

Connecting in a disconnected world: The role of Hackerspaces and maker culture in contemporary techno-politics

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The paper will address the emergence of the maker culture, where technology and making are explored outside the professional lab, predominantly in Hackerspaces, Makerspaces and Fab Labs. Such spaces constitute important sites in the development of open-source hardware and software, and provide conducive conditions for the spread of locally created technology to and often beyond technologically informed publics. Specifically, this paper will address the convergence of activism and the maker culture within capitalist realism.

Drawing on the findings of my research, I argue that the politics of Hackerspaces / Makerspaces and Fab Labs constitute sites that disclose contradictions and provide spaces for contesting the dominant paradigm and reflect the societies within which they operate. Users become developers themselves who simultaneously reinvent forms of consumption, processes of learning and re-conceptualizing the relationship between science and craft, productivism and play, authority and informal horizontal learning. Despite the apparent social and collective nature of these practices, there is also a parallel individualistic twist at the heart of the maker culture.