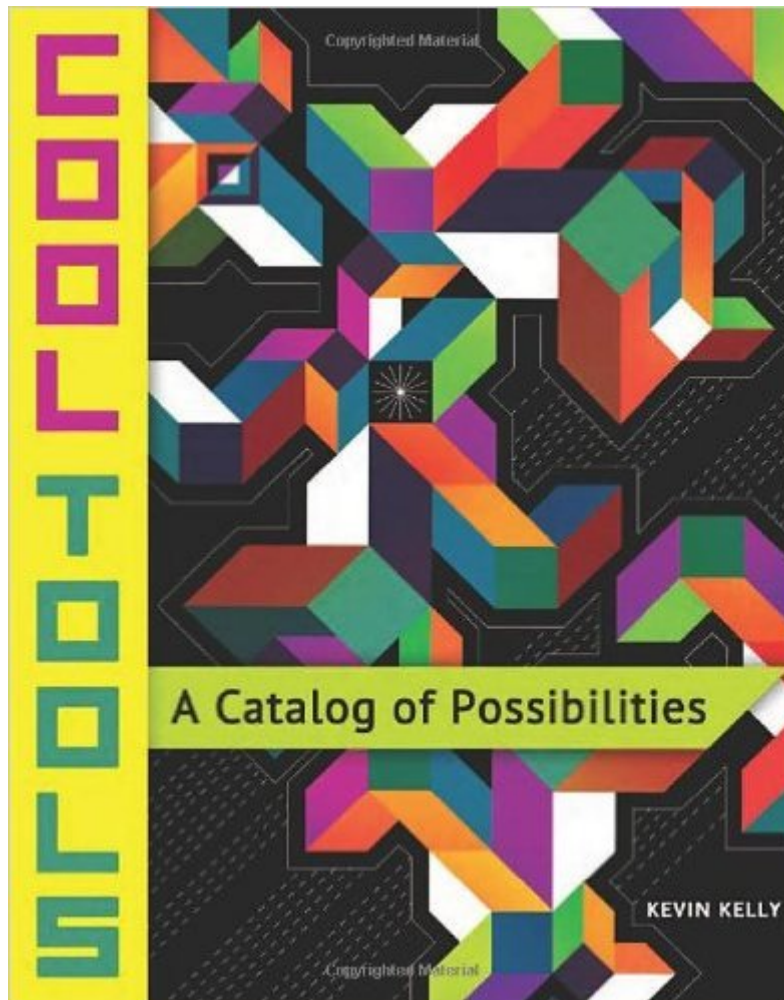


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# Cool Tools: A Catalog Of Possibilities



## 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 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 in five stars.

If you ever enjoyed reading the Whole Earth Catalog, read no further. Just buy this. You know why. If you are a reader of the Cool Tools blog, again, I'd say to just buy this. Yes, you've already read (or could read) much of the content on the site, but the book format (and the fact this is a hand-picked subset of the reviews from the blog) adds context and flow. You'll like curling up and paging through the oversize pages. Reviews within a category that were separated by months or years are side by side here in the book. QR codes take you directly to product pages. It is a nicely realized, physical

thing. Never heard of Cool Tools blog or the WEC? Check out the Cool Tools blog to get an idea of the tone (tell us about a cool tool, one that you'd recommend to a good friend) and subjects. This is a compilation of "cool tools"--tools that represent things you either never knew existed, or an extraordinary value. (The book itself qualifies as among the coolest of tools.) The categories are wide ranging, from cooking, crafts, learning, music, family, electronics and more. There's certain to be some area of immediate interest, but half the fun is the insight into the tools of the trade of some activity you may never have considered like beekeeping or world travel on a shoestring budget. There are some images with jarringly-low resolution, a few typos here and there, but overall a very nicely done book. (Disclosure--I received an early copy because a review I contributed years ago to the site was included in the book, but I'll be ordering more copies.)

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