

Dear Colleagues,

There have been some interesting observations in the discussion about "Design Tools, Their Orchestration, and Potentials" on academia.edu that raised concerns about the generalizing nature of tools and computing as replacements for the human designer. David Brooks writing in the New York Times yesterday underlined this, saying "Computers are not only getting smarter at systems analysis, they are improving at rates no human can match." and giving examples of professions being disrupted. He suggests that we turn to "the activities that we humans, driven by our deepest nature or by the realities of daily life, will simply insist be performed by other humans." He goes on to say "Empathy becomes a more important workplace skill, the ability to sense what another human being is feeling or thinking." and "Secure workers will combine technical knowledge with social awareness — the sort of thing you get from your genes, from growing up (with certain learning experiences) and by widening your repertoire of emotions through reflection, literature and a capacity for intimacy."

These are all strengths that designers have that user oriented design and the desire to do meaningful work reinforces. They point to the future for design education and practice alike.

Or so I believe,
Chuck