

*Digital craft—form-giving, work practices, and the idea of design.*

A reunion of skill and intellect has occurred in enough postindustrial work to revive and significantly transform the notion of craft. Whereas industrialism tended to separate use and beauty, work and play, art and industry, etc., many more recent work practices have begun to reconnect some of these. Because one of the great advantages of computing is how it gives form to abstractions so that we may manipulate symbolic structures as if they were things, many more subject matters of work, indeed businesses themselves, have become subject to form-giving, creative manipulation, and, in a word, design. The idea of design benefits from constant interdisciplinary negotiation. No longer just about making things look pretty, or usable, design, particularly interaction design, has become a key liberal art of the twenty first century. In the process, computing is increasingly and correctly perceived not merely as a tool, but as a medium. As with any medium, the sharing and admiration of expertise has been among the most timeless bases for organizations. Even solely as a desktop medium, (which it hardly remains), and even within the experience of an individual working with everyday software such as Photoshop, the transformation is apparent. This talk views such overarching issues through the lens of software use in three-dimensional modeling. Malcolm McCullough's 1996 book *Abstracting Craft* began as a mediation on computer aided design, but became a widely-read pick on interactivity and work practices.

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Short suggested reading: *Abstracting Craft*, Chapter 7. Further reading: Chapters 1, 8, and 9.