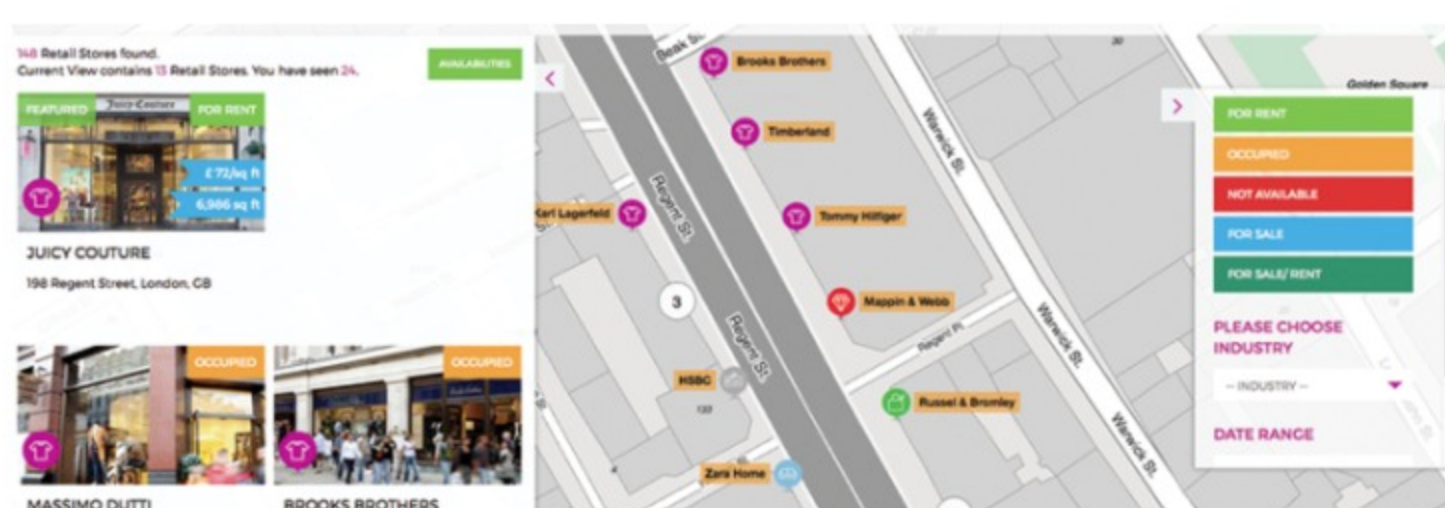


# Users click on innovative retail space finder



By Amber Rolt

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The latest inbound proptech platform to take on the UK is looking to revolutionise the way retailers find properties.

Despite launching only eight weeks ago, online retail marketplace eLocations already has 2,248 registered users in the country, of which 1,480 are in London.

Founder and chief executive Marc-Christian Riebe established the Geneva-based platform last year and it has 10,000 registered users worldwide.

Riebe's background is in retail. He founded agency The Location Group in 2005 and as an adviser has worked with some of the world's most renowned luxury brands on a global scale, including LVMH and Kering, as well as restaurant chains. He worked previously at EY on its M&A team.

## How does it work?

Riebe claims that unlike other retail proptech innovators that look to disrupt the agency world, eLocations wants to work with it.

The platform is an online map-based database that offers retailers, landlords, and brokers information about retailer locations on an interface similar to a GOAD map. The map shows where retailers are located on the street and their address, as well as where they have requirements. It also shows other nearby retailers, as well as the property's size, footfall and former tenants.

The maps also provide photos of the streets and the available units, which is useful for the parts of China, in which it operates, where Google street view is not operational.

The database is updated constantly to show new retailers that have been added to an area.

This means that users can see, for example, the latest 10 stores that Zara has opened or where H&M has closed. This allows retailers looking to enter a new market to work out quickly what shops and brands are trading well and in which locations.

Riebe says: "We connect local brokers with international brands like H&M and Zara, which are opening up to 250 new shops each year. Not all brokers in smaller cities know the details of the expansion plans. So we show the brands where there are available properties and opportunities and connect them with the brokers of those properties.

"We know exactly where brands like Apple, Prada or Zara are looking for new locations. And the uniqueness of the model is that it is free, which is why the website is visited so regularly."

## Who is it for?

Brokers can register their properties online for free to a wide audience of retailers. The user make-up is split almost 50/50 between retailers and brokers.

Riebe says: "If you are a retailer, there is no other website where you can find all available properties in one platform, so it makes it much easier for the brand to have an overview. If you're a broker, you might be making 100 calls a day to find the right tenant or buyer for your property, but if we give brokers the leads, then they have to make only 10 calls."

If a deal comes off the back of an eLocations connection, then eLocations takes 10% of the broker's fee. Otherwise, it is free to use.

Retailers operate best in close proximity to other retailers, so being able to work out the location of other brands quickly helps them to make better decisions. "You always see Gucci or Prada within a 200m radius of a Louis Vuitton and it is the same with young fashion brands H&M and Zara – they always want to be close to each other," Riebe says.

As well as brokers, retailers, and landlords, the service has also become popular with planning departments.

"It has been useful for communities and planning departments too," he says. "If you have a retailer that is active only in shopping centres, but wants to be on the high street, then we can help to put it in touch with the relevant decision makers, so it attracts a range of interest."

## Plans for London

eLocations is already assisting a new international retailer to launch in London.

Swiss chocolatiers Teuscher chocolate, which is famous for its champagne truffles, has registered on the portal in the hope of finding its first London location ahead of a countrywide expansion.

He says: "We have been instructed recently by Swiss chocolatiers Confiserie Teuscher to launch in the UK in collaboration with local brokers. The brand is famous for its shops on 5th Avenue and Madison Avenue in New York as well as Shanghai and Tokyo. The founder's son wants to expand the brand, first in Germany followed by London and then England, Italy and France."

It is looking for concessions in luxury department stores as well as prime locations in London and is considering opportunities on Bond Street, Regent Street and Oxford Street, W1, as well as Covent Garden, WC2, and the King's Road, SW3.

## eLocations in numbers

**77,075** stores registered globally

**14,033** streets

**2,755** cities

**129** countries

**55%** of users are brokers,

**40%** are retailers, and

**5%** are others

**10,000** registered users

50,000 newsletter subscribers

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