

Rent the Runway Transforms Retail with Analytics-Driven Model Supported by New Relic

Launched in November 2009, Rent the Runway is the leader in global fashion rentals and is responsible for growing the rental culture into a significant part of today's retail industry. Rent The Runway gives millions of women access to designer dresses and accessories, along with the expertise of professional stylists and the shared wisdom of like-minded, fashion-forward members. In 2014, Forbes recognized Rent the Runway as "tech's next billion-dollar star." The company is backed by some of the world's top investors including: Kleiner Perkins, Highland Capital, Bain Capital Ventures, American Express, Advance Publications, and Novel TMT Ventures.

RENT THE RUNWAY

Industry	Location	Employees
Fashion/Retail	New York, NY	287

Use Case

Keep mission-critical warehouse system, customer storefront, and mobile app performing at highest possible levels.

Why New Relic

Delivers the deep insight this analytics-driven company needs to continue revolutionizing the retail industry.

Highlights

- Helps identify where to invest engineering resources
- Reduced server load times for website by 50 milliseconds for a 15-percent improvement
- Enables daily delivery and optimized performance of mobile app code

Environment

Rent the Runway is a Ruby/Java shop running more than 400 servers. The company deploys its applications in a service-oriented architecture with Ruby as the front-end powered by Java services that interact with caches and databases.

Moving from Drupal to Ruby and Java

Powered by a transformative business model, proprietary technology that supports one-of-a-kind shopping innovations, and a unique reverse-logistics operation, Rent the Runway is challenging old systems and rewriting the retail rules. Leading a growing team of 60, Camille Fournier is Rent the Runway's chief technology officer. "Rent the Runway is a

fashion company with a technology soul," says Fournier. "With every click, delivery, and return, we gather an insane amount of data, informing every decision our company makes. Through the power of analytics, we're perpetually tweaking our model to make everything we do faster, smarter, easier, and nimbler."

That charter drives Fournier's engineering group to deliver unique products such as 'Our Runway,' which allows shoppers to explore how other Rent the Runway customers with a similar body type are wearing their favorite designs. The group also developed a proprietary, high-speed reverse-logistics system that allows Rent the Runway to turn items around in record time, usually within one day.



In 2011, Rent the Runway decided to rewrite its website and supporting services, moving from Drupal to Ruby and Java and focusing on improving scalability and performance. To meet the new performance goals, Fournier knew that her team would need deeper insight into Rent the Runway's applications and systems. "Our plan was to roll out the revised system piece by piece, one major customer component at a time," says Fournier. "We needed a way to view how each piece was performing in real time."

Focusing on the Right Areas with New Relic

Rent the Runway decided to try New Relic to provide the performance data the engineering team needed during the rewrite. Andrew Fernandez, general manager of customer experience at Rent the Runway, explains that "setting up New Relic took less than five minutes and was a boon to my team from the start." Fournier agrees: "New Relic turned out to be an incredibly valuable tool for us. Now, it's our first line of defense to know how well our site is doing from a performance standpoint."

Today Rent the Runway relies extensively on New Relic® APM™, New Relic Browser™, New Relic Server™, and New Relic Mobile™ to monitor its storefront, internal warehouse systems, and mobile app. Using a DevOps approach, the engineering and operations teams take advantage of New Relic capabilities such as Apdex to gauge their success and determine where they need to focus their efforts. "We love the mapping model that traces which applications are communicating with each other and lets you see where the real bottlenecks are," says Ali Khan, director of technology operations at Rent the Runway. "You might see a spike or lag in one application, but then you're able to trace it back to another instead."

It's not only the customer-facing applications that benefit from the insight provided by New Relic. A major component of Rent the Runway's transformative software is its warehouse management system, which includes managing the largest dry cleaning operation in the United States. "Our reverse-logistics warehouse system is very performance-sensitive," says Fournier. "On Wednesdays, we get many thousands of

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Camille Fournier

Chief Technology Officer, Rent the Runway

dresses coming back into our warehouse that have to be sorted, cleaned, examined, and sent back out to a customer on the same day." Achieving the aggressive goal of same-day turnaround makes throughput critical and that's where New Relic comes in. "New Relic helps us not only understand our website traffic and performance, but also helps us identify when problems are happening in our warehouse stack," says Fournier.

New Relic Mobile has helped the retailer provide its customers with their dream closet wherever they are with the Rent the Runway iPhone app, which lets them essentially rent on the run. "We're really big proponents of continuous integration and delivery," says Fernandez. "We deploy our application at least once a day, more often when possible. With New Relic Mobile, we have a source of truth that tells us if our load times are increasing or decreasing. It enables our developers to make sure that while they are rapidly developing and deploying, that they're not compromising the quality of our applications."



Making browsing and checkout 15 percent faster

Fournier, Fernandez, and Khan all agree that New Relic is a critical tool for Rent the Runway's engineers, technical operations, and data analytics teams, which use New Relic data to create predictive models. Adds Fernandez, "New Relic gives you a unified view across different types of systems and the depth of data lets our engineers really focus their time on fixing problems instead of trying to find them. New Relic is the first thing I look at in the morning and the last thing I look at the end of the day."

In preparation for Cyber Monday, Rent the Runway turned to New Relic to help it further improve performance and scalability for its storefront. "Using New Relic, my team reduced server load times for our customer-facing website by 50 milliseconds, a 15-percent improvement," says Khan. "Our customers can now browse more quickly and move faster through checkout. Plus we can handle more customers concurrently because everything is loading faster."

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Fernandez notes that New Relic puts development and operations on the same page. With New Relic, the monitoring software speaks the same language as the developers," says Fernandez. "Our previous monitoring interfaces gave us page-view and screen-based information, but not necessarily code-level information that our developers could act on. Once we starting using New Relic, it made a huge difference in targeting where we should make our changes."

Fournier couldn't agree more: "New Relic helps us plan ahead where we think we should invest resources and optimize our code to improve our infrastructure and reliability." With New Relic firmly entrenched, Rent the Runway plans to continue shaking up the retail model to bring it in line with how people live their lives today.

About New Relic

New Relic is a software analytics company that makes sense of billions of data points about millions of applications in real time. Our comprehensive SaaS-based solution provides one powerful interface for web and native mobile applications and consolidates the performance monitoring data for any chosen technology in your environment. We have over

200,000 users that utilize our cloud solution to analyze more than 200 billion data points across more than three million applications. When your brand and customer experience depend on the performance of modern software, New Relic provides insight into your overall environment. Learn more at newrelic.com.

Learn More

- To learn more about Rent the Runway, visit: www.renttherunway.com.