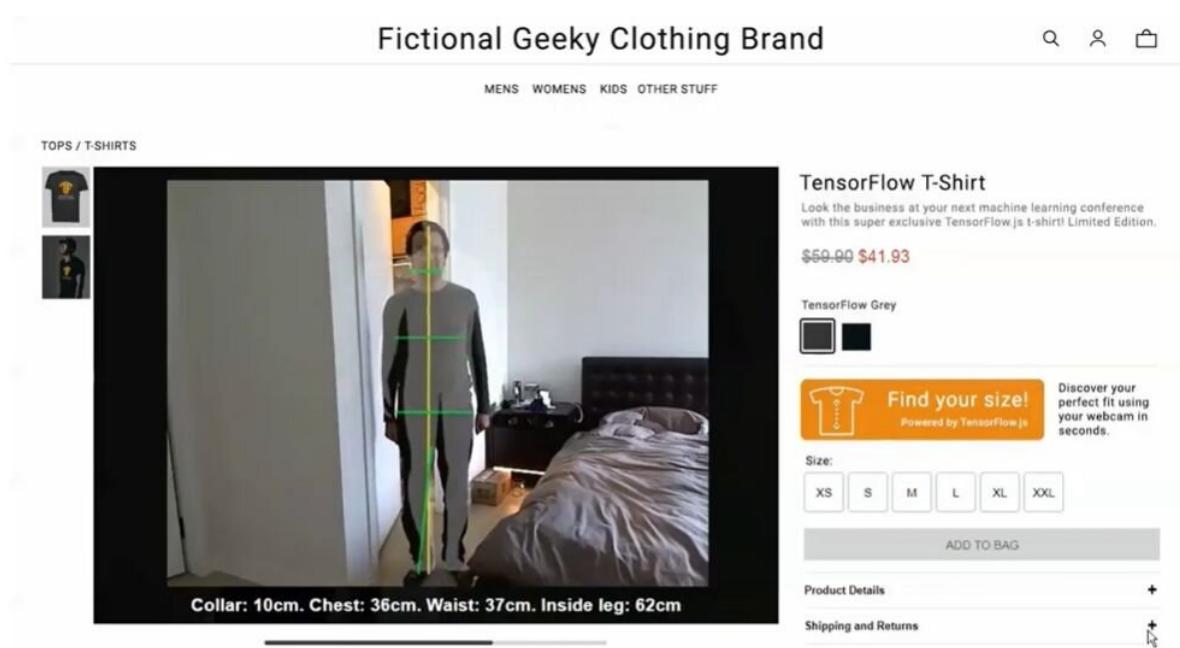


# A clothing measurement app for the age of social distancing

March 25 2020, by Peter Grad



Our world has been shaken by a deadly microscopic virus that has forced us to change the routines of our lives in major ways, routines that may never completely return to normal.

The term "[social distancing](#)" was practically unheard of 10 days ago, but now millions of home-ridden schoolchildren, out-of-work adults and

especially vulnerable homebound older citizens are daily reciting and living each moment with a mantra the pop group Police echoed in their 40-year-old hit "Don't Stand So Close to Me."

Along with the coronavirus' lethal potential are other serious repercussions such as unemployment, overstressed hospital facilities, a volatile and shrinking [stock market](#) and overtaxed parents who must contend with income interruption and temporary home-schooling for their children and special care for their aging parents.

There are lesser problems that may be classified as minor nuisances, such as being unable to shop in person for everyday items such as clothing.

Which brings us to an interesting new app created by a senior developer advocate specializing in machine intelligence at Google. Web engineer Jason Mayes, who recently unveiled an app that renders people invisible while live streaming video, released a prototype app Monday that should take some of the sting out of being unable to try on clothes at your local apparel shop.

Sporting a clunky name—Real-time clothing size body measurement estimator—the app is nevertheless a clever and simple means of grabbing an individual's image and calculating clothing specs such as chest size, waist and inseam. The user needs only to input height size and then stand in front of the webcam for a quick body scan. In an instant, the program provides basic measurements required for shirts, pants or a dress.

In a demonstration video produced by Mayes, the estimator correctly displayed measures for his chest and waist, and was off by just one centimeter on the inseam.

"I feel that for people like me who are not massive fans of shopping for clothing and never know their sizes, it can help speed things up," Mayes told TechXPlore Tuesday. He noted that his system, if eventually widely adopted, would avoid the inevitable problems consumers have when offered sizes with only limited options such as small, medium or large, or when dealing with brands whose size ratings differ from other brands.

"Every brand typically uses slightly different measurements," he said, "which means in one size, I am a small, and in others, I am a medium. Using a program that ensures precise standards of measurement would help ensure a comfortable fit most of the time."

He suggested it can provide a "super-easy" means to select correct clothing sizes without having to touch the clothes themselves, "especially given that nobody wants to touch anything these days."

One can envision a day when specific pieces of clothing can be accurately overlaid and "fitted" onto the webcam image of customers so they can see in 3-D how they'll look.

For now, fashion may not be foremost on anyone's mind. But since we still want to look good, even if our friends aren't around to see it, it's nice to know shopping for clothes with the measurement estimator will make the process easier—and, for the time being, a lot safer.

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