount of non-traditional press or otherwise content creators is much more. Additionally there is no official institution which filters or regulates the web, Google Results or contents of Social Media. So every city, every person and therefore any kind of fashion can represent themselves on the Internet and be seen by other users and therefore consumers. Once, content is created, it is directly available online, there is no time needed to publish a paper or magazine. There is no lead-time, to be considered what will be interesting in a month or two or what upcoming trends might be. Content is shared live, much faster and in a more direct way with potential consumers. Direct responses, whether something new is liked or dismissed, is available to the designer or the brand. Trends can be created within a mouse-click, likewise taken apart by the consumers. Trends are more volatile, more consumer-orientated as they are liked, discussed and shared among the community.

Through this possibility new fashion trends and new fashion cities can evolve.

## **4 Methods, how data is collected and analyzed**

### **Quantitative data collection and analysis**

As the aim of this research project should be the comparison of different web representation values of diverse cities or areas, first of all it had to be determined, what kind of criteria need to be fulfilled, to qualify for a good web representation.

The top 10 cities of the annual ranking of fashion capitals of 2015, published by Global Language Monitor, a trend tracking company, were used as the standard status of non-virtual fashion hot spots during the research project. To go a bit further, the German and English speaking web is searched for another top 10 ranking, based on the hits you get on Google, to amplify a better comparison between different cities, countries and areas. Thus, an individual profile could have been created for every city, which builds the basis to compare all gathered information. The data is saved in an excel file, to facilitate the comparison and evaluation.

As a starting point, statistical data from the “Statistisches Bundesamt” and Wikipedia was extracted, regarding the biggest cities in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Europe, as well as the worldwide metropolises. Based on this list, finally consisting of 35 cities, a first round of internet research was done in Google with the keywords fashion, style and textile. Additional Reutlingen was included into the research to get a sense of Reutlingen’s current internet representation and worldwide prominence. The hits were then ranked in a descending order to determine the newly created virtual Top 10 list and as a basis for further investigation on these 10 cities. The other 25 cities were no longer relevant, as they were just used for a first overview about the worldwide urban agglomeration.

	#fashion	#style	#textile
<b>Top 10 DE / AT / CH</b>			
Berlin	55.900.000	89.400.000	1.130.000
Wien	6.300.000	14.800.000	670,000
Hamburg	25.400.000	11.800.000	632,000
München	16.900.000	10.600.000	702,000
Köln	771,000	9.200.000	572,000
Frankfurt am Main	12.500.000	13.400.000	484,000
Stuttgart	8.390.000	14.600.000	624,000
Düsseldorf	15.900.000	11.300.000	567,000
Dortmund	847,000	12.000.000	616,000
Essen	17.900.000	13.700.000	597,000
Bremen	586,000	12.600.000	563,000
Zürich	821,000	20.100.000	564,000
Reutlingen	492,000	3.090.000	327,000

<b>Top 10 Europa</b>			
Moscow	27300000	14200000	1270000
Istanbul	16.700.000	10.500.000	675,000
London	178.000.000	324.000.000	24.100.000
Saint Petersburg	14.900.000	16.300.000	587,000
Madrid	36.000.000	56.200.000	3.130.000
Kiew	659,000	312,000	63,300
Rome	49.200.000	13.200.000	1.330.000
Paris	127.000.000	246.000.000	32.700.000
Minsk	590,000	14.900.000	353,000
Bucharest	647,000	31.000.000	629,000
Budapest	13.100.000	15.800.000	529,000

### Top 10 World

Tokyo	14.100.000	17.800.000	836,000
Jakarta	15.600.000	5.960.000	528,000
Delhi	35.300.000	19.600.000	883,000
Seoul	10.700.000	16.600.000	663,000
Manila	10.300.000	14.800.000	599,000
Mumbai	19.700.000	17.200.000	844,000
Karachi	12.400.000	15.500.000	587,000
Shanghai	20.100.000	12.200.000	570,000
New York	238.000.000	391.000.000	24.500.000
Sao Paulo	15.000.000	18.400.000	897,000
Beijing	18.400.000	11.200.000	785,000
Mexico City	14.800.000	150.000.000	1.250.000

**Table 2: Google Search Results of 35 pre-elected cities – Top 10 marked in grey**

The data collection mainly concentrates on the quantitative hits you get, when searching Google, Facebook, Instagram or Twitter, e.g. London plus keyword fashion, style and textile. With the help of the Google results and the Top 10 ranking, further research on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter was undertaken.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, the web page [web.alert.io](http://web.alert.io) measures the hits on social media and search engines, which can be filtered individually and gives a flawless overview of the web representation of each city, based on quantitative numbers and search words.

Events and numbers of posts and followers on social media need to be considered too, as the number of followers can be an indicator for the popularity of the city, although Fashion Weeks will not be a particular part of the project, as not every city hosts a Fashion Week. But for the fashion value of a city, a closer look is needed, to clarify, if it is just the promotion of the city or the area itself, by promoting events like Fashion Shows, to give hot spots in a certain city some attention, or is it really the fashion and its representation on the Internet, that is focused on and supported. The relation between fashion and the city, is another point which is important.

To evaluate this, it is barely possible to get an objective overview, as there is nothing like a scheme for a good web representation, focusing on fashion metropolises. So, a big part of this project will definitely consist of subjective results, as a scoring table is created, with the help of an excel file, to evaluate the data and finally summarize the results and findings in an illustrated fashion map. The scoring is based on the value of



the different searching criteria and the source we got the information or data from. This scoring will consist of our personal weighting of the certain search words and how valuable the source is. E.g. the posts on Instagram under the name “London fashion” are more valuable than the hits you get on Facebook, when the same search word is entered, as pictures show a better representation of the relation between the city itself and fashion. Summarizing the creation of a scoring table, the hits, gathered on Google are first of all the most important influences, followed by Instagram, Facebook and the overall findings of web.alert.io, focusing on Social Media.

The reason for choosing this order of relevance or generally choosing these sources, is especially the reliability of the sources and the popularity. More and more information or photos are shared on Social Media, which is an inevitable point for the research, that is undertaken, and gives particularly Instagram a high significance according to our scoring table. Whereas pages like Pinterest or Tumblr are rather irrelevant, as it is impossible to search for any certain term or get a number of hits you gained.

## 5 Results of data collection and analysis

### 5.1 Procedure

A self-created index was used for the evaluation of the results, gathered during the research period. Focusing on Google, Instagram, Facebook and Twitter a new ranking of the Top 10 fashion hot spots, being presented on the Internet, followed. To ensure solid results, the Top 10 rankings of each category were multiplied with a personally created index, which should reflect the significance of each source.

As Instagram is the most valuable source, when it comes to the actual results, these quantitative numbers were multiplied by the factor 0,4. For example, London had the best representation value on Instagram and received a 10 (best mark, that can be achieved) for this result, which will be multiplied by 0,4 to enable a ranking, being comparable with the other categories. Followed by Google with an multiplied factor of 0,3 and Facebook with an multiplied factor of 0,2, where a subjective ranking according to the quality of posts, was established. Twitter only has an multiplied factor of 0,1, consisting only of short 160-character text messages and due to the lack of photos or videos, but these results were only possible to gain with the help of web.alert.io, coming back to this in the following paragraph. The technique was always equivalent to the, described in the example with Instagram.

In particular, an overall ranking arises from the specific rankings of each category. If there was nothing to find for a certain category among the Top 10 hot spots, it was substituted by rank 11 of the Google ranking. E.g. Tokyo does not appear in the Top 10 ranking of the Google hits, but was used in the “Instagram category” anyway, as Rome could not deliver any useful data, because it was ranked after Sao Paulo, in accordance to the Google hits.

# Instagram

10	4,0	London	631.656
9	3,6	New York	313.759
8	3,2	Paris	218.181
7	2,8	Tokyo	194.348
6	2,4	Moscow	129.828
5	2,0	Berlin	110.885
4	1,6	Delhi	38.873
3	1,2	Madrid	10.880
2	0,8	Sao Paulo	1.290
1	0,4	Mexico City	518

Table 3: Instagram Results

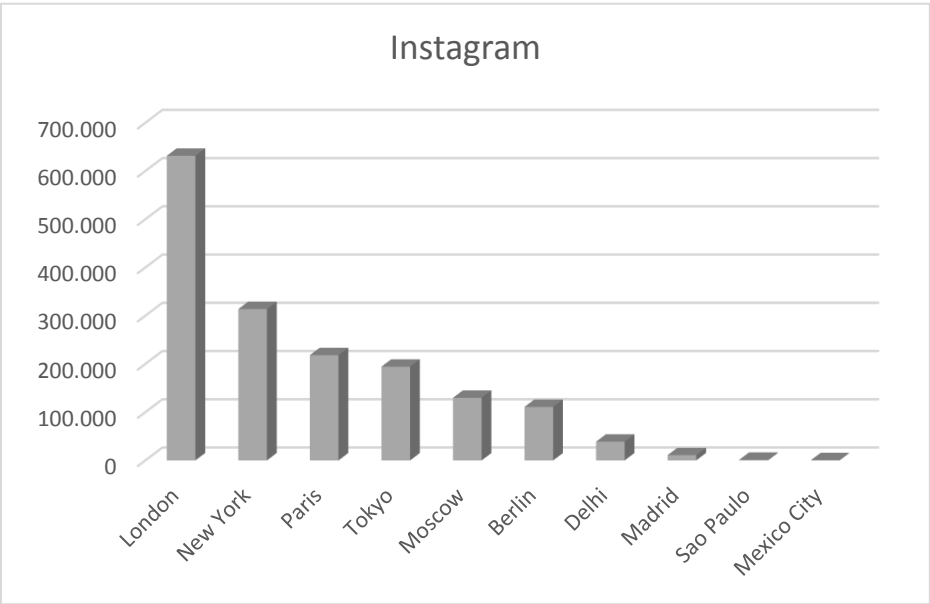


Figure 1: Instagram Results Chart

## Google

10	3,0	New York	653.500.000
9	2,7	London	526.100.000
8	2,4	Paris	405.700.000
7	2,1	Mexico City	166.050.000
6	1,8	Berlin	146.430.000
5	1,5	Madrid	95.330.000
4	1,2	Rome	63.730.000
3	0,9	Delhi	55.783.000
2	0,6	Moscow	42.770.000
1	0,3	Sao Paulo	34.297.000

Table 4: Google Results

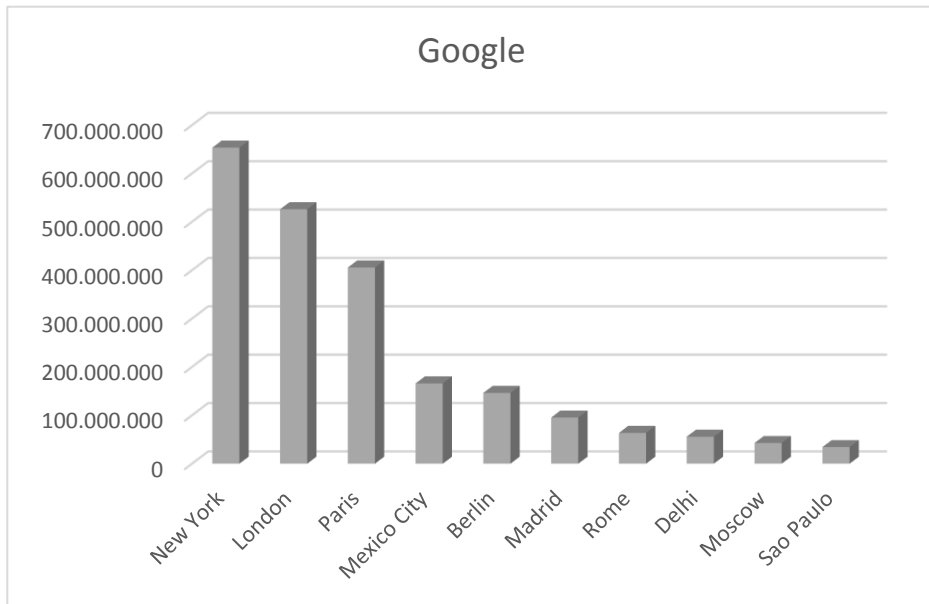


Figure 2: Google Results Chart

## Facebook

10	2,0	Tokyo
9	1,8	New York
8	1,6	London
7	1,4	Paris
6	1,2	Sao Paulo
5	1,0	Delhi
4	0,8	Berlin
3	0,6	Moscow
2	0,4	Madrid
1	0,2	Rome

**Table 5: Facebook Results**

As already mentioned, the Facebook ranking is based on subjective perceptions of a good web representation. E.g. how good the relation between fashion and the city itself is, if the page is convincing and attractive for “consumers” or even the general design. Therefore, only a subjective ranking, without any quantitative numbers, but also multiplied with the according factor 0,2 was created.

## Twitter - Alert.io

Alert.io is a Social-Media-Monitoring-Tool which can be used to search and filter the web for relevant search entries. Not only on the web itself, but also on different Social Media Channels like Instagram, Twitter, etc. In the research project it was mainly used for the quantitative number of twitter posts regarding to our Top 10 fashion cities, as there is no manual option in Twitter for getting quantitative hits. For each city a so-called alert was created, consisting of the relevant city name and one of the three optional keywords: fashion, style and textile. Alert.io then scans the web for matching hits and either displays them for reading or is creating a result sheet, which also can be set in comparison for all of our 10 nominated cities.

As text is not as relevant for fashion as images or videos, Twitter results are multiplied by the factor 0,1.

10	1,0	London	3056
9	0,9	Paris	1752
8	0,8	Moscow	755
7	0,7	Tokyo	693
6	0,6	Berlin	486
5	0,5	New York	315
4	0,4	Madrid	294
3	0,3	Delhi	157
2	0,2	Mexico City	12
1	0,1	Sao Paulo	2

Table 6: Twitter Results

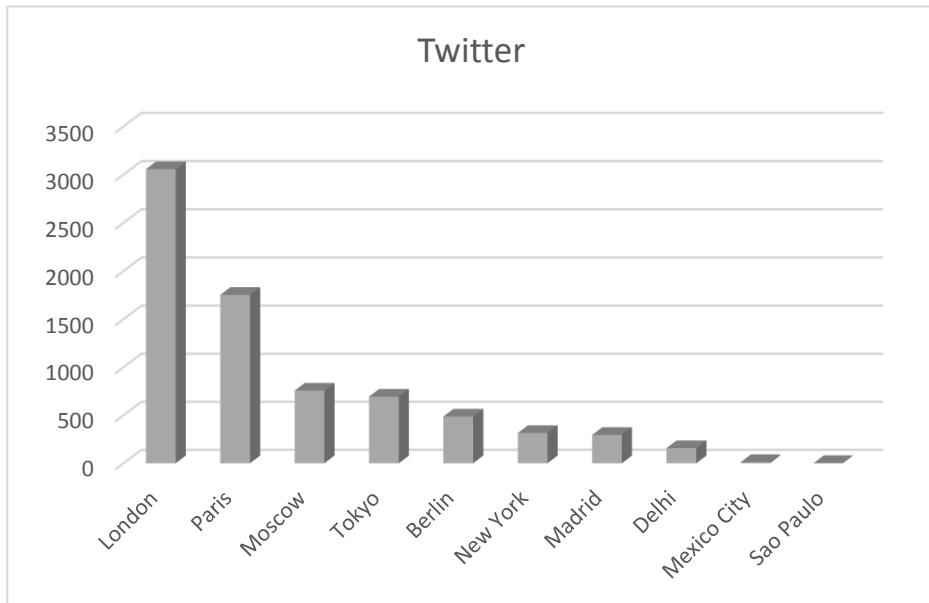


Figure 3: Twitter Results Chart

Adding up all the numerical values on the left side of the city names of the tables before, the final ranking comes out as followed.

1	9,3	London
2	8,9	New York
3	8,3	Paris
4	6,7	Tokyo
5	5,2	Moscow
6	4,0	Berlin
7	3,8	Delhi
8	3,5	Madrid
9	2,7	Mexico City
10	2,4	Sao Paulo

Table 7: Overall Results

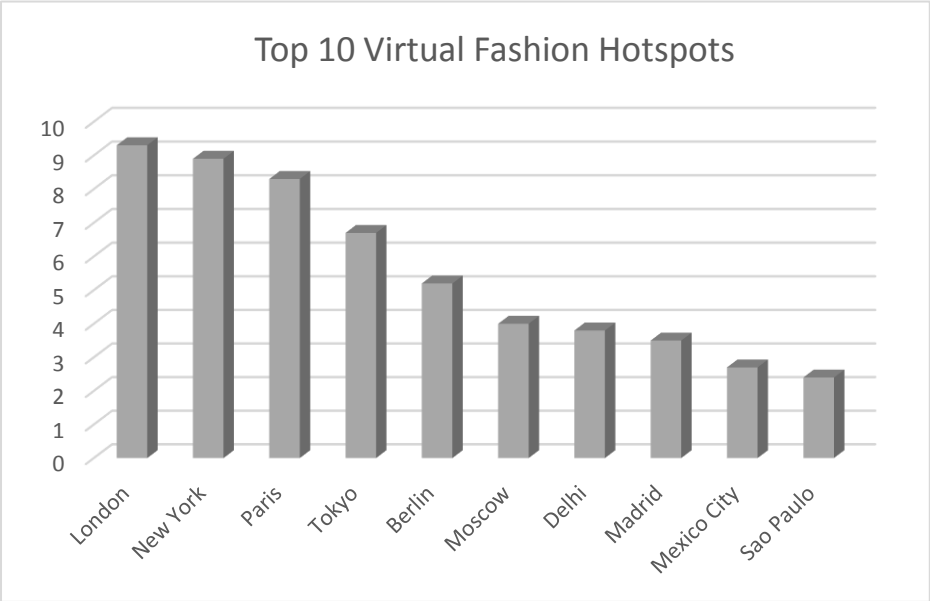


Figure 4: Overall Results Chart

To put everything in a nutshell and coming back to the very beginning of the paper, it is necessary to compare the Global Language Monitor ranking with the one, that developed throughout the research process. The reason for the differences and the effects among the two diverse rankings will be discussed in the next chapter, dealing with the relevance of the findings.

<b>Ranking</b>	<b>Global Language Monitor (2015)</b> worldwide fashion hot spots	<b>Research project (2016)</b> worldwide virtual fashion hot spots
<b>1</b>	Paris	London
<b>2</b>	New York	New York
<b>3</b>	London	Paris
<b>4</b>	Los Angeles	Tokyo
<b>5</b>	Rome	Moscow
<b>6</b>	Milan	Berlin
<b>7</b>	Barcelona	Delhi
<b>8</b>	Berlin	Madrid
<b>9</b>	Madrid	Mexico City
<b>10</b>	Tokyo	Sao Paulo
<b>16</b>	Sao Paulo	-
<b>22</b>	Moscow	-
<b>39</b>	Delhi	-
<b>53</b>	Mexico City	-

**Table 8: Comparison of Ranking**

## **5.2 Findings**

What is clear to say, is that the two tables are nearly superposable concerning the cities, being included among the first 10 hot spots, especially the most popular fashion metropolises. With four exceptions or differences, namely Moscow, Delhi, Sao Paulo and Mexico City, being included in the table of our research project, which are substituted by Los Angeles, Rome, Milan and Barcelona in the table of the trend forecasting agency Global Language Monitor. But tracking their table a little further, all four cities appear among the first 53 ranks. Sao Paulo is ranked on 16, followed by Moscow on



place 22. Delhi comes, with a small gap, on rank 39 and shortly after the top 50 fashion cities, Mexico City joins the ranking as the 53rd city.

Just a few words need to be taken note of about London on the first rank of the non-virtual ranking. Without any specific purpose, only with the focus of a “normal”, average Internet user, it was already conspicuous, how strong London is promoted and represented either on Google or on Instagram and the other Social Medias. The connection between fashion and the British capital is enormously well illustrated and seems very complementary. Though it is not surprising, that London achieved the best result in the ranking with 9,3 points of 10 possible ones.

Moreover, Paris, New York and Tokyo are not ranked among the first four fashion hot spots, without a reason. New York and Paris count as fashion metropolises for decades and live from the popularity of the Fashion Weeks, taking place every year. Fashion Week, a keyword, that was eliminated in the research project and might be one reason, that New York and Paris only appear on the second and third rank, as Paris and New York mainly concentrate on the promotion of the Fashion Week, in relation to their overall web representation as a fashion city. Although Tokyo was only on rank 11 concerning the Google results, Tokyo is represented, especially on Instagram, very creatively and this creativity does not only describe Tokyo itself, it also describes the Japanese style and way of life, which is tremendously apparent on the photos. Tokyo is even worldwide popular for their Cosplay quarter, called Harajuku, where their very own style is represented and lived, which is on the other hand of course, also present on the Internet. Another main point, why Tokyo is so well represented on the Internet, is the affinity of the urban Asian population to the digital world.

These alterations between the two rankings, were already analyzed in Jess Berry’s article, about “Street-Style: Fashion photography, weblogs and the urban Image”, where she is not directly concerned about the differences between the virtual and non-virtual fashion world, but she notices, that “the traditional fashion cities have remained dominant locations within global fashion discourse emergent fashion cities such as Shanghai, Moscow and Jaipur threaten to destabilize the status of the elite fashion capitals.” (Berry, 2010) This statement fits perfectly to the observations, related to the comparison of the virtual and non-virtual ranking of fashion cities, and can be used as one option of explanations of the results.

### **Comment to Reutlingen as a “Fashion City”**

At the first stage of the research process, Reutlingen was included among the first 35 cities, being focused on, after nominating the top 10 cities, according to the top 10 Google results. Of course, Reutlingen does not count to the biggest 35 cities, but as fashion students of the Reutlingen University, it was interesting to see, how Reutlingen performs. Due to the insufficient hits on Google, Reutlingen was no longer relevant for further actions. Even if you search for Reutlingen plus the necessary key words: fashion, style and textile, hardly any result is delivered neither on Instagram, nor on Facebook and twitter.

## **6 Research Limitations**

The results found in this research may be used with care as they are very subjective. The index used for the evaluation of data, is based on self-determined multipliers, which is very subjective too. The multiplication factors are based on personal preference rather than analyses. Search results found on Google, Instagram and Twitter can be counted on a quantitative basis, but there is still no qualitative evaluation of the content. There has been no qualitative insight on the shared images or texts if they are relevant or in any qualitative order. An index, solely based on the number of search results on different platforms, may not be an indication how qualitative well the city is represented in the web.

Further research may include a more objective based index. The index or the factors should not be created solely by subjective or personal perceptions. For example, the quantitative results found could be dissected even more. Samples of texts and images from each Social Media platform could be used in a survey to be shown to consumers. Those customers could then classify or qualify the content, if they think that they belong to one of the keywords - fashion, style, textile - or not. Or if they represent the city in any forms of fashion. Also the other way round could be thought of, that consumers get presented different images or other forms of media, and they should decide which city they belong to.

Other relevant Social-Media-Tools like Snapchat, YouTube, Pinterest should also be investigated even furthermore, in forms of relevance and more deeply looked into the content.

Beside the subjectivity issue, and as already mentioned in the chapter of the literature review, a huge difficulty was the lack of appropriate and suitable literature, which somehow lead to the subjectivity. The topic of the research project is definitely very unexperienced and does not provide a lot of historical data or even comparable work or projects, that could have been used or taken into consideration, when first ideas were transcribed, which was the reason to rely on our own personal findings.

## **7 Discussion of relevance**

Contrary to the existing offline fashion cities the new evolving virtual or online fashion cities are not underlying any form of approval of traditional fashion press. It is technically possible for every, howsoever small, city to become a Top 10 online fashion city. There is no regulation, to be listed on Google, upload pictures on Instagram or post news on Twitter. But there are still limitations due to the size of a country, city or area and the number of its inhabitants, which share content online, as most of the new fashion cities are more likely to be bigger ones, due to their more powerful acting on the web, caused by the size or number of inhabitants, as just mentioned. There is a remarkable difference in the Top 10 order from Global Language Monitor and the order created within this research project. Moscow (Russia), Delhi (India), Mexico City (Mexico) and Sao Paulo (Brazil) have been added to the list of virtual fashion capitals. Although they are already listed 30 years ago on John Friedmann's list of world cities as national financial centers. Up to now these cities are for sure not well-known or worldwide famous for their specific fashion style. But they do play a bigger part in the online representance than Los Angeles, Rome, Milan or Barcelona. But what are the reasons for these results? Why is Milan not ranked among the first top 10 fashion virtual fashion cities, when it is one of the most popular fashion destinations?

Because fashion is changing all the time, from season to season and year to year, as well as the focus of fashion is changing. So far, the traditional fashion press had their established order of fashion cities and no one called it into question. It was written in stone. The Internet nevertheless opened up the possibility to emerge from this inveterate order. Now it is possible for the users of Social Media, viz. the consumers of fashion, to select from a wide variety of available cities and representations. They can choose to "visit" whichever city they want and draw inspiration from cities all over the world. They are no longer settled on a fixed set of media presented by the press, but

are rather open to impressions from all over the world. Even margin countries or cities such as Moscow (Russia), Delhi (India) or Mexico City and Sao Paulo (South America) are now presented to the whole world. Thus, far these were not as much visible due to different politics or cultural backgrounds. Even though they all have their own variety of style with a very different backdrop. Consumers can now freely choose whichever city and style they like, and they do not even have to bother, if it is from a recognized fashion city or from an upcoming evolving fashion city. One could even assume, it is no longer relevant if a style comes from a fashion city, but it is more relevant that the majority of consumers likes it, to enable the possibility to become a new trend. Trends can start from different places, different cities, solely based on shared content online. Fashion Cities tend to conglomerate more and more, and style is independent of a specific city or region. The representation is no longer up to a restricted amount of press people, but rather open up to all people which are fashion interested and tend to share their style, impressions and representation of their city online. Which would be another interesting fact: The suppliers and consumers of content are nearly the same group of people, what makes the virtual development much easier than a non- virtual change. Sure, there will be more consumers watching and reading then people uploading new content into the system. But still, the kind of information, being provided, has changed. No longer the press is responsible for the delivery of new fashion trends or the quitting of existing ones. It is up to the consumers themselves what they find online, if they like it or not, and if they still like it after some time had passed. It could be assumed, that a new style from South America, India or Russia might be more interesting and fulfilling for customers. Therefore such cities, like Moscow, Delhi, Mexico City and Sao Paulo retrieved a better rating than “old fashion” cities like Los Angeles, Rome, Milan and Barcelona.

## **8 Conclusion**

The topic covering the whole research project “the web representation of international fashion hot spots” was kind of abstract at first, concerning the appropriate literature and freedom of design. What sorts of data need to be collected, reaching the final goal to create an individual and creative fashion map.

As soon as the framework was done, the project received a definite form, with the ability to show the differences between the virtual and non-virtual fashion hot spots

ranking. The aim was not only to show the differences among these two kinds of rankings, but also the vast distribution of these fashion metropolises around the globe and especially the agglomeration in certain regions or areas.

The research process itself opened up totally different views on the topic, how fashion hot spots represent their self in the web and how differently a city markets itself, which means the focus they put on diverse things or events, to sting out from the others. Dealing with some struggles at the beginning or the first ideas that turned out to be not really handy, a well representable project turned out. It enriches our personal abilities concerning branch specific know-how, as well as the knowledge of creating and writing such a research paper with all included processes.

As already mentioned, freedom of design, was a tremendously striking point, when it comes to reliability and validity of the included and presented information in this research paper. On the one hand, the freedom and possibility were provided to act out very individually, which was also necessary and inevitable to transfer all the theoretical information into an illustrated fashion map at the end. But on the other hand, at the beginning, in the actual research process, the collection and analysis of the data, as well as the evaluation of the gathered data, it was hard to remain merely objective, as a creative illustration, what a web page surely is, always depends on subjective perceptions, which could not be ignored.

Nevertheless, the results are based on 75% objective quantitative results, as well as on 25% subjective qualitative results, which seemed to be a good mixture, to achieve a flawless presentation of the issue and overall, enabled a satisfying clarification of the introductive investigation.

Focusing on the main findings of the research, it is obvious to notice, that there are differences between the non- virtual and virtual fashion world. But first of all, the common facts need to be discussed, as mainly the popular fashion metropolis or hot spots conform in both rankings (compare Table 8). Sometimes the ranking differs, but concentrating only on the included cities among the first 10, it is conspicuous, that cities, like New York or Paris appear in both rankings. This issue is based on a long tradition of the metropolis, according to fashion, Haute Couture or the famous Fashion Week. A lot of well- known fashion companies settled in these cities, which is definitely a reason of being as popular as possible.

Reasons for the differences can be explained as followed: The pace of the Internet goes so much faster than the pace of life or the way things change in the non- virtual world, which can be seen as a motive for upcoming cities like Sao Paulo, Moscow or Tokyo. As these cities, do have the potential to compete with the ancient, traditional fashion capitals, but so far, they only reached their breakthrough on the Internet, due to the further development of the virtual fashion world.

In conclusion, the whole research project can be seen as a forecast for the changes, according to the ranking of fashion hot spots in the non-virtual world. As the virtual fashion world is always one step further and a good web representation reflects the status of development of certain cities. Moreover, it is necessary to take a close look at the web representation of the fashion capitals, which can only function properly, when focusing on subjective, as well as objective findings.

The results and findings of this research paper are based on Google, the Social Medias: Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, which could be expanded in further or future actions. Pinterest and Tumblr show a perfect connection between the city itself and the fashion aspect, being concentrated on, in order of this research project. In one of the past chapters, the pitfalls of media like Tumblr, Pinterest and Snapchat were explained, as there can neither be entered certain search terms, nor be delivered any numerical values of posts or likes. But if the process would be modified somehow, other types of social media might be possible to be included in upcoming projects.

Fashion has a long tradition, as it was displayed in the chapter of the literature review and of course shapes the sense of comprehension in concern of what a fashion city is, among the population. Every person you would ask, would definitely give you the same answer, when you are asking for the three most well- known fashion cities: New York- London- Paris. This is not astonishing, as we humans adhere to common habits or in this case to traditions. Traditions that were formed couple of decades ago, but which are still present in every ones' mind. Traditions that form our non- virtual, right now existing world of fashion. Which includes the trade of fashion, the styles of fashion and the way it is presented. When it comes to the presentation of fashion, the bridge to the research topic can be built again, as the web shows how fashion is presented virtually. A presentation, which is common for us in the time of virtuality, but differs a lot from the presentation decades ago. In the 17th century clothes were presented in the surroundings of your cities, but nowadays, with the help of the Internet,

the whole world can be reached and even the smallest village in Germany can be informed about Indian fashion trends for example.

This phenomenon, of how fast and how much of any kind of information can be accessed on the Internet, is extremely useful for companies, that are supposed to expand or open up new stores in undiscovered fashion metropolises. Thus, the ranking, that was created during the research process, in order to value the web representation of a city, is tremendously convenient and progressing, as the new or rather evolving fashion cities are firstly named on the Internet. E.g. Outletcity Metzingen, a quite regional example and definitely not a fashion metropolis, but anyway popular all over Germany and international, mainly European clients run into the designer stores every day. Now how can such a little town develop so rapidly and attract masses of customers all over the world? Probably because it was adverted and promoted on the Internet as a “must-go”- location in the South of Germany. Looking back on Metzingen 10 years ago, there were a couple of shops, situated around the big Hugo Boss complex, but nowadays we can find a whole shopping city in Metzingen, as it is attractive for retailers to be situated here. Generally, what is important to say, if fashion companies, especially big and international well- known ones, want to remain in the big fashion business and compete with other fashion companies, they should or even have to focus on the cities, being included in the newly introduced virtual fashion hot spot ranking, as these are the non- virtual fashion hot spots of tomorrow, whose doors are already opened on the Internet for first inspirations.

As an appeal at the very end, the world of fashion is such a vast and fast developing department and can change promptly, especially propelled by the running pace of the Internet, which is the explanation of the modification of the current results of this project. Thus, it can be important to track these findings also in the future and find out completely new virtual fashion hot spots, that might be part of the non- virtual ranking a couple of years or maybe decades later. Ending up, with Jess Berry’s quote once more: “the traditional fashion cities have remained dominant locations within global fashion discourse emergent fashion cities such as Shanghai, Moscow and Jaipur threaten to destabilize the status of the elite fashion capitals.” (Berry, 2010)

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