

NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, JULY 7, 2002

# Hunters of Cool Are in a Freeze



hunter raised eyebrows when she urged the company to produce clam diggers for men. "Our guy wasn't ready for that look," Ms. Clark said.

The biggest challenge that cool chasers face is the elusive nature of cool itself. "The true cool kid is a hard breed to put your finger on," Ms. Clark said. "You can't follow him around; he's going to change all the time. Copy him, and he'll move on to the next thing."

Which may be one reason that companies like Lee now factor in cool hunting as "only one piece in the research puzzle," Ms. Clark said.

Similarly, Toyota continues to draw on cool hunting as only one small piece of its market research. The Scion bbX, the company's new concept car, with a boxy, Jeep-like design, was conceived in part with the

**As trend-spotters' predictions fail to come true, companies are losing faith in them.**

input of an independent cool hunter, David Wales, who identifies youth lifestyle trends — for instance, the ways in which teenagers use technology.

"It takes somebody with a fresh perspective to go out and take notes," said Kevin Hunter, the vice president for design at Caltz Research, Toyota's design studio in Newport Beach, Calif. He conceded, however,



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**THE NEXT LITTLE THING** Skiboards have their fans, but not as many as predicted.