

An Inside look at Vancouver's Vibrant Maker community

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Photo Credit: Christina Norberg

1. Introduction

Since 2011, Vancouver Maker Foundation has brought together a broad range of Vancouver artists, hobbyists, creatives, collectives, and small businesses through events and projects including the Vancouver Mini Maker Faire, Maker Music, Maker Camp, the Young Makers Program, and the Vancouver Maker Education Meet-up (Now Vancouver Maker Education Initiative).

Our driving purpose is to continue on this mission of connecting communities in order to spread the maker movement across the lower mainland.

2. Exposition

The first Vancouver Mini Maker Faire took place in June of 2011 at the Great Northern Way Campus. It was founded on a desire to see otherwise separate communities -- from hackers to welders, crafters and artists -- come together to share what they make and cross-pollinate with other collectives and artists across the city.

The event was founded with the support of O'Reilly Media (now Maker Media), and members of the Vancouver Hack Space, joined by Vancouver Community Lab and eatART Foundation. The first year was a great success!

With over 100 makers in our first year, it was clear this was something that needed to happen again.

This past June, we completed a successful fourth year at the PNE Forum.

2.1 Elaboration

Beyond the Mini Maker Faire, Vancouver Maker Foundation is now taking even more action to bring a diverse range of groups together.

3. Results

The Vancouver Maker Education Initiative is an exciting step to support both makers and educators interested in integrating the maker ethos in their classrooms and workspaces. It all started with a meet-up group, which included a diverse mix of librarians, educators and makers.

Since just a few of these evenings happened, there have been collaborations that include Young Makers Clubs at public libraries artist-run centres, a Maker Camp at UBC this summer, and there is talk of "Maker Spaces" opening their doors all over the city.

Vancouver Maker Foundation is committed to cultivating connections and forging partnerships between these groups to make more awesome things happen!

4. Conclusions

The maker movement has been growing exponentially throughout the world in terms of influence and impact. This year marks the first Maker Faire held at the White House, and this concept of "Maker Cities" is making headway. The maker movement is growing outside of events and spaces, into governments and organizations.

Getting involved with, or even building your local maker community can be a great way to meet new and exciting people, and work on new projects and initiatives that can create a real difference. While you're at it, it can also be a lot of fun!