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Building Fashion's Digital Future: Why Kering Should Invest in UGC Creation Tools

Executive Summary

Kering is a French luxury group that owns globally recognized fashion houses such as Gucci, Balenciaga, Saint Laurent, and Alexander McQueen. As more people express identity through digital spaces, Kering has a strategic opportunity to shift from limited promotional efforts in gaming to a lasting role in virtual fashion creation. This paper argues that Kering should develop branded design tools for use within user-generated content (UGC) platforms such as Roblox, Fortnite Creative, and Zepeto. These tools would include editable garment templates, branded textures, accessory elements, and animation features that allow users to build their own virtual fashion while drawing from the aesthetics of Kering's brands.

Interest in this type of creative participation is growing. Players on UGC platforms are not only purchasing digital clothing, they are actively designing and selling it. Fashion is one of the most popular categories in these spaces, and many younger users view avatar customization as a core part of identity. Surveys show that consumers are willing to pay for high-quality digital fashion from luxury brands, and many are eager to take part in shaping their own digital wardrobes.

Luxury brands have already experimented with gaming, but their involvement has mostly been temporary. Gucci's limited-time Roblox world and Balenciaga's Fortnite skins brought attention to digital fashion but did not offer tools for users to create or expand on those ideas. Kering has

the opportunity to take a different approach by focusing on infrastructure rather than one-time campaigns.

Creating digital fashion tools for UGC platforms would support Kering's long-term relevance in a growing market. It would also open new revenue streams through creator royalties and platform licensing. More importantly, it would align Kering with the future of fashion, where creative expression is participatory, customizable, and increasingly digital.

Introduction

Fashion has always been a means of self-expression. Increasingly, this expression happens in digital spaces. For younger audiences, platforms like Roblox and Fortnite are not only games but social worlds where identity is performed and customized. Clothing in these environments has become a key medium through which players communicate their own personality and style.

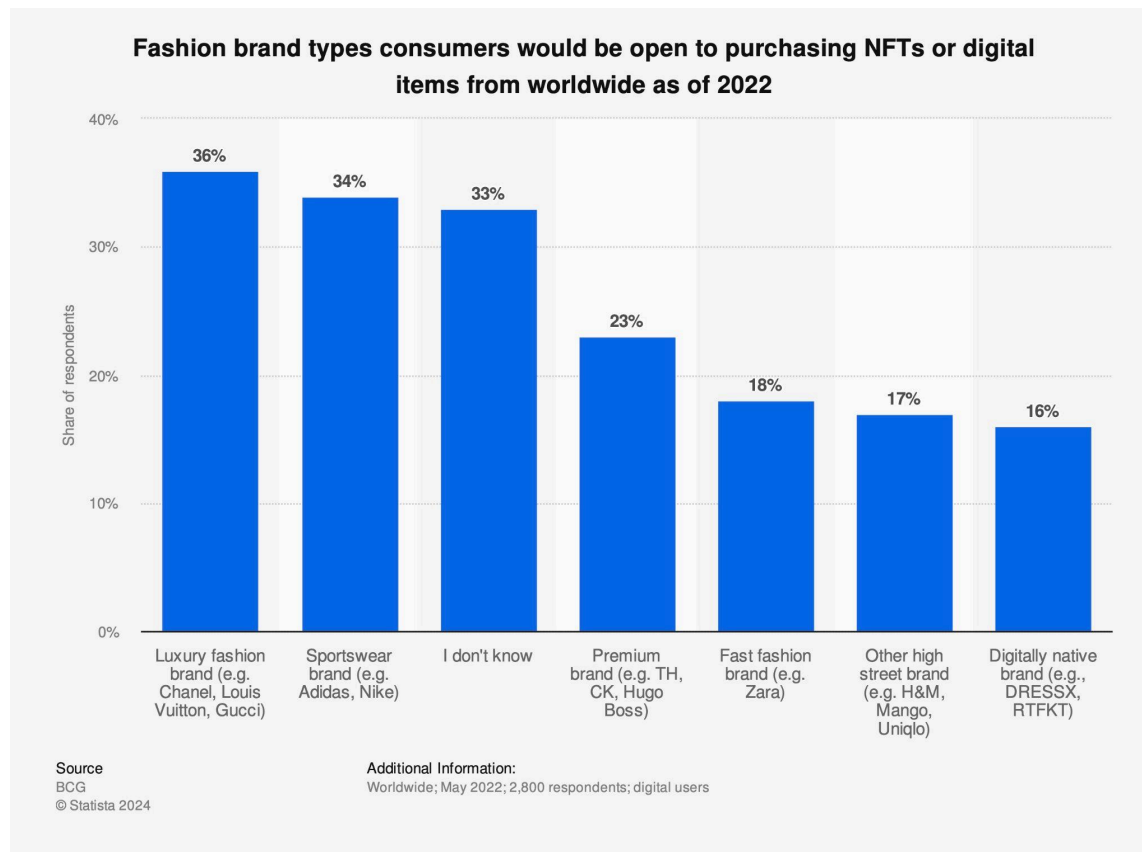
Many luxury fashion brands have entered this space, but their approaches have mostly been promotional. These efforts often take the form of one-time virtual collections or branded experiences. They are visual, time-limited, and controlled and what they typically lack is interactivity or creative freedom. Meanwhile, users on UGC platforms are not just consuming, they are building; they create avatars, environments, and entire economies.

Kering, as the parent company of brands like Gucci, Balenciaga, and Alexander McQueen, has an opportunity to go further than its competitors. Instead of launching short-lived activations, it can provide branded fashion tools that empower users to create. This would align Kering with the creative direction of UGC platforms and position it at the center of digital fashion culture.

The Market Landscape: UGC, Gaming, and Digital Fashion

The global gaming industry is projected to generate \$187.7 billion in revenue in 2024 (Newzoo). Within the broader market, user-generated content (UGC) platforms have experienced especially rapid growth, transforming players into creators and entrepreneurs. Roblox, for example, has over 85 million daily active users, and more than 2 million of them actively design and monetize their original avatar clothing, environments, and interactive experiences (Demand Sage). Fortnite has introduced Unreal Editor for Fortnite, a toolset that allows users to build immersive content using the same engine as professional developers. Zepeto Studio offers similar capabilities, particularly in Asian markets, by enabling users to create and distribute digital fashion and social content. These platforms have made content creation more accessible and have redefined games as collaborative, creator-driven environments.

Fashion has become one of the most prominent categories within user-generated platforms, where digital clothing plays a central role in how players express identity through their avatars. Avatars are customizable, and users regularly buy virtual clothing to reflect personal style. A 2022 Statista survey found that 36% of consumers were open to buying digital fashion from luxury brands, compared to less than 20% for fast fashion or purely digital brands. This suggests that luxury still carries cultural weight in digital space and that users are seeking meaningful, brand-aligned options.



Source: Statista (2022)

Interest is not limited to consumption. Many users want to design their own looks and sell them. Roblox's Layered Clothing system, introduced in 2022, allows users to build 3D garments that fit any avatar, opening new creative possibilities. While these systems do already exist, they have not been meaningfully integrated with the visual language and design expertise of established fashion houses.

Limitations of Current Luxury Activations

Luxury brands have experimented with gaming, but most efforts have been short-term and limited in scope. Gucci's "Gucci Garden" experience on Roblox created a visually immersive environment and featured a curated selection of digital accessories. While a few items gained

attention for their high resale prices on the platform's secondary market, the overall activation lasted only two weeks. Users were unable to modify or personalize any of the assets, and once the event concluded, Gucci had no ongoing presence or tools left behind for community use.

Balenciaga's partnership with Fortnite introduced branded skins and a virtual boutique. It was well-designed but lacked interactivity. There were no tools for users to create their own Balenciaga-inspired designs or integrate them into other parts of the platform.

Dolce & Gabbana's "Collezione Genesi" NFT collection brought in over \$5.7 million in 2021. It offered digital and physical collectibles, but it was targeted at elite collectors and not designed for everyday players or creators. The items were not usable in games or modifiable by users.

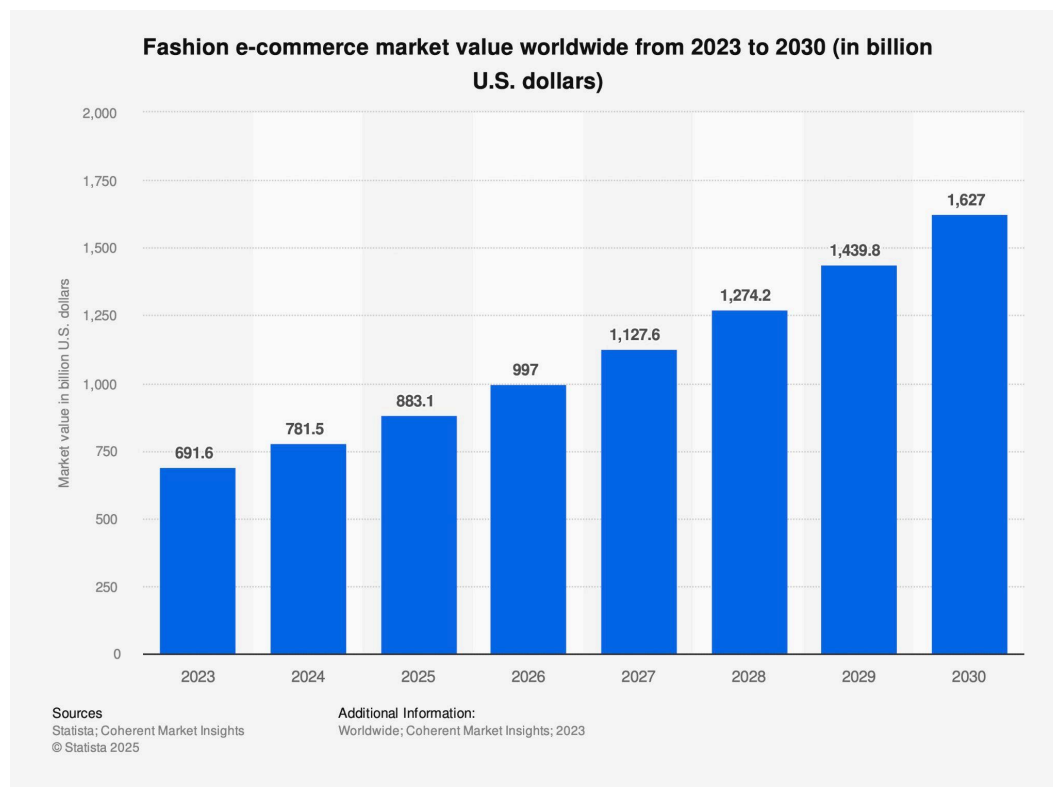
Across these examples, luxury brands approached digital platforms as static showcases rather than interactive environments. They offered visual content but did not engage with the participatory logic of the platforms. As a result, their impact was short-lived. What is needed is a shift from campaigns to systems: tools that keep users building and engaging long after the initial drop.

A New Strategy: Digital Toolkits for Fashion Creation

Kering should invest in building digital fashion creation toolkits for platforms like Roblox, Fortnite Creative, and Zepeto. These toolkits could include 3D clothing templates, logo assets, branded textures, color palettes, animations, and accessory components. Instead of offering complete outfits, Kering would offer a design language that players could remix and sell in-platform.

This model mirrors successful toolkits in other creative spaces. For example, Figma provides UI kits that let users design consistent web and app interfaces. Canva lets users remix templates while maintaining a brand's visual identity. A similar approach to fashion would allow Kering to scale its influence across thousands of user designs, while still maintaining quality and brand alignment.

According to Statista and Coherent Market Insights, the global fashion e-commerce market is projected to grow from \$691.6 billion in 2023 to \$1.627 trillion by 2030. This trajectory reflects growing demand for fashion that is flexible, digitally accessible, and increasingly user-driven, as consumers seek more control over how they engage with style in virtual spaces. The most rapid growth is expected between 2025 and 2028, aligning with the maturing of Gen Z and Gen Alpha as digital consumers.



Source: Statista (2025)

By launching a creator toolkit now, Kering could build brand presence in these digital spaces during a key growth window. Instead of competing for attention through one-off drops, Kering would become part of the underlying system that players use to create and express themselves.

This approach offers several long-term strategic advantages that extend beyond conventional marketing outcomes. One of the most significant is scalability. Once developed, branded digital toolkits can be reused by thousands of creators across platforms, enabling a steady stream of original content that draws from and reinforces Kering's visual identity. This continual presence increases brand visibility over time and reaches far more users than any single limited-time collaboration.

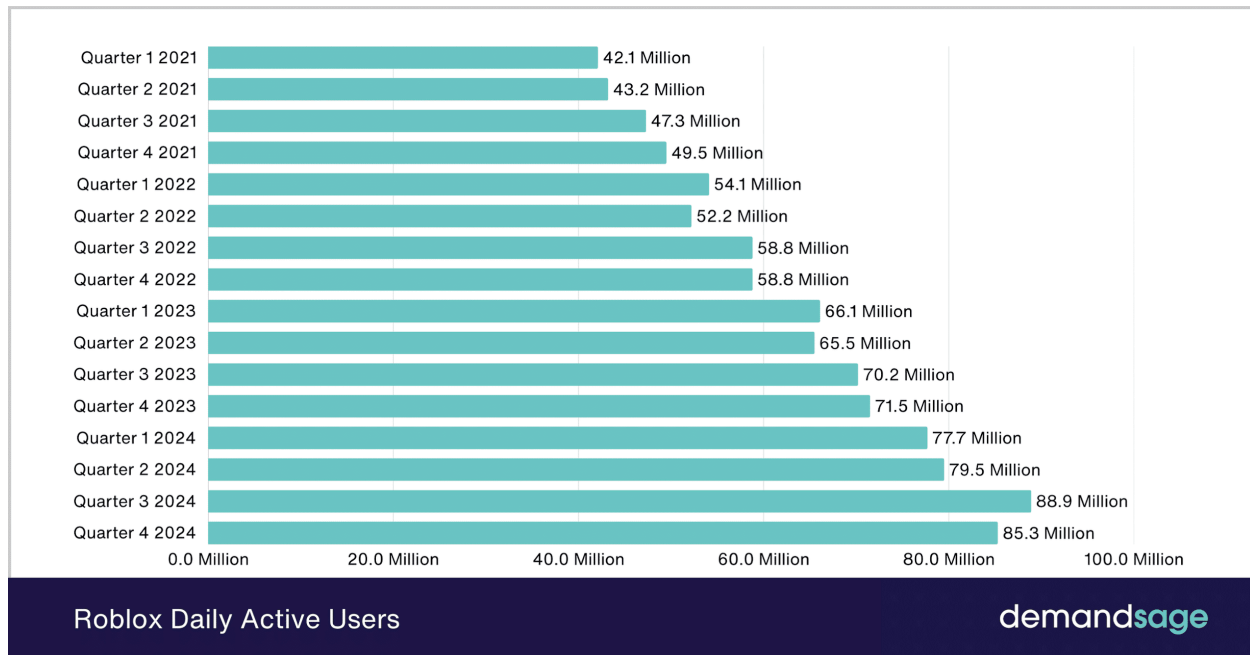
In addition to reach, this model fosters stronger engagement. When users are empowered to create with a brand's tools, they are no longer passive consumers but active participants. This sense of authorship builds a deeper emotional connection and encourages long-term loyalty, as users feel personally invested in the brand's digital presence.

There is also clear commercial potential. By integrating its assets into existing creator marketplaces, Kering could earn royalties from every sale involving branded components.

Unlike traditional campaigns that generate short bursts of revenue, these income streams would be continuous and tied to the ongoing activity of a platform's creator economy.

Finally, this strategy would position Kering as a leader not only in luxury fashion but in the broader digital and technological space. While many brands limit themselves to curated virtual experiences, Kering would stand out for contributing to the creative infrastructure that defines how digital fashion is produced and shared. This shift from presentation to participation reflects

a deeper understanding of where digital culture is heading and what it means to be a relevant brand in that space.



Source: Demand Sage (2025)

As with any new venture, there are potential challenges. One common concern for luxury brands is the protection of intellectual property. In an open creation environment, it is possible that branded assets could be used in ways that feel off-brand or inappropriate. To mitigate this, Kering would need to establish strong platform partnerships with Roblox, Epic Games, and others to ensure that all branded assets are deployed within frameworks that include content moderation, aesthetic guidelines, and creator approval systems.

Another concern is the potential for brand dilution, particularly among luxury stakeholders who may worry that opening up branded assets to public use could compromise their exclusivity or undermine the carefully curated image of the brand. Some may fear that remixing, customization, and widespread access would erode the sense of prestige that luxury fashion depends on. However, digital culture is already built around reinterpretation, and user-generated

remixing has become a central force in shaping relevance online. Rather than weakening a brand, participatory culture often strengthens it by creating a sense of ownership and emotional investment. When platforms include quality filters, aesthetic guidelines, and systems that elevate well-executed designs, brands can maintain integrity while also encouraging meaningful community engagement.

Technical complexity is also a challenge. Developing cross-platform digital fashion assets requires collaboration with game engines, avatar systems, and in-platform currencies. This is not a small undertaking, but the investment pays off through long-term use and reuse. Kering already invests heavily in craftsmanship, digital advertising, and emerging tech. Expanding that investment into creator-facing infrastructure is a logical next step.

Conclusion

The future of fashion is not defined solely by aesthetics or exclusivity. The future of fashion will be shaped not only by aesthetics or exclusivity, but by the systems, tools, and opportunities that allow people to participate in its creation. As platforms like Roblox and Fortnite become central to how young people build identity and express creativity, luxury fashion must decide how it wants to exist in these spaces. Brands can continue treating virtual environments as temporary showrooms, or they can embrace them as collaborative ecosystems where players are also creators.

Kering has the opportunity to lead by choosing the second path. By investing in digital fashion toolkits and creation infrastructure, it can support user-driven design while extending the presence of its brands into the creative core of gaming platforms. This approach would allow Kering to shape how fashion is built and shared in virtual spaces, not just how it looks.

The goal is not short-term visibility or chasing trends, but a deeper understanding of how the structure of fashion is fundamentally changing. It is about understanding that the structure of fashion is changing. Identity now lives in interactive, customizable environments. Kering is in a position to influence what those environments look like and how people participate in them. To do so, it must move beyond content and begin investing in creation itself.

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