

Fuzzy logic

This book talks about the need to change constantly, to be in sync with the ever-changing world, but is sadly lacking focus

Desires: "Human needs have changed little throughout our economic history, and are unlikely to change now."

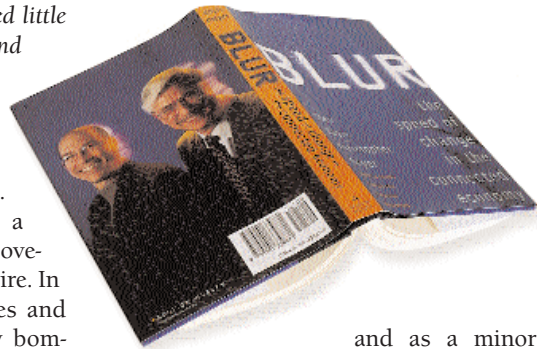
Most book reviews describe what the book is about and then offer opinions about the content and presentation. This review is going to involve a detour which arises from the above-mentioned quote about human desire. In the so-called connected economies and open societies, we are constantly bombarded with the need to be fast. We are constantly reminded of 'hyper-competition' and real-time changes. We are relentlessly hurled along with the ever-accelerating change, so much so that an entire generation may be experiencing the typical twentieth century phenomenon of 'Future Shock'. But if the above quote about human desire is accurate, why are we constantly accelerating the speed of change, work, life itself, to fulfil the same desires?

Back to the book...

The premise is straightforward—changes in technology are blurring traditional boundaries, transforming simple oppositions like product and service into a new synthesis. However, the approach is formulaic, and that's sort of the point. The Blur formula is right there on the table of contents: speed x connectivity x intangibles = blur. Well, all right. But hype x marketing opportunity x intangibles = blur, too, and that's pretty much what we've got.

Too many issues, too little clarity

Blur is literary junk food. Reading the book, you must endure the *Wired* magazine attitude, ie, your only chance to attain hip-dom and be cool, and, of course, business acumen, is if you embrace the terribly simplified and exaggerated message found in its pages. Now, this book does point out much that is true,



and as a minor 1990's milestone, confirms that we are on the path laid out succinctly in Alvin Toffler's *Future Shock*.

Several thought-provoking issues and questions are scattered throughout the book. However, far too many important and cautionary subjects are brought up only to be swept away by an adrenaline-fuelled hype-fest. The authors, who direct research at the Ernst & Young Centre for Business Innovation, are capable of a much better offering, as they have proven by the brilliantly written 2020 Vision. This book lacks the substance and the depth of analysis backed by authoritative research. It may prove to be a good read as an anecdotal snapshot of the current state of our economies in transition.

An 'economy' is the way people use resources to fulfil their desires. The specific ways they do this have changed several times through history, and are shifting yet again, this time driven by three forces—connectivity, speed and growth of intangible value. Because we are so newly caught up in the whirlwind of this transition, we are experiencing it as a BLUR.

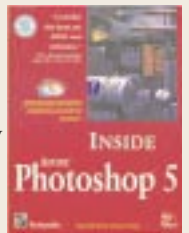
MAULIK JASUBHAI

Rating: HHH

BLUR—the speed of change in the connected economy
 Authors: Stan Davis & Christopher Meyer
 Publisher: Addison Wesley
 Price: Rs 960 (US \$20)
 Pages: 265

Inside Photoshop 5

In this fully guided tour of Photoshop 5.0, the authors take you through comprehensive steps to show you how to produce exciting photorealistic as well as abstract digital images.



The basic approach revolves around the theory that every attention-grabbing image starts with a good concept. Each chapter emphasises this point and explains the basic concept behind a visual before starting work with tools. After the user selects the right tool, he or she follows a series of steps. Along with the step-by-step tutorial, the book gives a generous amount of tips, shortcuts and techniques, bound to be extremely useful to every Photoshop user. Photoshop files, which contain the basic image for each project explained in the book, are supplied in the accompanying CD, allowing the user to execute all techniques himself.

Screenshots are intelligently used to help the reader understand important actions (such as dragging a layer from one document to other). Tutorials on Digital Imaging—like merging a head from one photograph to the body in another—are supported by excellent images. The final images are reproduced in colour and will give the beginner a very good idea about the infinite possibilities in Photoshop.

One advantage of the book is the clever combination of the basics of computer graphics and advanced technical fundamentals, with a simple easy-to-use guided tour of the software.

Tailpiece: The introduction to the book describes how Photoshop is becoming an established 'brand' like Xerox, Bisleri and Scotch. It is transforming itself into a verb—designers now say "I photoshopped the image!"

G V SREEKUMAR

Rating: HHHH

Inside Photoshop 5
 Authors: Gary David Bouton & Barbara Bouton
 Publisher: Techmedia
 Price: Rs 399