

*"The new indexing times are just unbelievable - we are currently running at two minutes instead of ten."*

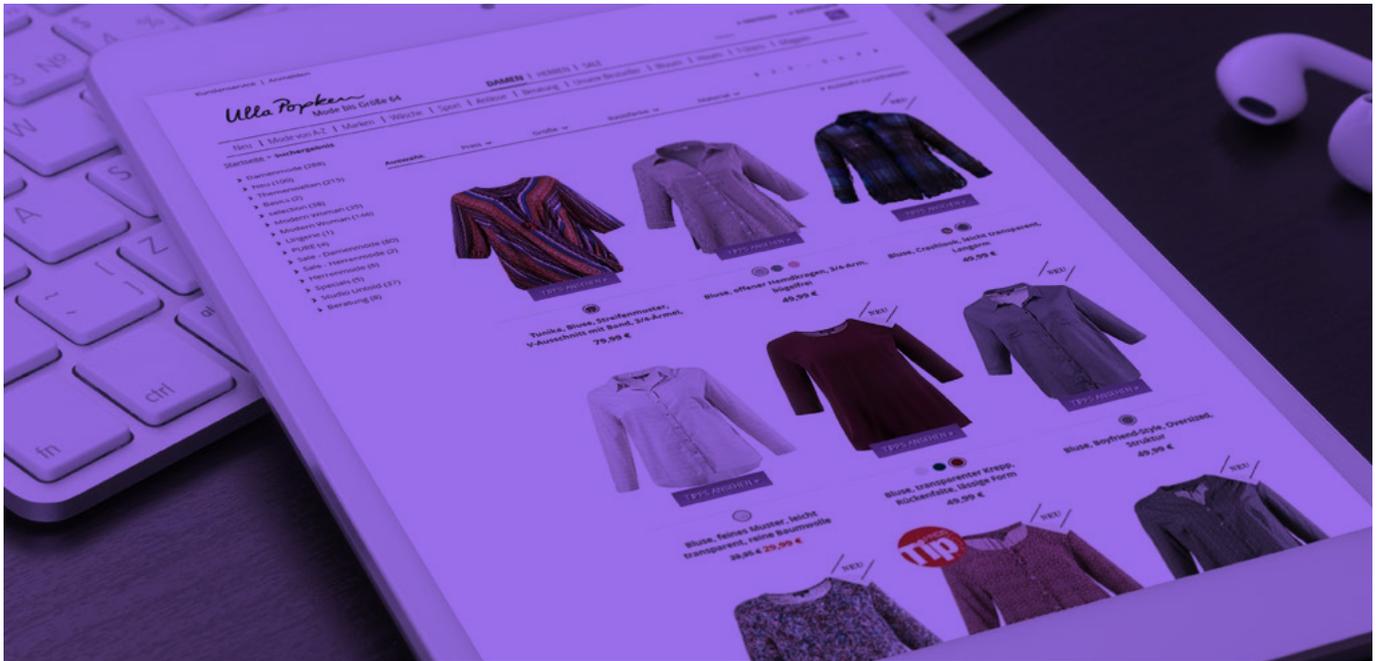
**Hauke Wessels**

*Head of Online Shop Development*

# Popken Fashion Group switches 12 online shops to FactFinder

As an omnichannel player, the Popken Fashion Group sells the fashion range of its four own brands (Ulla Popken, GINA LAURA, Studio Untold and JP1880) in hundreds of physical stores internationally and increasingly via the Internet. The group's eCommerce platform was previously supported by another search solution but, due to the rapid growth of the Popken Fashion Group, reached its performance capacity. Following comparative tests, a newer, more powerful solution was quickly found: FactFinder has been providing the group's 12 online shops with better search results and a drastic reduction in indexing time ever since.





*The Popken Fashion Group places great importance in automation, ranking, and personalization in order to offer high user-friendliness.*

### **The previous solution was unscalable**

The notion that the search function is the heart of any online shop was something that was very clear to the Ulla Popken team right from the start. Initially, they chose to go with a well-known solution, which at first fulfilled its purpose. What no one could have guessed at the time, however, was that this search solution would not be able to scale to the extent that corresponded to the growth of the Popken Fashion Group. "We had reached a dead end with our old search solution and wanted out of it," recalls Hauke Wessels, Team Leader of Online Shop Development at the Popken Fashion Group in Rastede, Germany.

Today the fashion group operates 12 online shops offered in five languages and representing two brands. "Of course, it used to be less, but the problem was that with each new client we added over the years, the running times of the old search solution drastically increased - both in terms of data export and indexing times." For a while the group did its best to get by despite of these difficulties. "But when we wanted to start our U.S. shop, we had reached a point where we knew it couldn't go on like this." Therefore the decision to implement a new search solution was made.

### **The new search function should enable quicker updates**

At first, the group hadn't considered FactFinder, as Wessels explains, "We originally wanted to go with Solr as our new search solution. That was as good as decided. But when you're replacing a component as important as search, you look at everything very carefully. We let Hybris show us the Solr search and also looked at other solutions available on the market. We even had another look at our old search provider, to check the new search concept with it. Then, last summer, we called the FactFinder team in - which proved to be a very enjoyable visit."

The Popken Fashion Group quickly carried out a benefit analysis and drew up a catalog of requirements. "It was very important for us to have the ability to apply updates quickly." In addition, they wanted to move away from the SKU (Stock Keeping Unit) level as it doesn't make much sense for a search tool. "We now wanted to export and index the data differently." But that's not all - Wessels and his team had an even larger goal in mind. "With the new solution, we wanted to keep the time needed for indexing the entire database for all countries and all clients to under one hour. That was our clear objective." Furthermore, they wanted to be well positioned in the areas of automation, ranking and personalization. "If

we are already investing in a new search, then it should also be suitable for the years ahead and, unlike our old solution, also be able to scale,” says Wessels.

## FactFinder impresses with its speed and learning capabilities

In September of 2015, the Popken Fashion Group took part in the ‘Proof of Concept’ with FactFinder. “The clear concept and simplicity of the technology convinced me immediately,” says Wessels, adding that the department found FactFinder’s learning abilities and automation to be very appealing features. “The search does not use any clusters, which is good, and FactFinder reads the index very quickly. The search server is ready immediately. In respect to this, what we know from other suppliers is clearly not as strong.”

Another reason for choosing the market leader in search and navigation was the guaranteed indexing time of no more than ten minutes. “FactFinder was the only vendor with the courage to make this claim. That was the key argument for us, because it would keep us well below our one hour limit.” FactFinder had also been given preference over its competitors because the fashion group recognized the technological advantage of this search solution.

## Steady performance and new merchandising possibilities

Since May 2016, FactFinder has been live in all the online shops of the Popken Fashion Group. “As far as the general server load is concerned, we’ve gotten a whole lot better thanks to FactFinder on account of having redesigned the category pages.” The subject of product ranking has now also taken on greater significance within the Popken Fashion Group. “Previously it ran through our PIM system, which was historically grown. The most recent article from the catalog had to be at the top,” explains Wessels. “That used to be important. But today we can rank products automatically based on customer reviews, item availability and sales, which is an enormous advantage. It supports conversion by displaying relevant products higher up in the result list. Since the integration of FactFinder, the search function has been more actively used.”

### 1) SKU

An SKU (Stock Keeping Unit) is an identifier such as a number or a code for an individual product within a retailer’s product range.

### 2) Cluster

When clusters are formed, the search indexes are distributed among several nodes. This is intended to improve performance at peak load, but makes operation much more complex.

## “It couldn’t have gone better.”

What Wessels is most pleased with is that his bold expectations for the performance and speed of the search were surpassed, or to be more precise, cut down. “The new indexing times are just unbelievable - we are currently running at two minutes instead of ten.” Wessels is also enthusiastic about FactFinder in other respects. “We like the technology because it performs great but at the same time has been kept as simple as possible. Even the server operation is easy to manage. We have set up four servers for search results alone, but presumably just one server would be sufficient. We are really delighted with the performance.”

As for the FactFinder team, Wessel only has words of praise for the project process and successful cooperation with the Popken Fashion Group. “It couldn’t have gone better. The go-live process was absolutely seamless, which was fantastic.” Wessels goes on to tell us about the transition experience to FactFinder. He says, “The day after going live, I got to the office really early to enjoy the calm before the storm that I was anticipating. Even my colleague from the technical department arrived an hour early because he wanted to be prepared for the worst-case scenario. And nothing happened - FactFinder ran like clockwork right from the start.”

## About FactFinder

FactFinder is the European leader in eCommerce product discovery and search. We help over 2,000 online shops worldwide like MyTheresa, Intersport, OBI, Stihl and Elkjøp Nordic increase revenue by 20-33% with outstanding shopping experiences.

By combining human and artificial intelligence, we understand every shopper's intent from the first click. We call that authentic intelligence. Smarter algorithms and human expertise create a union that will always give a competitive edge.

Every day millions of B2C and B2B shoppers find what they are looking for with FactFinder – fast, personalized and with joy.



## Contact us

+44 845 561 0250

[info@fact-finder.com](mailto:info@fact-finder.com)

[www.fact-finder.com](http://www.fact-finder.com)

Our eCommerce experts can offer support in multiple languages.

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