

Social Change Symposium

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Title: 21C DIY: The Maker movement and the 'Things of the Internet'

Abstract: The Maker movement is a wide collection of people, all connected to the internet, who are expressing a renewed interest in making physical artefacts in a time increasingly dominated by the automation and obfuscation of everyday processes. This work follows Marshall McLuhan in his statement that, 'the age of automation is going to be the age of do it yourself' (McLuhan 1995), arguing that automation is helping turn people 'back' towards physical objects. From 3-D printers to knitted aliens, Makers show no unity in output, but instead share processes and motivations. In this presentation, artefacts made by Makers are 'Things of the Internet', proposing internet enmeshment in amateur practices of making objects in the present moment. Also introduced is 'participatory object culture', playing with Henry Jenkins' notion of participatory media cultures (2006), highlighting how the turning towards physical objects isn't a simplistic rejection of technology but is instead an evolving relationship. Finally, this work will assess the idea of Making through the moral framework of conviviality, developed by Ivan Illich (1973), that prioritises joy and connection over convenience and consumption.