Fablab and the expanding Makersphere

Bart Bakker

- www.fablab.nl
- www.minifablab.nl
BartB

• Post-pensionado
  Used to be retired, no more time for that

• Waag Society
• 1st NL fablab in 2007 ‘El Hema’
• Protospace Utrecht
• miniFabLab

• Fablab Benelux
Roots 1947

Leonard de Vries during WWII wrote ‘The boys from the Hobby Club’. 1947

His goal was to get people on the learning curve of new technology: radio, electronics, sound rec, film

By 1950 70 hobbyclubs in Holland

The hacker/makerspaces of the time
Roots 2006

7 years ago life was simple

- **Fablab**
  - make things
  - edu MIT $100k
  - vertical
- **Hackerspace**
  - hack things
  - nerdy
  - horizontal

- First [Makerfaire](#) in San Mateo
2013

• Fablabs
• Hackerspaces
• **Makerspaces**
  • in an expanding Maker Movement
• Repair Café       Fix lab       Hacklab
• Makelab           Bibliolab      Technasium
• Techlab           Techshop       iFabrica

oops
The **Maker** movement

- DIY got a wider dimension
- MAKE magazine
- MakerFaires **FUN**
- Appeals to people
- Interest in 3D-printing
- Commercial makerspaces
The Power of Play

- Johan Huizinga, Dutch historian
- *Homo Ludens*, 1938
- ‘Culture emerges from Play’
- ‘Cultures that foster Play are richer’

- **Play** is the appeal of the Maker movement over Fablab
Homo faber - Homo ludens

- FabLabs
  - serious - usefulness
- Makerspaces
  - fun and Play
- Fablabs
  - overrated by the public
- Maker Movement
  - is still underestimated
Objectives of both

• No real difference
• *Get people on the learning curve of digital fabrication*
• Underlying long term philosophy
• Digital local fabrication
• Kids
Trends in NL

- Fablabs/makerspaces in
  - Schools
  - Libraries
  - Neighbourhoods/communities
- Institutional funding is scarce
- 50% of initiatives is ‘grassroots’
- Bottom up
- Tenacious individuals
Community aspect

- Each want to create a community
- Power of any movement
- Grassroots are good in that
- More of a club feeling
- Nurture your community!
- Lifecycle

By 1974 all Hobby Clubs were gone

Book 1953
Challenges for fablab

• Widening makersphere
• Big potential

• Our labs are very diverse
• Fablabs not open in evening/weekend
• Little outreach

• Growth can and will occur outside fablab
• Where? Why?
O’Reilly

- If you want to start a **Makerspace**
- Download the Makerspace Playbook
- Free
- Tons of info

- Of course a commercial interest in anything ‘Make’
- Power of Play
Adafruit

• If you want to start a Hackerspace
• Download ‘How To Start A Hackerspace’
• Free
• Nice tutorials

• Commercial interest too

Both nourish the Makersphere
Fablab

• If you want to start a FabLab

• Scattered info is available indeed
• No good vehicle to offer knowledge outside
• Our labs are very diverse and introvert
• Not even a good vehicle to share knowledge
• The MCU (Polycom) is hardly used

• Should we bother about the Makersphere?
Option 1

- Focus on current fablab
- $100k type MIT labs
- Institutional (=vertical) funding
- Education oriented
- Fabacademy as global campus
- Worldwide community
- ‘MIT-elite’
Option 2

• See existing $100k fablabs as hubs
• Coaching smaller $10k labs
  • Fablabs
  • Makerspaces
  • Others
• Possibly helping with MtM
• Regional focus
Option 3

- Extend the fablab definition
- Embrace smaller initiatives
- Condition: offer open access
- A mesh of $10K labs
  - Neil Gershenfeld

The fablab objective stands:

*Get people on the learning curve of digital fabrication*
What we do in Holland

• We embrace newcomers and initiatives
• Community spaces
  – Schools, libraries, neighbourhoods, cities
• Promote the Spirit of the FabCharter
• Community, open access
• We try to coach them - with limited resources
• Fabtable, miniFabLab, visits
Worldwide

• Easy in the Benelux
• Our 250+ worldwide fablab community is not geared up to that
• Should they?

• We should reflect on our ambition.
• As the Makersphere expands.

bart@minifablab.nl