

# Leaks in outdoor clothing design

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## Abstract

Long-toothed extreme weather clothing users and dog walkers talk about older products that performed as well or better than more recent products. Why? Perhaps rose tinted glasses? The Mallory replicas, however, indicate that high performance outcomes were available decades ago. Why have we learned so little in so long? Extreme weather clothing is very competitively priced and profits are good. Why hasn't extreme weather clothing design advanced more in the last four decades?

This paper described findings from recent research into design processes in the outdoor trade. The research found that typically in the outdoor trade, design processes are leaky. Existing design processes do not retain design knowledge about successful functional features. This hard won design knowledge – the foundation of successful innovation in the sector - is lost at a rapid rate.

The research identified four reasons for the leaks and losses of design knowledge in the outdoor clothing sector:

- Incommensurability between functional and conceptual design processes
- Misunderstanding of the locus of design and design decision-making. Many faultily believe it is located with the designers.
- Lack of attention to design rationale, its archiving and use.
- Geo-politics of design

The presentation concludes with three suggestions for improvement.