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Reformation Debuts Denim with Traceability Woven Into Its Fibers

By Kate Nishimura

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Join us March 24 at 11 am EST for the Trust Through Traceability webinar to learn the benefits and limitations of certifications and standards and how the latest innovations aim to verify product provenance and protect brands in today's callout culture.

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Traceability technology is having an undeniable moment in the fashion industry, as savvy shoppers are increasingly demanding accountability from the brands they love. It's not enough for labels to proclaim that they're sustainable—consumers are now asking for the receipts.

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Los Angeles-based label Reformation built its business around the idea of reducing waste and promoting conscious consumption. It did so first through the use of deadstock fabrics, then through myriad material innovations and revisions to its globalized supply chain. These efforts over the course of 12 years have

culminated in a claim of carbon neutrality, along with a current goal of total traceability across its supply chain and climate positivity by 2025.

Now, the brand known for its elevated basics and wedding-ready frocks is upgrading its denim selection with a new collection featuring FibreTrace, a technology that embeds traceable, scannable pigments directly into the fabric of its jeans. With a simple swipe on their smartphones, shoppers can track a garment's entire lifecycle, with each audit—from the cotton farm, to production, to the finishing stages—securely recorded on the virtual blockchain.

According to Reformation, the project was born of a desire to provide more visibility into its supply chain, and specifically, its rigorously maintained fiber and production standards. The company is the first in the U.S. to adopt FibreTrace, which will be used on fabric made with Good Earth Cotton from the world's first climate-positive farm in Australia. The farm's operations absorb more carbon than is released into the atmosphere, therefore facilitating a net reduction in carbon emissions, it said.

"We're really excited about this Reformation x FibreTrace denim collection, as it's our inaugural use of this traceability technology—and the first time it will be available to consumers globally," Kathleen Talbot, Reformation's chief sustainability officer and vice president of operations, told Rivet. Calling the tech "a unique solution for extending a level of deep and powerful visibility into how our products are made," Talbot said Reformation is already looking to incorporate it into other fabrics and future collections.

Each denim product made using FibreTrace is tagged with a scannable QR code, Talbot added, allowing consumers to access their denim's pedigree with their fingertips. "This enables customers to view the denim's entire lifecycle from fiber to production to finished garment, to when they finally take their jeans home," she said. The digital ledger "really goes back to the start, right down to the farm where the cotton bale was harvested," she added.

FibreTrace founder Danielle Stratham said the system has useful applications for both brands and consumers. "For brands, the system acts as a verifier of the digital chain of custody ensuring they can communicate with their customers

with confidence," she said, while "for customers, Fibretrace allows true insight into the journey and the environmental impact of their products."

The technology, which is applicable to both man-made and natural fibers, and stands up to wear and tear as well as recycling, holds "definitive information for transactional records" within its luminescent pigment. Those invisible dyes are embedded into raw fibers at "minute quantities," with no impact on the ultimate look or feel of a garment, Stratham

said. As the item moves through the supply chain, digital Bluetooth scanning devices take on information about its location, qualities, factory certifications and more.

"The Fibretrace system allows the brand and its supply chain to be connected in real-time with live connection right through to reuse and recycle, creating irrefutable storytelling for consumers," she added.

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