



Success Story

Visual-AI Helps GearLaunch Increase Legal Compliance & Revenues

With special thanks to Jared Hunsaker,
General Counsel and VP of Operations,
GearLaunch

The Visual-AI People.



About VISUA

We deliver best-in-class enterprise Visual-AI for brand protection, authentication, monitoring, and promotion.

Our Visual-AI can help 'print-on-demand' companies eliminate the risk of lawsuits from infringing on copyright and trademark protected content.

Highlights

CHALLENGES

GearLaunch wanted to:

- ▶ Reduce the risk of intellectual property infringement caused by sellers using potentially protected content.
- ▶ Reduce the cost of manual oversight and intervention.

SOLUTION

VISUA delivered:

- ▶ Advanced Visual-AI platform.
- ▶ Combined brand detection and image matching.
- ▶ Tailored the solution to meet specific GearLaunch requirements.

OUTCOME

Since implementation:

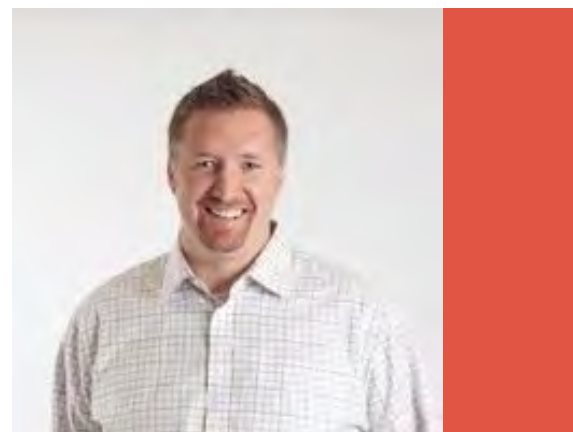
- ▶ Legal compliance increased.
- ▶ Revenues increased.
- ▶ DMCA notices handled quickly and with ease.
- ▶ Major savings in overheads.
- ▶ Engagement with brand protection enforcement now friendly and collegiate.

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“When we tell lawyers or brand’s legal teams about VISUA, it gives them reassurance that we do take brand protection seriously.”

Jared Hunsaker

VP of Operations,  GEARLAUNCH



Who is GearLaunch?

GearLaunch is one of the world’s leading print-on-demand marketplaces, enabling a variety of sellers, from individuals to organizations and non-profits, to upload or create their designs and sell them on a wide range of merchandise.

GearLaunch provides the infrastructure, the products, and the logistics. The sellers simply provide the creativity and attract buyers. It’s a symbiotic relationship that has seen GearLaunch enjoy significant growth in a few short years and make it a major player on the global stage.

GearLaunch stands out because they give the seller the opportunity to completely own their selling space, rather than sharing it with other creators. Significantly, they also provide support to the creators and organisations using their platform, often advising them on things they can do to drive increased sales of their product designs, driving success for all involved.

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What challenges did GearLaunch have?

Most GearLaunch sellers have their own unique content. It's often their own brand or unique creative designs they have developed. In other cases, it's clever content that leans on the themes of popular movies or brands without infringing on copyright or trademarks.

Unfortunately, GearLaunch discovered that for some sellers, the lure of making 'easy' money by selling merch that potentially infringed on a movie's, artist's or other protected imagery was too great. They saw a growing number of sellers uploading content that they did not have the rights to produce.

Of course, sellers need to agree to terms and conditions that prohibit the use of trademark or copyright protected designs or slogans. However, a minority of sellers will ignore the legal text in the belief that:

- 1) Their misuse of the protected content will probably go unnoticed.
- 2) Even if it does get noticed, the worst that will happen is that it will be taken down...eventually.

The problem for GearLaunch was that it created several fundamental challenges to their business:

- 1) How vulnerable this made them to potential liability.
- 2) The cost of legal compliance (both logistical and punitive).
- 3) The increasing number of DMCA takedown requests they were having to deal with.
- 4) The increasing pressure on resources to detect potential infringing content and liaise with the sellers to have it removed.

While their Trust and Safety team did all they could to manage this manually, as the company grew globally it became increasingly difficult to keep up with the scale of the task. This left them more exposed to potential legal liabilities, and their teams overloaded.

It is impossible for a team of any size to prevent this from happening without the support of Visual-AI technology: ***"If you're a human", explains Jared, "and you've never seen these images before, you would have no clue they were protected designs. It could be some specific race car brand in Italy that's super popular if you're into race cars, but you would have no clue if you weren't."***

Because of increased intellectual property scrutiny they soon realised they needed to find a permanent and effective automated solution.

The VISUA Solution

Following a thorough testing and implementation phase, the final solution provided an automated process for scanning all uploaded content against a database of brand logos and specific images. This flags any content which possibly infringes another's intellectual property, so it can be checked by the Trust & Safety team. This reduced manual intervention from hundreds of images per week to only a handful.

The team could also flag content that they believe might become problematic. For instance, as TV shows like *Stranger Things* or *The Mandalorian* grew in popularity, the team could gather the most popular imagery and upload it, thereby pre-empting possible issues before they happened.

Most importantly, was the ability to catch close-matches, allowing varying degrees of potential infringements to be caught with minimal intervention.



“What I love the most about VISUA’s Visual-AI solution: it's innovative, it works, and it's flexible. Meaning, the team is able to adapt the technology to meet our needs, so if new issues arise in our business, we know they will help us find solutions.”

Jared Hunsaker

General Counsel and VP of Operations,
GearLaunch

How GearLaunch uses VISUA's Visual-AI

- ▶ Uploads protected imagery to the VISUA platform library.
- ▶ Scans all uploaded content against the protected imagery in the VISUA platform library.
- ▶ VISUA identifies any infringing or possibly infringing use of protected content and notifies the Trust and Safety team.
- ▶ Where a confirmed breach is detected, the seller is contacted to request a license for the use of the imagery.
- ▶ Where a possible breach is detected, the Trust and Safety team review it. If they confirm it as a potential infringement, they contact the seller to determine if they have a legal license to sell the copyrighted design.
- ▶ In either case, if no copyright or trademark license is produced, the design with the infringing content is removed.





“We worked with the VISUA team to refine what was on offer to fit our business model and needs. They’ve been responsive and very helpful in getting us to a place where we feel comfortable.”

Flexibility was key

GearLaunch had the option of using off-the-shelf AI technologies from well-known providers. But they also realised that this was not a straightforward use case.

“For example,” begins Jared, **“with high school sports, some of them may be happy for their logo to be used because it’s good for publicity, or they may be uploading it themselves, but some of their logos might be similar to NFL, NBA or College teams. We needed to be able to automatically flag it to our Trust & Safety team who could then check if the design is an actual infringement or a legitimate use.”**

This required some tweaking of the system to provide the level of granular detection required. Achieving this with an off-the-shelf solution is at best extremely difficult and at worst, simply not possible. VISUA’s size and

dedication to a hands-on approach to client relationships meant that the technology could be adjusted to match GearLaunch’s needs.

Increasing legal compliance and avoiding litigation by building trust

Jared pointed out that one of the secrets to legal compliance is to build trust with brands, content owners, and their legal teams.

By using VISUA to automate the infringement detection process, GearLaunch has been able to quickly react to, and pre-empt, infringements. This builds friendly and collegiate relationships with legal teams. This favourable relationship means that future engagements with lawyers representing brands and creators are less contentious. As Jared said, **“they now call us, not to complain, but to ask to add new imagery to our database, which means they are doing the work of pre-empting infringements for us.”**

An example of a time when VISUA helped GearLaunch to build trust in this way is when a famous comedian’s legal team reached out to them. The comedian’s work had been illegally used on another website and the legal team was asking what GearLaunch could do to stop the incident repeating on their platform. They had an answer ready to go: **“It’s easy, we’re using VISUA!”**

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What this means for GearLaunch

And what it could mean for you.

Increased Legal Compliance

By its very nature, VISUA acts as an extremely effective safety net, allowing GearLaunch to protect themselves from potential liability. This in turn eliminates the significant costs in time and money associated with this compliance.

Increased Revenues

An unusual side-effect of implementing this system was the growth in revenues that GearLaunch experienced. The increase in revenue came from sellers realising that by delivering truly creative and unique content, their products became even more desirable, and sold more.

In other words, just sticking a movie logo or character on a t-shirt wasn't as interesting to buyers as a distinctive quote from the movie with some engaging but non-infringing design elements.

Time saved

GearLaunch's Trust and Safety team can save time spent on manually managing copyright infringements which can be deployed on to tasks that can help grow the business rather than trying to protect it.

Trust & Reputation

By using VISUA's technology, GearLaunch continues to create a solid trustworthy reputation. Brands and their legal teams can trust that they are doing all they can to protect them.

“They know our company is trying to combat this. We are doing what we can , we’re paying a company like VISUA to help us. We’ve never had a lawsuit, at least since I’ve started in the company and I think that has a lot to do with VISUA.”

Peace of mind

Ultimately, using VISUA's technology gives senior team members, like Jared, the peace of mind in knowing that VISUA provides their team with a safety net, protecting them from litigation from world-renowned brands, especially as the company operates globally, 24/7/365.



“I can rest-easy at night knowing that we have this automated process for scanning everything. We have a customer service team and a trust and safety team that helps manage this but we're 9-6 office time in the United States so even at night we have this technology that's been scanning everything and for me, it's kind of a safety blanket to know that we have this thing that's mitigating our risk.”

Jared Hunsaker

General Counsel and VP of Operations,
GearLaunch



You too can grow your business
AND rest easy knowing that your
eCommerce marketplace is protected
from lawsuits with Visual-AI.

Contact VISUA to learn more about how
our flexible, hands-on approach can
benefit your business.

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Or find out more at [VISUA.COM](https://visua.com)

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