From Access to Information to Access to Each Other

Public Libraries as Innovation Spaces?

Chris Coward & Dilini Wijeweera
African Library Summit
Pretoria, South Africa
2-5 July, 2013
“We systematically overestimate the value of access to information and underestimate the value of access to each other.”

Clay Shirky
Where do good ideas come from?
Lone thinker myth
INNOVATION SPACES IN SOCIETY

LEARNING → PRODUCING

YOUTH → ADULT
Innovation Spaces in Society

LEARNING ➔ PRODUCING

Youth

- K-12
- Colleges/Universities
  - Closed membership
University of Washington Library Research Commons
INNOVATION SPACES IN SOCIETY

LEARNING ➔ PRODUCING

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  - Closed membership
- Libraries/museums
- Community centers
  - Open membership
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**PRODUCING**

- Work (offices)
  - Closed membership
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INNOVATION SPACES IN SOCIETY

LEARNING

IN-BETWEEN

PRODUCING

YOUTH

ADULTS ENTREPRENEURS

ADULT
LEARNING • Cafes • Markets

IN-BETWEEN

Unintentional

Public/commercial

PRODUCING

YOUTH

ADULT
INNOVATION SPACES IN SOCIETY

LEARNING

IN-BETWEEN

PRODUCING

YOUTH

- Cafes
- Markets
  - Unintentional
  - Public/commercial

ADULT

- Co-working
- Hubs
- Maker & Hacker
  - Intentional
  - ‘Open’ membership
Dar es Salaam’s TanzICT’s Innovation Space at COSTECH (Commission for Science and Technology), part of a bilateral Tanzania-Finland development project designed to kick-start Tanzania’s technology ecosystem, and move Tanzania towards an information technology society, opened in late 2011.
iceaddis, based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, is the country's leading University-based innovation hub, incubator and co-working space for communities. They work to improve Ethiopia's economy by building relationships between researchers, developers, entrepreneurs, creative workers and customers, and by promoting local technological solutions to the public.

Photo: Courtesy Jonathan Kalan, Used with permission
JoziHub is a co-creation space in Johannesburg dedicated to creating sustainable change in Africa.

WE [HEART] JOZI
Mitch Altman's Hacker Trip to Egypt

By Gareth Branwyn  Posted 2011/10/24 @ 4:15 pm  Category Makers, Makerspaces

Mitch Altman sent us this report about his trip to Maker Faire Africa, in Cairo, where he was on a mission to do what he does best — inspire hackerspaces.

-Gareth

I got back from Cairo Friday, Oct. 14th. I was exhausted in the aftermath, but exhilarated by what I witnessed. The main purpose for this trip was to assist in the development of Cairo's first hacker space, a community-driven hub for sharing skills and tools.
“The physical space around us has a big impact on the way we think and interact with each other.

The configuration of our space at work can promote the collision of insights and ideas and it can accelerate a team’s ability to work quickly.

Promoting microbursts of social interaction should be a managed activity. Spontaneity takes a lot of planning.

Spaces for serendipity are full of clutter. Innovation is allergic to clean and tidy environments.

Space should be both serious and playful but never solemn.

Innovation needs flexible spaces; this means our environment has to be low cost.

The best innovation environments are not created through traditional management channels but are self-organized.”

Source: The Science of Serendipity, by Matt Kingdon
Can libraries be innovation spaces?
Almost every library does this

BUT...

- for children
- in non-tech areas
RULES FOR THE COMPUTERS:

1) ONLY ONE LEARNER ALLOWED AT THE COMPUTER. IF YOU DON'T LISTEN TO THIS RULE YOU WILL BE LOGGED OFF.

2) STRICTLY NO ADULTS ALLOWED ON THESE COMPUTERS.

3) ONLY ONE SESSION ALLOWED PER DAY.

4) PLEASE SIGN IN BEFORE USING COMPUTER.

5) NO FIGHTING, MISBEHAVING, SWEARING WILL BE TOLERATED. IF THIS HAPPENS YOU WILL BE LOGGED OUT.

6) PRINTING COSTS 60c PER PAGE AND MUST BE COLLECTED FROM THE KC SECTION.

7) IF YOU ARE CAUGHT VIEWING FORBIDDEN SIGHTS YOUR CARD WILL BE BLOCKED.

8) MAKE SURE YOU LOGOUT WHEN YOU ARE DONE.
Libraries Make Room For High-Tech 'Hackerspaces'

by JON KALISH

Listen to the Story
Weekend Edition Saturday

Make: technology on your time

Public Libraries, 3D Printing, FabLabs and Hackerspaces

IS IT TIME TO REBUILD & RETOOL PUBLIC LIBRARIES?

AND MAKE "TECHSHOPS"?
Survey of internet café users in Ghana

- Over 50% come with others
- 68% report sharing made coming to a public access venue more productive
- 75% interested in environments that support enhanced collaborative group work

Source: Global Impact Study Collaborative Knowledge Sharing (M. Best)