

flashback

Those study staples of yesteryear — flashcards — are making a stylish comeback, thanks to a Minneapolis entrepreneur.

BY ALLISON KAPLAN
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Good news, students: The next must-have accessory on campus isn't some high-tech gizmo that will set you back a rent check or two. What's really trend forward is going old school.

You need flashcards.

Minneapolis-based Myndology is giving flashcards a makeover. They come in different colors and sizes and, most important, these new cards are ring-bound, so no worries about flyaways. Myndology flashcards are sold at more than 1,000 stores nationwide — primarily in bookstores on college campuses, including

the University of Minnesota, University of St. Thomas and College of St. Catherine. As a sure sign of the growing buzz, the cards are making their way into upscale gift shops, including Bibelot.

Myndology creator Jason Kinziger first discovered ring-bound flashcards in Japan, where he was teaching English. All the kids were using them, and Kinziger says he got addicted to the orderly tool while trying to learn

Japanese.

It wasn't until he was back home in Madison, Wis., that Kinziger's entrepreneurial drive kicked in. He was at the apartment of a friend in law school when her cat jumped on the bed, knocking over a shoebox filled with errant study cards. That's when Kinziger decided to bring ring-bound cards to the U.S.

He started out importing and sold the cards to some college bookstores. But to take his product to the next level, Kinziger, who lives in Minneapolis, contacted Minneapolis

design and branding firm Duffy & Partners, which counts Starbucks, Coca-Cola and Toyota among its clients. Duffy recognized the potential in well-designed paper products and took on Kinziger. They helped him rename his company, which had been called Mindbinders, gave the cards a sleeker, graphic look and expanded the product line to notebooks and journals.

"We saw the potential being so much more than flashcards," says Duffy managing partner Tricia Davidson. "People are becoming more particular about everything in their lives, whether it's a car, a can opener or a notebook. There's a realization that for an extra 50 cents, I can have a notebook that feels better, makes me smile and helps express my personality."

But nice-looking or not, the real question may be whether there's even a demand for paper products, with college students

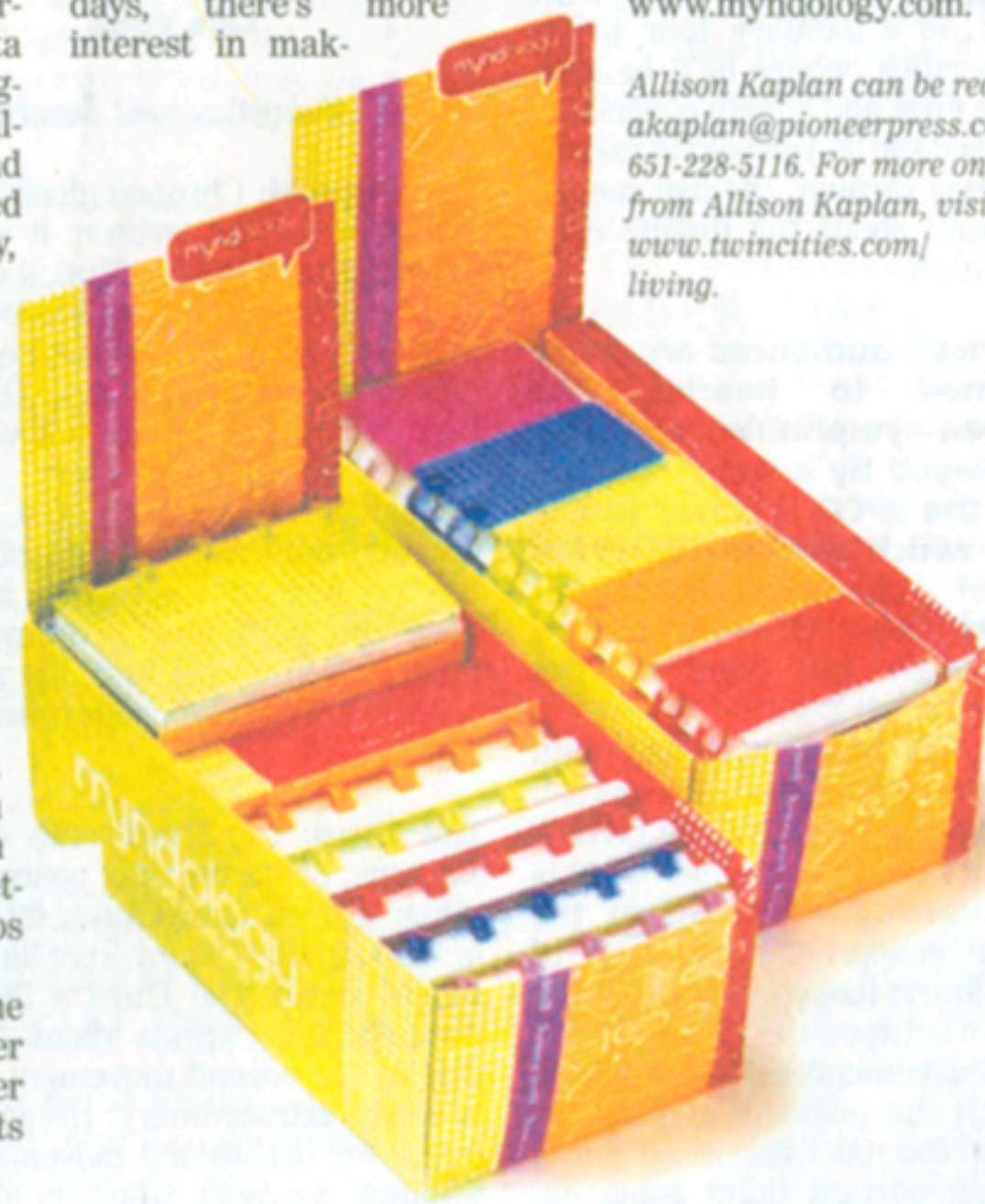
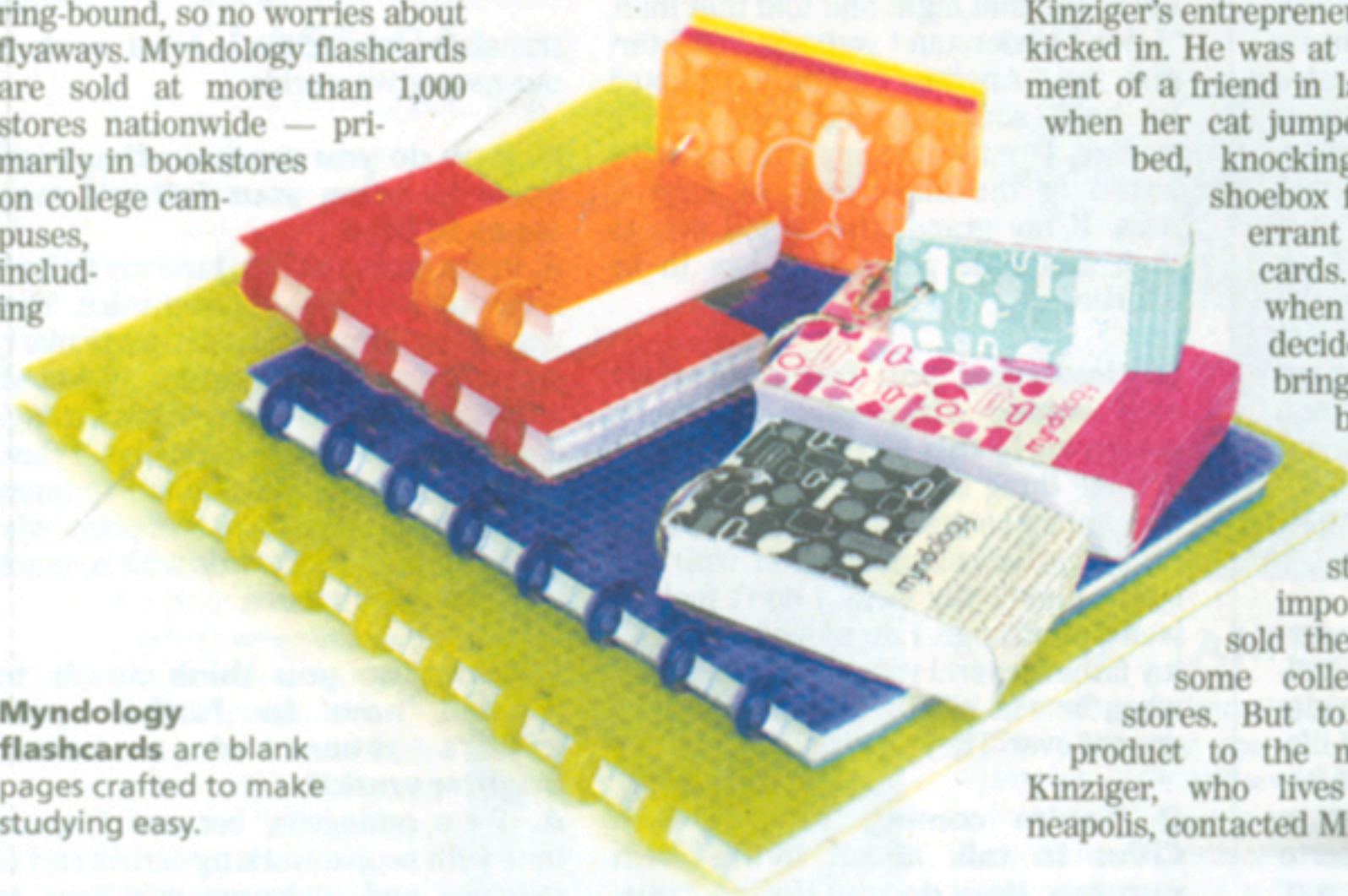
typing class notes directly onto laptop computers and communicating with friends via text messages. "There are certain times when you don't need a computer — studying on a bus or in bed," Kinziger says. And because consumers do use paper less frequently these days, there's more interest in mak-

ing the experience distinct.

The flashcards' next frontier: coffeehouses and high-end grocery stores. "Any place," says Kinziger, "where people are sitting around or thinking."

Myndology flashcards sell for \$1.50 to \$3, and letter-sized notebooks are \$8. To view the line or purchase online, visit www.myndology.com.

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Myndology flashcards are blank pages crafted to make studying easy.