What Would Google Do?

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trol that flow and benefit from it (with relevant content and ads, bargains, and subsidies for the services we use), I'd hook up my fridge and phone. Google could become the operating system not just for the web and the world but for our homes and lives.

Another challenge: fashion. We know what Googley fashion is: T-shirts, shorts, and sandals. It's hard to imagine spartan, garish, geeky Google having an impact on taste and trendsetting, which are decreed by designers, fashion editors, and Hollywood. Fashion is top-down—or it was. Just as the internet democratizes news and entertainment, it is opening up style. A darling of the open fashion movement is Threadless, a T-shirt company that invites users to submit designs, which are voted on, Digglike, by the community. Winning designers receive $2,000 plus a $500 credit and $500 every time a design is reprinted. They become the Versaces of the crowdsourced runway.

Just as in entertainment, we are learning that the public wants to create and leave its mark. A smart response is to create a platform to make that possible. CafePress.com and Zazzle provide the means for anyone to make and sell designs on T-shirts, mugs, bumper stickers, even underwear, getting a cut of every on-demand order. Threadbanger, a weekly internet video show, teaches viewers how to make cool do-it-yourself fashion with young designers. See also BurdaStyle.com's open-source sewing from the German publishing empire Burda, which decided to take copyrights off its dress patterns and invite the public to use them, adapt them, create their own, and share them. The site is filled with patterns, how-to's, and discussion. Springwise reported that SANS, a small New York label, stopped selling its hit $85 square shirt in 2008 and then released the pattern. For $6, you get the pattern, which you print out at home, and a SANS label to sew inside. Opening the design is a nice idea but I can't sew. So craftsmen could build a business out of making SANS or Burda designs on order, as some are doing, selling them on Etsy, a site filled with unique, handmade items, which has been the store for more than 100,000 sellers since 2005.

OK, consumable goods, gadgets, and fashion could be Googlified. But what about Google TP? Surely it is not possible to bring Googlethink to toilet paper. There won't be communities around toilet paper. I shudder to imagine TP 2.0 after seeing a commercial for toilet paper whose USP (unique selling proposition) is that it doesn't leave little paper bits on your butt. Boy,