

Tipping Point Commentaries

The Rediscovery of Manual Labor

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Can a tipping point be retro? If you were to read Gladwell's *The Tipping Point*, you would note that the answer is an emphatic YES! However, given this example from his work was decidedly a fashion statement with Hush Puppies, we now have something that is more than a fad – perhaps.

from:

Digital Designers Rediscover Their Hands

By G. PASCAL ZACHARY

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Paradoxically, yearnings to pick up a hammer — or an oscilloscope — may deepen even as young people immerse themselves in simulated worlds. “People spend so much time in digital worlds that it creates an appetite for the physical world,”

Fifty years ago, tinkering with gadgets was routine for people drawn to engineering and invention. ...“we tended to forget the importance of physical senses,”

Making refinements with your own hands — rather than automatically, as often happens with a computer — means “you have to be extremely self-critical,”

EVEN in highly abstract fields, like the design of next-generation electronic circuits, some people believe that hands-on experiences can enhance creativity. “You need your hands to verify experimentally a technology that doesn't exist,”

Bringing human hands back into the world of digital designers may have profound long-term consequences. Designs could become safer, more user-friendly and even more durable.

The Hush Puppies' resurgence as a fashion wave certainly elevated its stock, but it also helped those who rode the wave to differentiate themselves and thus reinforce the wave. Similarly, the fashion wave of the skate board shoes, where the wave collapsed when the manufacturer failed to satisfy their base constituency and became just another shoe.

One of the lessons from Gladwell is that a tipping point is not always, in and of itself, the object that claims the benefit. The tipping point can be the trigger that launches the trend as I would say is invested in the statements above. Like the time and motion studies of the 20s and 30s discovered, change can bring improved performance; and the object of change (like the color of paint on a wall), can appear to be the significant factor when it is more the vehicle.

The article reveals that Adobe's interest in developing their designers' minds through their handicraft (a literal metaphor) unlinks the two while reinforcing their connection. That is, the profit motive is removed from their play while enhancing the bottom line.