

Karma Queens, Geek Gods and Innerpreneurs: Meet the 9 Consumer Types Shaping Today's Marketplace

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Introduction

Okay, you picked this book up. Presumably that means you have some interest in consumers, and what we have to say about them. Maybe you're a marketer, maybe you're an innovator or entrepreneur, or maybe you're just fascinated by what makes consumers tick. Perhaps you're still standing in a bookstore, reading this introduction trying to decide whether or not to buy the book. (Go ahead, you won't regret it.) Whoever you are, you probably want to know what exactly we mean by consumer types (C-Types). That isn't what this introduction is about. (Skip ahead to Part 1.) This introduction is about us, and how and why we came to write this book.

"We" refers to Consumer Eyes, Inc. We're a New York-based marketing and innovation consultancy. Since 1991, we've been helping companies grow their brands and fill their new product pipelines with breakthrough, business-building ideas and concepts. Every single year, Consumer Eyes probes, explores, and processes the attitudes and behaviors of literally thousands of consumers, of every stripe and variety, in everything from in-depth, at-home ethnographic interviews to 60-second curbside surveys. After tens of thousands of interactions, we think that nobody knows consumers like we do.

Our clients have included some of the top companies in the world, and over the years we've had a hand in creating a number of successful and influential new products, across myriad categories.

Over a decade ago we began tracking trends... looking at how and why they emerge, and where they're headed next... so we always stay one step in front of the consumer. Then we pioneered a process called Consumer Immersion, which involves tours of category-related hotspots, expert interviews, hands-on experiential visits, and a multitude of real-world consumer interactions. During our Immersions we break bread with consumers in cutting-edge restaurants, sip cocktails with them in their favorite bars, and query them on the street, at the gym, and in the supermarket. Together with our clients, we see how life looks from the consumer's perspective and let that learning inform all of the brainstorming and insight building that follows.

C-Types grew out of our Consumer Immersion work. We noticed similarities among many of the consumers with whom we interacted, seeing the same types of consumers showing up again and again, across different product categories. Eventually we developed a new way of categorizing consumers according to the similarities we noticed. This book is the result. It's an in-depth exploration of the nine most interesting consumer types we've uncovered. These are the types we think are and will be influential going forward: the consumers who will set the trends in art, music, technology, consumer products and services, and more. Hopefully you'll find it useful, and more importantly, interesting and insight-inspiring.

Part 1: What's a C-Type and Why Should I Care?

1.1 C-Types Defined

Do you know a couple who shops only at Whole Foods, who proudly drives a Prius, and who took three vacations last year, all to exotically remote locales? You may just know some E-litists.

Who's the person you turn to when you need to make a decision about buying a new computer, flat screen plasma TV, or pda? Most likely, your friendly local Geek God.

Are you a guy who's changed a week's worth of diapers? Taken the 3 a.m. feeding? Been the one who your preadolescent daughter turns to when she needs social advice or emotional support? Congratulations, you may just be a Denim Dad.

In today's world, it's a truism that there's simply no mass audience out there which shares common goals, values, and interests. So it's more important than ever to find ways of understanding the whole through its component parts. C-Types are a valuable tool in this effort.

So what exactly is a C-Type? It's a rich, three-dimensional portrait of a type of consumer derived from their key attitudes and behaviors, their social status, and other demographic factors. It's a portrait combining quantifiable data backed up by real-world expressions of personality. C-Types are not flat, factual constructs; each type has a multifaceted persona—a face, if you will—which makes them easier for marketers to interact with, to understand on a deeper level, and to figure out how to reach effectively.

C-Types are not essentially demographic constructs, though demographics do play a part. Some C-Types, it's true, are defined in great part by age and/or gender, or are found more frequently in certain regions of the country or in a certain economic bracket. But C-Types are not to be confused with the rough groupings of consumers categorized by "life stages" or "lifestyles." (A generational swath as massive as the Boomers, for instance, is made up of lots of different and overlapping C-Types, while Gay Americans or Evangelical Christians, to choose two wildly divergent lifestyle groups, contain multiple C-Types within their somewhat self-defined ranks.)

Psychographics are closer to the C-Type model, but C-Types are not merely Psychographic Profiles by another name. In general, psychographic profiling is a distillation process that looks at all the features of a particular market segment and, finding the points of commonality, casts off oddities and irregularities that don't fit, ending up with a portrait of a generic everyman that in truth resembles no real man (or woman).

C-Types, on the other hand, are all about the idiosyncratic characteristics that make consumers distinct. C-Types take contradictions into account. They are also defined with the help of immediately recognizable, everyday references (e.g., what stores these consumers shop in, what brands or designers they associate themselves with, which foods and beverages they consume) or through illuminating examples of the type drawn from popular culture.

C-Types emerged when we looked at where demographics and psychographics intersected, informed by a whole lot of real-world experience on our part. They are a conceptual space where "who consumers are," "what consumers think," "what consumers do" and "how consumers express themselves in today's marketplace" all come together.

There are obviously precedents for this construct. "Soccer Moms" was a type that came to prominence during the political campaigns of the 90s, but it personified something so immediately recognizable that it remains with us 15 years later. "Metrosexuals," another recent type that made a splash (debased by use as a pop culture punchline, and perhaps a more dubious construct to begin with) has not proved as durable. But the notion of definable types goes back even further than that. If someone says "Beatnik" to you, you probably still immediately picture black turtlenecks, goatees, bongos, and Maynard G. Krebs. "Flapper" still carries associations as disparate as bobbed hair, the Charleston, women in the workplace, and the first era of sexual liberation. The list could go on. How about "Hippie" or "Astronaut's Wife" or even "The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit"? In all these cases, the image evoked is of a three-dimensional being. This distinguishes consumer types from mere advertising characters ("the Arrow shirt collar man") or comic stereotypes ("valley girl") whose very essence is flat, and whose power comes from their simplicity and lack of nuance. True consumer types are rich with resonances, which is what makes consumer typing such a powerful tool. When you describe a consumer with a term like "Hippie" you can picture his hair and clothing, understand his political views, his attitudes toward social issues, almost hear his favorite tunes on the radio. Maybe even smell some fragrant smoke in the air.

SELECTIONS from Part 2: The 9 C-Types Shaping Today's Marketplace

2.1 Karma Queens [excerpts]

Have you ever noticed a woman of a certain age walking through a mall dressed in Birkenstocks and Eileen Fisher? Or a woman putting her groceries—a mix of organic produce, gourmet teas, and high-end bath products—into the trunk of her VW Beetle? How about the older woman leaving the gym with a rolled-up yoga mat in her hand and a satisfied smile on her face?

It's very likely you've just seen a Karma Queen.

There are a number of vaguely derogatory terms out there for these women, such as crunchy, granola or aging hippie, but these veiled insults don't mean much to the Karma Queen. Karma Queens are individuals with a strong sense of self, trying their best to achieve harmony with the universe. And no matter what others think, they continue to march to their own drum.

Typically in their forties or fifties, these are women who have lived long enough to know who they are, what they want, and what they believe in. Although age is a less important consideration than outlook and attitude; Karma Queens can be found as young as 20 or as old as 70. They need not be wealthy, but most are at least comfortably well-off. Their purchase decisions are, generally speaking, not constrained by financial considerations. Rather, this type puts her money where her ideals are, choosing to patronize companies that are as ecologically minded and socially conscious as she is. And her discretionary income is likely to be spent on intangible services like spa treatments or visits to retreats, rather than on status markers like a big house or expensive jewelry.

While the heart of every Karma Queen lies in unspoiled countryside, you are more likely to find Karma Queens concentrated in urban centers or in the densely populated regions surrounding cities. Is it because they can find a wider range of organic and/or alternative products and services there? Or is it because the underlying impulse to embrace a Karma Queen outlook comes from some sort of "civilization backlash" unlikely to be encountered in a more remote area? It could simply be that Karma Queens are social creatures who believe in the value of human interaction.

Wherever they reside, you're likely to find the Karma Queen at the center of an extended network of family and friends. She is often the glue that binds together a community, or she stays in touch with far-flung relatives. As such, her sphere of influence is large, and (make no mistake about it) she can be very influential. Karma Queens enjoy spending their money, and they like to spend it on pampering themselves and those closest to them. Their daily purchases set the pattern for their households, and their gifts to others (which lean toward the cutting edge and often come from the health and wellness or natural foods categories) can expose these consumers to goods and services with which they were previously unfamiliar.

The origins of the Karma Queen type lead inexorably back to the sixties. Even Karma Queens too young to have taken part in the Summer of Love are at least spiritual descendents of those tumultuous times. For aging female Boomers, the Karma Queen outlook marks a return to the idealism and spiritualism of their vanished youth. After the excesses of the greed-is-good eighties and the dot-com nineties, Karma Queens happily embrace the ethos of the early women's movement with its "rap sessions," Women's Lib, and bestsellers like *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. Karma Queens, like the hippies of the sixties, are interested in the exploration and exaltation of the individual, but remain cognizant of every individual's effect and impact on society, community, and the planet as a whole.

If you look carefully at what you are doing, you can ask, "Am I making the world better or worse?" We pretty much have that choice about everything in life.

Karma Queens: Food and Drink

Eating and drinking are not mindless activities for Karma Queens. Members of this C-Type carefully consider which foods they will eat, and which they won't. While many (though not all) are vegetarian or vegetarian-leaning, it goes almost without saying that they prefer natural or organic varieties to processed products. Karma Queens were the pioneers of the green revolution, helping push sales of organic goods through the roof (retail sales of organic products have increased steadily from \$3.6 billion in 1997 to \$13.8 billion in 2005) and bringing to the forefront ideas such as sustainability and the local-foods movement. Natural and/or organic packaged goods brands are now reaching more consumers than ever before, and even mainstream brands such as Healthy Choice and Lean Cuisine, two of the largest in the prepared foods category, continue to grow, based on their better-for-you, if not all-natural, halos.

I have not eaten meat for probably 25 or 30 years, because I believe in more sustainable food systems. I thought it was something that was worth doing.

Mary, age 58

"I try very hard to only have organic food," Ms. Varcher says. "The accumulation of chemicals and pesticides can be really hard on us, especially in small bodies. Sure, it is a financial sacrifice, but it is also expensive to eat processed food in restaurants. I'm not that strict about it, though. What we have at home is quality, so if Sasha wants to go to a birthday party and eat, that's OK. I believe the closer the food is to the original state, the better it is for us. That doesn't mean I don't eat out."

Catherine Varcher, 41, *The Washington Times*, 7/6/03

But despite this talk of halos and organics, Karma Queens are not Spartan in their relationship to food. Nor are they food disapprovers—quite the opposite. They relish what they perceive as the chance to connect with the glory and wonder of nature's bounty. And they're not averse to pampering themselves. Of course, their idea of decadence is more likely to be a steaming cup of (herbal) tea rather than a sumptuous meal at a trendy restaurant. In fact, helped along by Karma Queens, tea sales are up by more than \$3.4 billion over the past decade. There are now 1,200 to 1,500 tea salons operating across the country, up from only 200 five years ago.

When it comes to the other hot beverage, Karma Queens look to the Fair Trade Coffee cooperative, an international agency founded to guarantee coffee growers and harvesters a living wage. (Coffee is, after oil, the world's most valuable traded commodity.) Last year the Fair Trade governing agency certified only \$208 million worth of coffee (out of a nearly \$20 billion American coffee market), but Fair Trade sales have tripled in the past three years and constitute a growing slice of the booming \$8.4 billion gourmet coffee market. Today Fair Trade coffee is imported and roasted by 280 U.S. companies and sold at 18,000 retail outlets.

The overall message of Karma Queens' relationship to what they ingest is that they see the world from the outside in, rather than the other way around. Which is to say, they don't see the food they eat as having been put on the planet just for them. They feel that they must place themselves and all humankind in the context of the natural order, to make sure there is a planet to bequeath to future generations. And they try (as best they can) to keep their own bodies in tune with the rhythms and organic processes of nature. When marketing food products to Karma Queens, stress any benefits that go beyond simple nutrition. Any-thing that leverages the source story of the ingredients will help them see a greater value in the product.

Newman's Own was one of the first brands to appeal to this C-Type by focusing attention

on the charitable causes supported by the company's profits. This strategy has since been taken up by many brands, and very successfully. Toward the future, there may be an opportunity for forward-thinking brands to take this cause-and-effect marketing to the next level. A corporation that creates a program of devoting actual hours and energy to charitable organizations, rather than (or in addition to) simply giving financial support, would be likely to garner much positive attention from Karma Queen customers. Remember, Karma Queens make purchasing decisions with their brains and their souls.

At dinnertime we have a ritual of saying something we appreciate about the day. We often recognize the farmer, the animal, the land, and the water for making it possible for us to have this nourishing food.

Jen, 43, mother of two

2.2 Parentocrats [excerpts]

It's a scary and competitive world, no doubt about it. But there are certain parents for whom worry seems to have gotten the better of them. These parents obsess over their kids' safety and are determined to see that their kids succeed no matter what the cost. We call them Parentocrats.

The first thing that needs to be said, and which cannot be stressed enough, is that Parentocrats act out of love. While many of them do pursue high-status prizes for their kids (e.g., attendance at a top-ranked college), they are genuinely motivated by their concern for their offspring. Parentocrats truly believe that certain socially accepted markers of success will ensure their kids a lifetime of security and happiness. In this quest, however, they often deny their children some of the classical joys of childhood—the ability to experiment and fail and the freedom to waste time and be carefree.

The Parentocrat impulse manifests itself in two distinct, if related, ways: first, the need to protect their kids from all threats, and second, the desire to ensure that their kids excel in every way. A kind of familial narcissism permeates the thoughts of this C-Type. Not only do Parentocrats believe that their children are special, they believe that their children are important to the world. Therefore, they must shield these special creatures from any outside influence that might harm them and see that they get the opportunities to surpass their peers.

Parentocrats have always existed, but it is a type that is most definitely on the rise. Broadly speaking, members of this C-Type come from the middle and upper-middle classes, the large swath of the population that requires two incomes to support the family, but has a large enough combined income to afford music lessons, sports trainers, computers, and the like. Parentocrats usually have small numbers of children, or a single child—all the better to lavish time and resources on them. This makes sense, since parents with many offspring often reach a point where they are so relaxed, or just so plain sleep-deprived, they can't muster the energy it takes to micromanage like a Parentocrat. Additionally, the older consumers are when they begin to reproduce, the more likely it is that they will fall into this C-Type. Couples who procreate in the second half of their thirties or early forties, especially if they have had problems conceiving their "miracle babies," often become Parentocrats. But it's important to note that Parentocrats can fit into almost any age demographic, since their kids can range in age from one week to college age.

The growth of this C-Type can be partly ascribed to economic realities faced by all families today. We live in an era of two working parent households. As a result, there seems to be less time to practice the hands-on parenting that was the norm in earlier generations. Feeling guilty over this, Parentocrats overcompensate.

It's also true that we live in an increasingly numbers-driven world, one where it's easy for parents to get caught up in benchmarking their kids at every stage of development. From a

newborn's Apgar score, assigned just moments after birth to the SATs (or the LSATs or the medical boards, and on and on), it's inevitable that some parents let the numbers do the talking for them. Comparative rankings, if the news is good, offer the opportunity for parental pride, thus Parentocrats never stop checking and assessing. The marketing implications of this are key. Parentocrats may be the rare breed of consumer who actually wants to see charts and statistics detailing the efficacy of a product, or a detailed ranking of a competitive set. They will actually pore over a detailed ad or visit a linked Web site that offers more information. Parentocrats like to do research and dig deep before making important purchase decisions. So offer them the opportunity.

Parentocrats and the Overscheduling Epidemic

No pickup games of stickball in the vacant lot for the kids of Parentocrats. This type prefers the regimented and supervised play of organized sports leagues. They believe that every moment of their kids' lives can and should be planned for and filled up. From even a young age, they work to arrange not only outings, field trips, and activities, but simple play dates for their kids. There are no hard-and-fast data as to when the formal "play date" replaced the old-fashioned "going over to a friend's house," but it seems as though it happened over the course of the 1980s, the decade during which (coincidentally or not) the urban myth about razor blades in Halloween candy became a favorite of the mainstream media. Parentocrats now feel an obligation to vet the households of all potential playmates and make sure an adult will be carefully monitoring playtime.

As free playtime has diminished, competitive sports have catapulted to the forefront of the Parentocrat mindset. If their kids just express an interest in, or (especially) show an aptitude for a particular sport, Parentocrats will encourage them to refine their skills with a personal trainer or private coach. This obsessive behavior can backfire, however. According to some physicians, overuse injuries are a growing problem among kids. "It's all about doing too much, too soon, too fast," says Dr. Eric Small, director of the Sports Medicine Center for Young Athletes at Blythedale Children's Hospital in Valhalla, New York. Torn knee ligaments, or ACL tears, have reportedly reached epidemic levels in high schools and colleges. Even if no one is injured, some psychologists see the focus on achievement that leads to overtraining as harmful in itself. For the kids of these sports-obsessed Parentocrats, there's precious little fun left in after-school sports and playground activities.

Our parents think we're insane because we're flying all over the place . . . But I feel it's part of my job, my obligation, to expose my children to the arts, sports, various activities.

Angela, mother of 4

My kids were involved with many, many activities . . . ice skating, hockey, soccer, ballet, tap dancing, chess lessons, Spanish lessons, Chinese lessons, piano lessons, violin lessons, swimming lessons, lacrosse . . . You want your child to have everything you never had.

Marjorie, a stay-at-home mom

One recent study found a dramatic rise in the "overscheduling" of children since the 1970s. Children ages 3 to 12 lost 12 hours per week of overall free time, including a 25 percent drop in playtime and a 50 percent drop in unstructured outdoor activities. There are many possible causes of this. Some of it is simple: keeping up with the Joneses. Or, as noted earlier, it may stem from working parents' attempts to make the most of the limited time they have to spend with their kids.

There's so much pressure, like if your kids aren't involved in something, what's wrong with you?

Teri, *Arizona Republic*, 8/17/06

Overscheduling is an epidemic in America. Parents are overscheduled and parents overschedule their kids.

Charles Fay, school psychologist/parenting consultant

If you live in a neighborhood of overachieving parents raising overachieving, overscheduled kids, you're going to feel pressure to be that way and guilt if you're not.

Cathi Hanauer, author of "The Bitch in the House," in the *Chicago Tribune*, 12/21/04

But some of the need to schedule and supervise can also be put down to the culture of litigation and liability we live in, which seems to especially permeate the suburbs. There is a vicious circle at work, an insidious logic to the creation of some of these suburban Parentocrats. Since parents often must sign waivers for even innocuous activities, they then think that these activities must be more dangerous than they imagined. Therefore, they demand more safety precautions, which make the institutions react to protect themselves by making parents sign more waivers. Sometimes the children lose out completely, when school and play-ground administrators decide that the only course is to simply bar kids from climbing on the jungle gym unsupervised or from participating at all in whatever the activity was. In those cases it's up to mom to plan another play date or trip to the children's museum.

It's too dangerous [for children to be unsupervised]. I can spend five minutes and take [my daughter] to school, rather than wonder if she's ok. . . . I always tell her, 'If you're going to fall and hurt yourself, I want to see it.'

Victoria, in *Modesto Bee*, 8/12/06

Of course, scheduling all of these various activities and balancing different family members' desires and commitments is a full-time job (see sidebar Chairman of the Brood). In marketing to this C-Type, always highlight any time-saving elements—whatever the category, the most efficient product or service will likely win out. But there is one caveat to this advice. You need to always be sensitive to the tone of your advertising when mentioning speed or simplicity. No Parentocrat wants to be perceived as rushing through his or her parental duties. By its nature, "Parentocrat" is a double-edged term, and you need to ensure that your product's positioning casts a positive light on Parentocrat attitudes and behaviors. This C-Type doesn't want to be seen as overzealous, just involved. Not as overprotective, but prudent.

2.3 Denim Dads [excerpts]

In the early 1970s, feminism was in full force. Women were entering the workforce in droves, bursting into even the most traditionally male industries. *Ms. Magazine* began publication. Girls of the time were told they could grow up to be "anything they wanted to be." And the first generation of Denim Dads was taking it all in . . . as little boys.

Though they wouldn't technically belong to this C-Type for decades (after all, one can't be a Denim Dad without first fathering or adopting a child), the stage was already being set. A favorite children's album of the time—Marlo Thomas's *Free to Be . . . You and Me*, an infectious work that espoused feminist ideals, such as gender equality and sharing the housework, in catchy songs and comedy sketches—was aimed as much at boys as girls. In this

album's carefree vision of a utopian future, hundreds of years of cultural baggage could be repacked, creating a generation of happy and centered grown-ups unconstrained by restrictive gender roles.

But the road to adulthood wasn't all rosy. For this was the group that, upon entering the workforce in the early 1990s, would become known as Generation X, and be derided as slackers and cynics. Cultural anthropologists blamed the many negative events that Xers witnessed during their coming-of-age years, including the Cold War, AIDS, a flagging economy, and rising divorce rates. Yet at least some of Generation X's influences, most notably feminism and having to fend for themselves as "latchkey children," inspired a social distinction that would finally earn this generation some praise. Generation X, having lived through what some called the "demise of the American family" (a full third of Xers had divorced parents), was determined to do things differently when they had their own kids.

Gen X moms certainly differ significantly from their counterparts in prior generations, but the arguably more interesting shift has occurred among Gen X dads, the group of 25- to 40-year-olds who largely makes up this C-Type. Forget the buttoned-down, three-piece-suit-wearing fathers of yesteryear, who arrived home from work just in time for dinner, and who left nurturing strictly to mom. When it comes to parenting, Denim Dads have a new style and a new attitude about what it means to be a man with kids. Without much soul-searching or critical thinking, they've made parenthood and the maintenance of a household their priorities. Denim Dads seek out a better work-life balance, because they believe they can get more satisfaction at home than they can on the job. Creating a happy home life takes precedence over acquiring toys (a stereotypical vice of this age cohort). Having enough flexibility in their work schedules to allow for this increased familial involvement means more to them than climbing the corporate ladder to the very top.

The "ideal worker model," where the employee is supposed to put workplace as the first priority, and kids/family come second, is not a healthy model for kids, for moms or for dads.

Chip, 34-year-old father of 2

The fact that many men are delaying fatherhood may be increasing the maturity and wisdom they are bringing to the role of father. Today, the average American man is marrying a full five years later (at age 28 versus 23) than he did in 1950, which means that most Denim Dads are probably starting families closer to age 30. And they recognize that a strong paternal presence can have a beneficial impact on their kids.

My motivation to be a stay-at-home dad came a lot from being a Big Brother with Big Brothers/Big Sisters for 7 years. Most of the kids in that program have little or no contact with their fathers, and I really got to see the consequences of that
Riggs, on Dadstayshome.com

I think older Dads are more likely to stay at home than younger ones.

Dave, Rebeldad.com

Changes in society have also played a part in the creation of the Denim Dad. Technology has made it easier for Denim Dads to work from home, full-time or via flex-time schedules. The stigma of the stay-at-home dad (think Michael Keaton's character in the 1983 film Mr. Mom) has been shed, and continued advances toward gender equality have meant less pressure on men to be the primary breadwinner.

The only people that hassle me anymore are older women who assume I'm playing

“Mr. Mom” and giving Mom a break. They don’t even bother me anymore since I realize they’re making assumptions based on their experience growing up and raising kids.

SGTDad, at parents.com

All of this translates into more face time with the kids, more influence on the kids and on their upbringing, and an entirely new definition of fatherhood. Kids, say hello to the Denim Dad.

Boys Will Be Boys: High-Tech Baby Gadgets

Denim Dads may play a momlike role, but don’t try to market to them like you do to moms. Dads still favor their gadgets. Take a look at some of the baby products that have done a good job appealing to Denim Dads’ tech-happy sides.

Delphi Intelligent Child Restraint

Though not yet on the market at press time, this car seat monitor will give high-tech support to the type of Denim Dad who doesn’t like to ask for help installing his child’s car seat. Child seats are installed in- correctly 80 percent of the time, but this built-in monitor senses whether the belts are tight and the seat is correctly positioned and, if there is something wrong, a red light signals the Denim Dad in which of the four zones the problem lies. Also in the works for Delphi are high-tech crib sensors that can do things like detect motion and breathing irregularities.

Lullabub Self-Rocking Cradle

Denim Dads of newborns want to care for their baby the best way they know how, but it’s often exhausting and Denim Dads certainly won’t turn away a helping hand. Babyhugs’ Lullabub gives them just that. The Australian company has come up with a remote-controlled crib-rocker which lulls your infant to sleep. The Lullabub modules are motorized cups you place under the legs of a crib that produce a gentle motion that’s a lot like the vibration of a moving car (and what kid doesn’t fall asleep in the car?). The product has four settings and an automatic timer, so it can be shut off after a certain amount of time. Visit www.lullabub.com to find out more.

The DadGear Diaper Vest

In recent years, new designers have emerged with hip, funky fashionable diaper bags—perfect for the en vogue mom, but never for the Denim Dad (or any dad, for that matter). Denim Dads, nevertheless, have the same transporting needs that moms have, and that’s where the DadGear Diaper Vest comes in. It’s got large pockets for spare diapers, tall pockets for bottles, chest pockets for gadgets like an MP3 player and a cell phone, and a special travel wipe pocket for unexpected cleanups. For more info, visit www.dadgear.com

2.6 Middlemen [excerpts]

The child is father of the man.” So wrote William Wordsworth in 1802. Let’s give him the benefit of the doubt; maybe when he wrote it the sentiment rang true. Two centuries on, the situation is less clear. Lately it seems that for some males the child is just the father of a bigger child, or (at best) the father of the “guy.” Today’s young men (and we’re speaking here of the generation that has come of age since the early 1990s) appear to be creating a new definition of manhood. This new male type owes more to the jokey carelessness of adolescence than it does to the traditional burdens of adult responsibility.

Bearing in mind that there are exceptions, the average MiddleMan is an unmarried

college graduate who most definitely doesn't cook. They don't all live with their parents, although that is true of many. Primarily a highly visible and influential segment of the 21- to 35-year-old male demographic, MiddleMen are defined more by mindset and behavior than life stage. So it's possible to find some examples even among older men. And while there are women who share the same habits and sense of humor as the guys, the wellspring of this C-Type is the preoccupations of the adolescent male.

To be clear, the notion that youngish American adults are in a perpetual state of adolescence is not new. From a 2002 article in Newsweek magazine (which referred to them as "adultolescents") to pieces in lad magazines like FHM and Maxim, the idea that American kids are re-fusing to grow up has been widely disseminated. It has been in the subject of books (for example, *Rejuvenile: Kickball, Cartoons, Cupcakes, and the Reinvention of the American Grown-up* by Christopher Noxon) and a topic of conversation at dinner parties. Why we think this type is still worth reporting on is the overlooked effect that MiddleMen have had on the culture as a whole, especially the wider culture's construction of masculinity. The MiddleMan type has helped make fantasy sports leagues and video gaming the nation's top pastimes, turned sneakers into collectibles and, most especially, shifted the notion of what we think is funny. The MiddleMan sense of humor has had a profound effect on what the rest of us watch on TV, as well as the kind of films that reap big profits. This type seems well entrenched in the consumer zeitgeist and shows no signs of going away.

One of the most visible MiddleMan markers is their tendency to re-side in a parental home even after graduating college. The number of college graduates who move back home has been increasing in recent years for many reasons, but most young men and women remain only a brief time. (For many, male as well as female, the impetus is purely financial. Today's college graduates owe 85 percent more in student loans than the graduates of a decade ago.) Some 54.8 percent of men between ages 21 and 24 now live with their parents but by 25 this number drops significantly. It is this group, the 13.5 percent of men 25 to 30 who still live in their childhood homes, which forms the nucleus of the Middle-Man C-Type. It's not a small group. According to the 2000 census, nearly 4 million people between the ages of 25 and 34 live with their parents.

I think it's perfectly legitimate . . . conditions in the real world of today almost demand a parent's support—for a while.

Robert, on the alumni.unc.edu message board

We don't want to kick [our 25-year-old] out but we wonder when he'll go . . . there are no indicators to assess his status on the scale of "progress" and "moving ahead."

Lindsey, on the AARP message board

It's worth noting that there are MiddleMan-related marketing implications for which MiddleMen themselves are not the target. Consider the mother of a MiddleMan. She's still the primary shopper and chef for the household and, in a strange way, the old stereotype "mom as gate-keeper" still has relevance in her home. Whether you address her with an empathetic or a humorous tone, you'll still likely gain her loyalty. Taco Bell, a brand that has shown itself wise to the MiddleMan C-Type (see eating habits, below) took the humorous path, with its 2006 "good to go" campaign. In these ads, restless parents use Taco Bell food's portability (" . . . it's good to go") to lure their twentysomething son off the couch, out of the house, and into a waiting car loaded with his belongings. This type of advertising strategy could just as profitably be applied to many categories: household cleaners, cough-cold products, T-shirts, etc. Yesterday's mom expected that packing junior off to college marked the end of her housekeeping role, but more and more this is not strictly the case, and that may be interesting to acknowledge

in your marketing.

For this C-Type, college is now seen as a life stage, with its own set of rituals and behaviors never intended to be a model for life in the “real world.” So when MiddleMen graduate, they are not ready to be truly adult. College may have prepared these MiddleMen to hold down lucrative jobs, but that doesn’t mean they’re ready to cook, clean, or do laundry for themselves. There are studies to confirm the theory. Social scientists like Frank Furstenberg at the University of Pennsylvania see the emergence of a new phase of life called “early adulthood.” And some view this as a positive life trend. Jeffrey Arnett, author of *Emerging Adulthood: The Winding Road from the Late Teens through the Twenties*, suggests, “This is the one time of their lives when they’re not responsible for anyone else or to anyone else. So they have this wonderful freedom to really focus on their own lives and work on becoming the kind of person they want to be.”

This time for me is about taking risks. What my parents have done is given me the opportunity not to settle, and I’m taking advantage of that.

Evan, age 29

... it’s just easier to concentrate on finding the right job without having to worry about other stuff. And there is a lot to worry about when you leave home.

Biggt, on the gamemakergames.com forum

For many MiddleMen the period after college becomes a period of job-hopping. Those not living with parents are usually found cohabiting with roommates in communal living environments where expenses are shared and therefore reduced. These unmarried men live a life that often resembles life in a frat house, replete with beer in the fridge and a ring around the tub. Surprisingly enough, according to Roommates.com, it’s people ages 25 to 34 who form the biggest segment of their users, people whom previous generations would have expected to live independently (if not with a spouse). In addition to the social elements of living with roommates, the sharing of expenses lessens the pressure to stay at jobs that are considered displeasing. Among MiddleMen there is often the attitude that work ought to be, somehow, fun.

These attitudes and behaviors generally last until marriage. Given that the median age for first marriage for men is now nearly 27, this can be quite a few years. A survey for the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series looked at men and women in 1960 and 2000, comparing their level of transition through the “traditional benchmarks” of leaving home, finishing school, getting married, having a child, and becoming financially independent. In 1960, 65 percent of men had passed those benchmarks by age 30. That figure had fallen to 31 percent by 2000.

Men and women are marrying later, launching their careers or simply sowing oats instead of settling down to start a family with a spouse and kids in their teens or early 20s.

“Kids flock back to parents’ nest,” *The San Francisco Chronicle*, 3/11/06

[This] generation is finicky at best, and full of loners. They don’t really date in college—they “hook up,” as if sex is just another mechanical accomplishment, to be tallied and put on a resume.

“The Long Goodbye,” *Newsweek*, 5/22/06

Many of the factors that created the MiddleMan phenomenon reach back a quarter of a century to a time when most of this bunch were still tykes. The generation that came of age in the 70s and early 80s grew up at a time when the American family was breaking down, when divorce was becoming commonplace, and when the mood of the country was cynical. There

was an absence of positive father figures for many of these boys, both on a personal level (for children of divorced households) and on a macro level. The presidents during the 70s were Nixon, Ford, and Carter—none of them, at the time, was considered a positive, strong male role model—and the overriding message of the culture, at least as it related to personal behavior and interpersonal relationships, was an “if-it-feels-good-do-it” hedonism. In addition, this was a generation where most young men made it into adulthood without a draft or a war to serve as a moral testing ground. It was a time of general prosperity, a time when a segment of pampered boys was uniquely prepared to mature into a cohort of eternal boy-men.

2.7 Culture Crossers [excerpts]

Members of our next C-Type are defined as much by what they aren't as by what they are. Which is to say, they define themselves by whom they choose to be, not by the culture, class, or ethnicity they're born into. They choose freely from all the world has to offer and leap over differences and social boundaries as if they aren't there—hence the name Culture Crossers. Visit any high school, open any youth magazine, or turn on MTV, and you'll be struck by the fact that what you find not only celebrates diversity but embraces and builds on it to an extent unimaginable in the past.

Culture Crossers primarily exist within the 15- to 30-year-old consumer demographic, making them the youngest of our C-Types. They may or may not belong to an ethnic minority; they may or may not be multiracial. Whatever their background, they're engaged in cultural ideas from outside the United States. They define themselves in totally new—foreign if you will—ways, bulldozing through boundaries to find what's cool and different.

It's important to note that we're not referring here to suburban kids who mimic their favorite hip-hop stars by wearing their jeans slung low and adopting “thug” attitudes. Culture Crossers are not just white kids bored with vanilla pop culture; they can be of any race and class. What unifies Culture Crossers is an interest in appropriating styles and customs from cultures other than their own. They're part of the new frontier in coolness, picking and choosing from a world of global trends to create a new and idiosyncratically personal image. Culture Crossers are the young people to watch if you want to know where tomorrow's trends will originate.

It's easy to see why Culture Crossers have emerged now. As members of the most diverse and open-minded generation in American society, they've grown up hearing buzzwords like “multicultural” and “inclusive” incessantly. Their social and educational circles likely have included peers of varied ethnic backgrounds. Maybe they've even attended classes in racial harmony at school. Some were (or have friends who were) born overseas and brought to this country to be adopted by American parents. Others may be recent immigrants or the children of immigrants whose families have made it a point to maintain their cultural identities.

This generation is accustomed to seeing mixed race couples treated with nonchalance, whether on television or in real life. The television hit *Grey's Anatomy* features an Asian-American medical resident dating an African-American surgeon, but it is not a factor in the couple's plot-line—it's just the way the roles were cast. Interracial celebrity pairings, like model Heidi Klum and musician Seal, exist in the spotlight without controversy. And this generation's role models come in all shapes and colors. Some—like super-golfer Tiger Woods, who has referred to himself as Cablinasian (a word that combines “Caucasian,” “black,” “Indian,” and “Asian”)—are themselves an amalgam of ethnicities.

I have Sikh, Hindu, Pagan, Neopagan, and Christian friends, and most are fine with my choice of religion [Wicca] and with each other's. I do not tolerate those out to bash other religions—or race, or sexuality, come to that.

Fey Scissorhands at greatestjournal.com

Culture Crossers grew up exposed to the world, not just through television but through the Web. They barely, if at all, recall life without the Internet—the one technological breakthrough that has turned all of us into global citizens. Ideas, trends, products, and music from all over the world can be accessed by the touch of a keyboard button.

In short, a changing cultural landscape, amazing technological advances, and a new climate of open-mindedness have slowly merged. Yesterday's "melting pot" has been replaced by today's "salad bowl." Individualism, the preservation of customs and habits, and celebration of personal differences are in.

Culture Crossers: Fashion & Style

Perhaps the easiest way to identify a Culture Crosser is through the clothes he or she wears. Fashion is an area in which this C-Type can easily reference other cultures: an Indian batik print here, African beads there, or even a keffiyeh (a patterned scarf common in the Arab world) around the head to pull off a controversial look that some derogatorily refer to as "terrorist chic."

Want to make your parents angry and want to be provocative? Wear a keffiyeh.

David Abitbol, cofounder of the blog
jewlicious.com, *L.A. Times*, 4/9/06

i wont confine myself to just asian fashion, it will be mostly about My-kindafashion. :) or in other words, whatever i like.

fashionista.blogspot.com

Culture Crossers and the fashion industry alike look for sartorial inspiration outside of the United States. In 2005, South Asian colors, beading, and embroidery were all over the runways. And it isn't just high design that's being influenced. The references have trickled down all the way to mass market retailers such as Target. That year, Target introduced a new concept called the "Global Bazaar," in which furniture and other housewares from India and Asia, Latin America, Africa, and Europe were for sale. Affordable pieces from all over the world? Perfect for cash-strapped Culture Crossers just beginning to set up households of their own.

When it comes to street fashion, Culture Crossers probably idealize Japanese design more than any other. The most notable brand is the monstrously successful A Bathing Ape (affectionately referred to as BAPE by brand loyalists), which attracted a cult following in Japan before doing the same in the United States (see Marketplace Evidence below). By some reports, the loud colors and cartoonish prints of Tokyo pop (which includes lines like BAPE) have bounced back to the young, urban market in the United States, from which it took its earliest cues. A checked fedora worn with custom Nike Air Jordans and a bright blue, cloud-covered hoodie might be an example (at least at this writing) of a Tokyo pop-style combination you might see on the street.

My friend's going to Japan, and I asked him to bring me back a BAPE hoodie. I don't even care what kind, as long as it's not available here.

Kernohan, on the SoleCollector.com message board

Temporary guerrilla stores, traveling boutiques and hybrid emporiums, selling everything from Belgian fashion experimentalia to limited-edition Japanese toys, are just some of the novelties setting the stage for a serious denouement at the cash register.

Horacio Silva, in the *New York Times Magazine*, 5/29/05

Of course, sneakers and T-shirts reign as the favored uniform of all youth. Microproduced, limited-edition tees, with obscure or foreign images and text are de rigeur for Culture Crossers. Online retailers like San Francisco-based Trainwreck Industries sell tees that mix American and international references (one shirt features Che Guevara made up like a member of Kiss—another, Chairman Mao as a DJ). The messages on the T-shirts may not always make sense to the average viewer, but that's just the way Culture Crossers like it.

Like T-shirts, sneakers are (in most cases) affordable enough for any- one to maintain a collection. In fact, some of the most popular Culture Crossing blogs include rambling musings on sneakers. The transition from word-of-mouth to word-of-blog has expanded the circle of influencers and opened up a whole new world of information exchange. Now they can find what they're looking for (or even what they didn't know they were looking for) by going online. In stores like New York's Flight Club and Alife, sneakers are even displayed on walls like they're art works in a gallery. Channeled in hip hop (Run DMC's 1986 classic "My Adidas" being one of the earliest, most noted examples; The Pack's 2006 hit "Vans" being one of the more recent), this global sneaker culture might have initially been controlled by brands like Adidas and Nike, but today's informed Culture Crosser demands a greater selection of colors and styles than even megabrands can provide.

When you walk into a room, people look at your feet first.

Miamian Gregory Fago, "Freaking for Sneakers,"
Time Magazine, 4/06

For Culture Crossers, this need to have apparel that is unique and hard to find creates extreme pressure for manufacturers. While ordinary consumers may complain about styles that are "last year," Culture Crossers will decry anything that's "too seen," even if they were all over it last month. One solution (that every marketer, no matter which category, should consider) is to invite the most cutting-edge, taste-making Culture Crossers to be part of the design and marketing team. Two notable, and noteworthy, examples come from Nike and Diesel, each of which plucked an artist from the underground art scene to join their efforts. Nike hired Stash, one of the best known and most notorious New York graffiti artists of the 80s, to design both T-shirts and sneakers. Diesel, meanwhile, commissioned the design work of Paul Pope, the only American comics writer and artist to have worked for Japan's largest manga (Japanese word for comics and print cartoons) publisher, and the man behind DC Comics' Batman: Year 100, a look into what the superhero might be like in the year 2039. As Culture Crossers find their inspiration in leading-edge figures like Stash and Pope, smart marketers can't go wrong by enlisting their assistance.

2.8 Geek Gods [excerpts]

It's safe to say that most consumers have a love/hate relationship with technology.

Not Geek Gods.

Geek Gods Geek Gods are the guys (and we're not being sexist; this C-Type is definitely male) who live for the latest gadget, systems up- grade, or other technological advance. Call them hooked-up, wired, or teched-out; just don't call them ambivalent. The Geek God's relation- ship with technology is a real love affair.

While the Geek God moniker may seem like an oxymoron, it really isn't. Today we live in an age when almost everyone under 40 totes an iPod, is wirelessly connected to the world around them, and does an in- creasing amount of shopping online. (Online holiday spending totaled \$19.6 billion in 2005, a 25 percent surge from the same period in 2004, according to comScore Networks.) In this tech-driven world, Geek Gods play revered roles: those of teacher, motivator, trendsetter, and sage. The former computer nerd or AV club geek from your high

school now possesses both the power and status of a god . . . or, well, at least a demigod.

As mentioned earlier, we've sculpted this C-Type as male. It's not that there are no tech-savvy females—far from it—but the contours of the type, as you will see, go beyond a facility with computers and gadgets. When it comes to social matters and the like, the smaller number of tech-head women exhibits a different set of characteristics and behaviors.

The majority of Geek Gods fall into the 20 to 35 demographic, are single, and have a fair amount of both money and free time (being a Geek God takes a good deal of time). A typical Geek God might spend hours a day perusing his favorite Web sites and posting messages on the latest software, the best deals, or some crafty way to outsmart “the system.” Another might spend hours rewiring his toaster to send a text message to his cell phone when his toast is ready. One Geek God we met recently told us he runs computer searches on the same 20 high-tech products every day until he finds the price he's looking for. Once he snags his deal, he's on to the next one. This type will do anything short of breaking the law to ensure that they maintain their position atop the technological power pyramid.

When I bought my first Mac I wasn't thrilled . . . so I upgraded the RAM myself.
Adam on [Lifehacker.com](#)

I have the most sophisticated home entertainment system of anyone I know . . .
and you won't believe how little I paid for it. You just have to know how to work
the system. . . .
Brian, on [about.com](#) home electronics message board

The rest of us, rather than begrudge Geek Gods their superior knowledge, love them for the fact that they are so inclined to share it with us. A Geek God's interest in sharing his discoveries, and being generous with his time and technical know-how, cannot be overstated. This type finds satisfaction in getting the information before anyone else and then in spreading it to others. If you're lucky enough to be the friend, family member, or colleague of a Geek God, you know what we're talking about. There's no need to do the research yourself. Tell your friendly Geek God your budget, and he'll find the perfect digital camera for you. He helped you set up your iPod three years ago. And he can always retrieve your lost data.

My friend is a computer geek. He put together his own PC, and he helps me
figure things out.
MrMike on [the-junkyard.net](#)

My friends often call or email and ask computer questions. I use a program that lets
me see their computer screen from my own.
Bob on [www.askbobrankin.com](#)

Almost everyone will agree that knowledge is power. And Geek Gods not only possess knowledge but they also possess the type of knowledge that's of-the-moment. In his bestselling *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century*, the New York Times Op-Ed columnist Thomas Friedman argues that globalization is driven by the technical advances of the digital revolution. It's a belief shared by many. Good news for Geek Gods, as this theory puts them in demand. It also secures them a seat at the proverbial table, whether that table is social or professional.

I have done more tech work for my coworkers off the job than I have on the job
most months.
GenericTech commenting on [AssociatedContent.com](#)

I've got a family gathering coming up, which means that I'll be cornered by aunts, uncles, and cousins asking me about Registry keys and device drivers. I've been functioning as the unofficial Bass family help desk for years.

Steve Bass from "Helpfulness Is Next to Geekliness"
on About.com, 4/30/03

Geek Gods and Sex

Despite the lingering stereotype of the socially awkward, dateless computer nerd, Geek Gods usually have a wide circle of friends and even (gasp!) romantic lives. This is not so surprising when you consider the qualities this C-Type, as a group, embodies: intelligence, diligence, curiosity, and financial stability. While they may not have the qualities typically associated with sex appeal (e.g., physical attractiveness, athletic prowess), their technological savvy often becomes their passport to relationships.

Intimacy, however, does not come easily for Geek Gods. Since they're defined by gadgets and computer bytes, it makes sense that they might find more comfort in hardware than in the murky waters of emotions. Thankfully, the Geek God doesn't have to navigate these waters without help from technology. Their preferred method is not much different from the way in which most modern-day teens interact: abbreviated text messages, emoticons to express very real physical reactions, e-mail flirting.

[Text messages are] little electronic waves and nods that, just like real waves and nods, aren't meant to do much more than establish a connection—or disconnection, as the case may be—without getting into specifics.

The New York Times Magazine, 1/22/06

Technology affords connection without intimacy, a tempting barrier that preserves the power of the Geek God. It's also important to note that technology is often the topic of conversation, as well as the method, for this type. Remember, it's what Geek Gods know best and what they use to connect with others, from family members to colleagues to romantic interests.

Although the typical Geek God is unlikely to have six-pack abs (or to waste much time worrying about not having them), there is, as with everybody, the desire to be seen as sexy and desirable. This creates an opportunity for marketers. You can use this tension in your advertising to create humor or empathy by playing against what is typically considered sexy, and positing intellectual and nerdy as "sexy" instead.

Actually, the idea of the nerd as a sex symbol might not be that far-fetched. Lately there seems to be a newfound passion for Geeks. Fashionable T-shirts have appeared emblazoned with slogans like "I Love My Geek." The TV show *Beauty and the Geek* followed the cohabitation of a group of self-defined geeks and a troupe of buxom beauties. The goal of the program (ostensibly) was to show that the two groups have much they can offer each other: knowledge on the one side, social panache on the other. One woman, interviewed by an Australian newspaper, explained geek appeal very simply, saying, "Geeks are cool, because it's about being able to do things other, less tech-savvy people can't." On its simplest level, knowledge is sexy, and the Geek God's kindness, sensitivity, loyalty, and helpfulness are actually winning him dates these days.

I want someone who'll take me to concerts AND anime-cons. Someone who can reformat my hard drive for me and keep me up to date on which programs are best to pirate software and mp3s with. Someone who can help me with website layouts and . . . and . . . and . . . I want a geek, dammit!

Mandysrad on the GeekCulture.com message board

The true test of a sexy geek is Making Stuff. Robots, art, what have you—we go for guys who can design and build some cool and unexpected thing. That is HOT! Watching someone do what he's good at is a turn on that beats a Calvin Klein underwear model body.

Jane on gamegirladvance.com

Geek Gods and “Open Sourcing”

As mentioned above, whatever information Geek Gods acquire is meant to be communicated to others, a trait that makes them uniquely suited for the concept of open sourcing. Open sourcing was started by software programmers who shared the source code they developed with other programmers. (The source code is the actual lines of words, numbers, and incomprehensible clusters of characters that tell a computer what to do and how to do it,) They gave it away for free, because tech folks in general believe information wants to be free.

As the code moved from programmer to programmer, it was read, changed, and redistributed. Performance upgrades were made; bugs were discovered and fixed. Through the open source process, software has evolved and advanced to new levels, at record speed. Open source has been so successful that it's precipitated a fundamental shift in how code is now being written. Many pieces of code are now being “open sourced.” An army of Geek Gods took command of the operating software for Google maps and reprogrammed it to create Google map mashups. These mash-ups allow users to overlay fun, sometimes meaningless, data, such as the locations of potholes, taco stands, and UFO sightings, over the map of a given locale. It's just one way Geek Gods have left their imprint on highly utilized pieces of technology. In an odd twist of the capitalist marketplace, some companies that market technological products have taken the code that's been reworked by open sourcers and incorporated the changes into the new products they sell. The clock and calendar functions on Apple's iPod were originally written into the iPod software by Geek God hackers. When the company saw how popular these functions were, they added them to the official iPod package.

I really thought the idea of putting my subway map onto my iPod was cool. Why should I keep it all to myself? If it's helpful to me, then why not to the rest of you?

William Bright, design director for Nerve.com whose site www.ipodsubwaymaps.com was one of the first to create an MTA map of NYC downloadable onto an iPod.

Early users of the Roomba, a robot vacuum cleaner, are rewiring it to serve as a “mobile security robot.”

The Washington Post, 7/12/05

Through open sourcing, leading-edge Geek Gods have created a community of sharers and collaborators, a virtual “team” that works together toward synergistic, if not common, goals. One must possess creativity, intelligence, and cutting-edge insight to become a part of this community. Herein lies Geek Gods' power. There's an inherent desire to continually move forward, to work together, and to create the next best thing. Thankfully, technology (via the Internet) makes it easy for Geek Gods to both find and share with each other.

Bulletin boards are popular among Geek Gods because they easily facilitate communication and allow this C-Type to share ideas and information. Geek Gods can speak to each other and seek advice, expert to expert. Non-Geek Gods, beware. If you're not a member of the type, you may not understand the language spoken here! Companies marketing to Geek

Gods need to be wary too. Geek Gods are outspoken with their opinions, and the Internet gives them an easy podium from which to spread the word—good or bad. And don't assume that they chat only about the high-tech stuff, either. This type can make or break products from a variety of categories, simply because the Web gives them extraordinary reach, and their technical facility means that they know the fastest and most effective ways of delivering their messages.

In the consumer technology industry, for example, Gizmodo (www.gizmodo.com) is widely read. If the writers on the Gizmodo site are unhappy or disgruntled with a product, a lot of people will read about that.

Chicago Tribune, 7/17/04

In addition to community boards, Geek Gods also populate technology blogs. Although specific blogs come in and out of favor (like everything else in the Geek God kingdom), as this book is written, many Geek Gods were turning to Gizmodo, a blog about gadgets; Boing Boing, a virtual scrapbook for tech ideas; and Lifehacker, a site that offers up “the downloads, web site, and short cuts that actually save time.”

It's not like tech geeks have all the answers in their heads, but they know how to get the answers. It looks a lot simpler to people than it actually is.

The Journal News, 10/10/05

For marketers, the open sourcing practice has wide application across categories other than tech gadgets and computers (imagine, for example, open source baby food products that allowed consumers to play with the list of ingredients). Open sourcing also provides us with increased insight into the Geek God community and the Geek God mindset. This C-Type wants things transparent. They will figure out if you are not being straight with them. This is a community that also has a “first to market” mentality. Within the open source community, new ideas bubble up organically, and it's considered disrespectful to take credit for ideas that are not your own. (Use the idea, sure, but don't lie about developing it.) Geek Gods respect true innovators versus fast followers.