Rider Education Report

Tool. What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you see this word? Until sometime around 2008, my first thought would have been Sears Craftsman. Why? Because at that time it was still a brand that offered items made in the USA of decent quality at a reasonable price, many with a lifetime guarantee, and often on sale. And you could also find some specialty tools of other brands in their catalog that would make the job easier and "done right". But as my familiarity with the internet, the complexity of my projects, my understanding of code compliance, and especially my day job responsibilities have grown, my first thoughts have changed. My initial reaction to the word tool is now completely dependent on the context in which it appears.

When the context is my day job, software applications are the tools that come to mind. My favorite tool is the drawing software I use to develop the radio control transmitter layouts and receiver wiring diagrams. The drawings I make with this tool become the instruction set (another tool) used by the technicians to assemble the parts that become the radio system (another tool) our customers will use to operate their machines. Our drawing software requires training to learn how the different mouse movements and keystrokes affect manipulation of the images on the screen. Additional training allows us to stay up to date on changes and improvements in the refinement of the software and advances in our product. Without continued training, new product developments and features would be impossible to implement.

When the context is yard maintenance, I think of lawn mowers, weed eaters, and leaf blowers. These tools also require some training, usually what can be learned from the operators' manuals and repetitious use, to become efficient in their use and care. Things like safety interlocks, speed settings, and maintenance tasks all need to be learned and practiced allowing for fast, safe and efficient operation. Additionally, suggested safety gear like sturdy footwear and the use of eye and hearing protection allow for safe and comfortable operation.

In the context of motorcycling, the first tool that comes to mind is the bike itself. A motorcycle helps us travel from one place to another quickly and with less effort than walking. Riding safely and keeping the motorcycle under control require training and practice. Operator manuals explain how to use the bike's performance and convenience features properly. Regular riding helps build familiarity with the machine, making each ride safer, more enjoyable, and more rewarding. Motorcycle specific training courses provide additional skill enhancement to improve operation and safety. Motorcyclists can use tools like online research and conversations with other riders to better understand best practices and how to use their motorcycles effectively and safely. Riding gear like helmets, boots, jackets, and gloves are tools we can use to make the ride more comfortable and enjoyable.

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