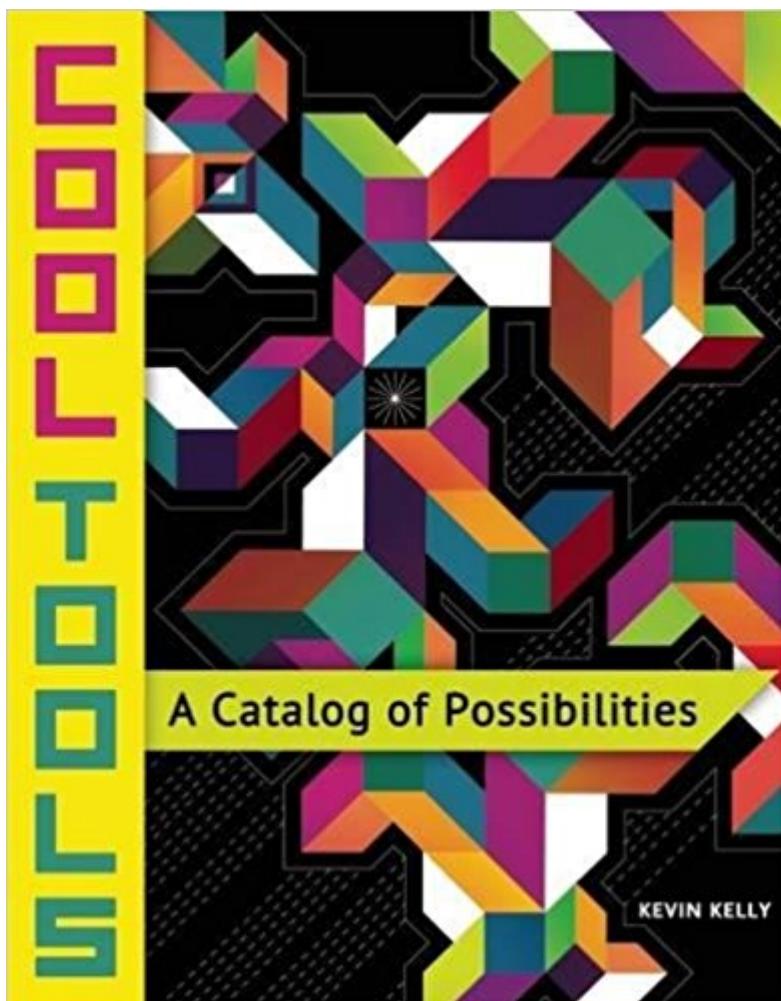


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Cool Tools: A Catalog Of Possibilities



Synopsis

Cool Tools is a highly curated selection of the best tools available for individuals and small groups. Tools include hand tools, maps, how-to books, vehicles, software, specialized devices, gizmos, websites -- and anything useful. Tools are selected and presented in the book if they are the best of kind, the cheapest, or the only thing available that will do the job. This is an oversized book which reviews over 1,500 different tools, explaining why each one is great, and what its benefits are. Indirectly the book illuminates the possibilities contained in such tools and the whole catalog serves an education outside the classroom. The content in this book was derived from ten years of user reviews published at the Cool Tools website, cool-tools.org.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Cool Tools is a refreshing antidote to the hype that surrounds the latest hot gadgets. Unimpressed by newness for newness' sake, Kelly is attracted to objects that have withstood the test of time -- and is passing those ideas on to others. It's a habit he learned while editing and publishing the Whole Earth Catalog, the bible of counterculture do-it-yourselfers who wanted in 'tools and ideas for the 21st century.'" (Leander Kahney, Wired News)"Stewart Brand said that Cool Tools had captured the spirit of the Whole Earth Catalog but without taking on a counterculture and back-to-the-land philosophy. 'It proves that you can restart the essence of something,' he said." (John Markoff, New York Times)"Cool Tools is what the Whole Earth Catalog always wanted to be." (Peter Schwartz,

futurist, Salesforce)"Jeff Bezos is a fan of e-mail newsletters such as Cool Tools, a compendium of technology tips and product reviews written by Kevin Kelly, a co-founder of Wired." (Brad Stone, author of *The Everything Store: Jeff Bezos and the Age of Everything*) Cool Tools has been featured in "Best of the Web" lists, such as the following:^{*} Forbes Best of the Web Directory^{*} Alltop - Gadgets^{*} New York Times Blogs 101 - Technology Toys & Cool ThingsPraise for Cool Tools: A Catalog of Possibilities:"There is something magical in the book's juxtaposition of stuff, folklore and product reviews ..."New York Times"This may well be the greatest catalog of all-time..."Engadget"The result is something more than just a paper-bound list of awesome objects. It's a tool itself."Wired"This wonderful book is so much more than hardware and electronics however, this is 472 pages of inspired genius."Time Out"It's 460+ full-color pages of ear-to-ear grinning, hours of ooh-ing and aah-ing, and years of repetitive page-turning."GeekDad"It is like sitting with the old Sunday funnies, slowly poring over the colorful illustrations and finding surprises on every page."The Joiner's Apprentice"A real geek's geek-guide to tools."American Design and Master-Craft Initiative"Guaranteed you will want 4,000 things from this huge catalogue."The Coast"What a knockout! Book of the year!"Matt Groening, creator of *The Simpsons*"When this fabulous, amazing, unputdownable book arrived at my studio I immediately spent two and a half hours in it, and then the next morning passed another three-hour stint of 'Wow  look at this! I could do that!' This book is more exciting  in both what it actually offers and what kind of life it suggests  than anything I've read for a very long time. It's an outstanding achievement in every sense  content, design, and quality."Brian Eno, musician, artist"Flipping through Cool Tools is a completely different experience from reading the same material online. Long live dead trees!"David Pescovitz, Boing Boing"If this doesn't solve some large part of your Christmas shopping challenges, you need a different set of people to whom you give Christmas presents. The book itself (a real print 463-page glossy-stock oversizer) is great either for young people starting a home, or geezers who are in touch with their youth who might want to be shocked and reminded why so much of their take-control-of-your-own-life life is the way it is, or somebody who just could use a striking coffee-table conversation-starter/stopper. And then there are the hundreds and hundreds of amazing things  "tools" defined extremely widely and deeply as stuff that really works reviewed by people who've actually used them  to give you more gift ideas."Joel Garreau, *The Washington Post*, author of *Edge City* and *Radical Evolution*"I don't know an adjective large enough to do it justice."Michael Litchfield, *Fine Homebuilding*"I love it. A worthy successor to the Whole Earth Catalog."Walter Isaacson, author of *Steve Jobs: The*

Exclusive Biography" This is a roundup of over 1500 tool reviews with incredibly useful tips and how-tos covering just about everything you can imagine. On one page there will be a recommendation for a great truck (Toyota pickup) on another they'll be tips on learning how to swim properly (it's all about the stroke length). This is, without a doubt, my favorite book to come out in 2013."  • Sal Cangeloso, Geek.com "The Cool Tools book was sitting on the counter of the bar when an old boatbuilding friend stopped by and immediately became immersed in it. His exact words: "I GET this! There's no buttons to press!"  • George Dyson, author of *Turing's Cathedral* "Best coffee table books = size of coffee table. Kudos for the beautiful Cool Tools collection."  • Scott McCloud, cartoonist "Right now, do not pass Go, do not collect \$200 . . . just grab a copy of *Cool Tools: A Catalog of Possibilities*. It's 460+ full-color pages of ear-to-ear grinning, hours of ooh-ing and aah-ing, and years of repetitive page-turning. After it arrived at my door, I lost almost two full hours in its pages before realizing just how much time had elapsed . . . and this was me just skimming the various sections and randomly jumping from item to item. Since then, I've lost a few more hours as I've started to methodically tackle specific sections that are relevant to a few special projects that interest me (right now)."  • James Floyd Kelly, GeekDad "Most catalogs are short stories. This one is a catalog novel."  • Mark Pauline, Survival Research roboticist "Covering topics from hand tools to adhesives, organizational oddments, bicycles that double as chainsaws, beer brewing, mushroom growing, milling and fabricating, and so much more, it's enough to make your brain hurt with all the ideas for projects."  • Michael Una, Inventables "Bravo for this mega catalog. Back to the future!"  • Steven Leveen, CEO founder of Levenger's "I find myself not only flabbergasted at the size and extent of this achievement but happily awash in the feeling I used to get from the Whole Earth Catalogs; that all may not be right with the world, but that it could be."  • Jim Woodring, illustrator and cartoonist "The glorious Cool Tools is like my dream update of the Whole Earth Catalog."  • Steve Silberman, NeuroTribes "Multiple head asplosions on every page. Amazing!"  • Mark Laidlaw, science fiction author "Love you, Wirecutter, but we're breaking up while I work through this tome."  • Luke Pebler, actor "Cool Tools: A Catalog of Possibilities reminds me of the engineering catalogues I read at my grandfather's house."  • Steve Remington, Chronicinfoholic.com

Kevin Kelly is Senior Maverick at *Wired* magazine. He co-founded *Wired* in 1993, and served as its Executive Editor from its inception until 1999. He is editor and publisher of the Cool Tools website, which gets half a million unique visitors per month. From 1984-1990 Kelly was publisher and editor

of the Whole Earth Review, a journal of unorthodox technical news. He co-founded the ongoing Hackers' Conference, and was involved with the launch of the WELL, a pioneering online service started in 1985. His last book, *What Technology Wants* (Viking/Penguin October 18, 2010), asserted that technology as a whole is not just a jumble of wires and metal but a living, evolving organism that has its own unconscious needs and tendencies. He also authored the best-selling *New Rules for the New Economy* and the classic book on decentralized emergent systems, *Out of Control*. Kevin Kelly's website is kk.org.

COOL TOOLS is a sprawling compilation of useful tool reviews that author Kevin Kelly and a thousand contributors wrote over a 10-year period on Kelly's blog of the same name. Every tool in this massive (472 pages, 11" x 14") collection was recommended by an avid tool user who actually used the tool. Every tool in COOL TOOLS is either the best, the cheapest, or the only thing that works. As a former editor of *Fine Homebuilding* magazine, I thought I knew a bit about tools. Not anymore. Kelly and his crew have put together the most exhaustive, inventive and mind-bending selection of stuff I've ever seen. For starters, their definition of tools encompasses more or less every human activity on earth. So in addition to hand jacks that can raise 7000 lbs., the Teeny Turner (a pocket sized driver), portable band saws, and laser measuring tools, you can find the best source on how to buy a car cheaply, make a low-budget movies, brew your own beer, rear an optimistic child, design a logo, win a fight, soak in feral (!) hot springs, learn to swim efficiently, prepare for a natural disaster, vagabond the world, do something dangerous (and live to tell about it), run for local office and win, go solar on your roof, or (a great boon to Boomers) remember anything. This list doesn't scratch the surface of what's in COOL TOOLS and that's one of the things that makes it so irresistible--you return to it again and again. Open it at random and you experience something like being six again, with a child's sense of delight and wonder at how clever people can be and what abundance this world holds. Like the Whole Earth Catalogue from 40 years ago, COOL TOOLS might just delight and empower a new generation of people who love learning--and doing. A most remarkable book.

I still have a dozen or so Whole Earth Catalogs (WEC) from the last century. I visit author Kevin Kelly's Cool Tools site almost every day to see and read about the latest cool tools, and I could just afford this book, so I ordered it before it was published, and it has been open on my coffee table in my living room, ever since it arrived. I page through it often and spend a lot of time reading about specific topics of interest to me - and I always learn new things - and even give attention to areas I'll

probably never use. It's a wish book and a daydream book and a down-and-dirty reality book. Nothing since the WEC has been as continually fascinating and educational. It reminds me of a New Age Sears Catalog of everything available - especially tools, which have always fascinated me. I like that the book is easier to navigate than the site, which is still great for browsing, and though many of the tools reviewed are too esoteric for my direct use, it is still vastly interesting. The type is a tad small. I keep wanting to command + it up to decent reading size for my elderly eyes, but I keep a bright lamp nearby for reading. It's over-sized and heavy, and it's not comfortable reading closer to my eyes like most books. So I hunker down over it - maybe I should buy a podium desk, since they're listed along with everything else in the book. Or I might have given it five stars.

Cool concept, but the implementation is lacking. It looks like it has a lot of cool tools contained in it, but I don't know how "cool" they really are. The items listed about topics I am familiar with didn't seem exceptional or novel, which leads me to believe that the items listed about topics that I am not familiar with really aren't that novel either (except that I'm not familiar with them, so I'm learning something new but may not impress people with my knowledge of something that really isn't very novel). The biggest issue that I noted is that the book doesn't stand the test of time. Some of the technology tools (quantified self, fitness and nutrition trackers) are already outdated (picture of a previous model fitbit that isn't available anymore) or are no longer available (the zeo sleep tracker), and other things have been around for a while and have come into pretty common use (MyFitnessPal nutrition tracker). I didn't really pay attention to the fact that the book was already two years old when I purchased it, so it didn't occur to me that some of the cool tools would be outdated. There's really no way to get around the outdated technology issues in a printed book except to maybe write a blog instead (which the author does), or maybe to leave out the categories of items that are most likely to be constantly evolving. On the other hand, it's a neat coffee table book that crams a lot of stuff into a coffee table book-size package. Right now, it's like browsing through an old issue of SkyMall. But in a few years, it will be like a snapshot of the early 2010s and will be more like browsing through an old junk store to see what kind of surprises you might find. As a piece of history, it's pretty cool and will only become more cool as time passes. As a useful publication, I question the value. I bought it for my boyfriend, who is a tool geek, and I hope he will appreciate it in the same way that I do - as a window into our modern world that will be fun to look back on.

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