



**Business Models for Competitive Success in the United States Textile Industry:  
A Tale of International High Fashion Gone Awry**

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**ABSTRACT**

*French law protects fashion designs by copyright, whereas the United States copyright law offers no similar protection. The policies of these laws are brought into direct conflict when Viewfinder, a Delaware corporation, posts images from a French fashion show on an internet site hosted in the United States. French designers initially sue in France to enforce their rights, demanding that the photos be removed and that fines be imposed. This case chronicles the conflict between French designers and a United States website, highlights competing values, policies, and laws, and asks critical questions about how technology affects the fashion industry and its international environment.*

*Keywords: Copyright, fashion industry, French design, business models*

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Introduction

This case involves international fashion designers, photographers, and websites. The internet brings these entities together, and unfortunately stirs controversy amongst the disparate groups over the photographs of fashion designs posted on internet sites. The resolution of this copying dispute involves courts from Paris and New York, and ultimately requires consideration of the nature of fashion, technology law and public policy. A brief background of the fashion industry and the parties involved provides information relevant to the conflicting

values that must be balanced, followed by a description of the facts and the dispute.

History of the French Fashion Industry

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, French dressmakers, using luxurious, expensive fabrics, designed clothing for their aristocratic clients. France became the center of production for these textiles and thus the center of fashion for the aristocracy. Later, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, dressmakers were transformed from artisans working for their individual clients, to artists, whose reputation came, not from the clients for whom they worked, but from