Makerspace Research: SkullSpace

Jozelle Sumat (200465219)

Faculty of Education, University of Regina

EDTC 400: Advanced Studies in Educational Technology and Media

Professor Ehsan Akbari

January 20, 2023

Makerspace Research: SkullSpace

Figure 1

Modular Synthesizer Petting Zoo – February 24, 2018

SkullSpace is a 2,500-square-foot makerspace located on the second floor of 347 Donald Street in Winnipeg. This makerspace is located in a central location that is ideal for quick access. It is a space for people with different hobbies such as hacking, building, programming, and more. It is a common place for people to help others and share their knowledge and creativity. Skullspace calls itself a "hackerspace," but what is it exactly? Jeff Schmerker (2020), an author of Integrated DNA Technologies, stated the following:
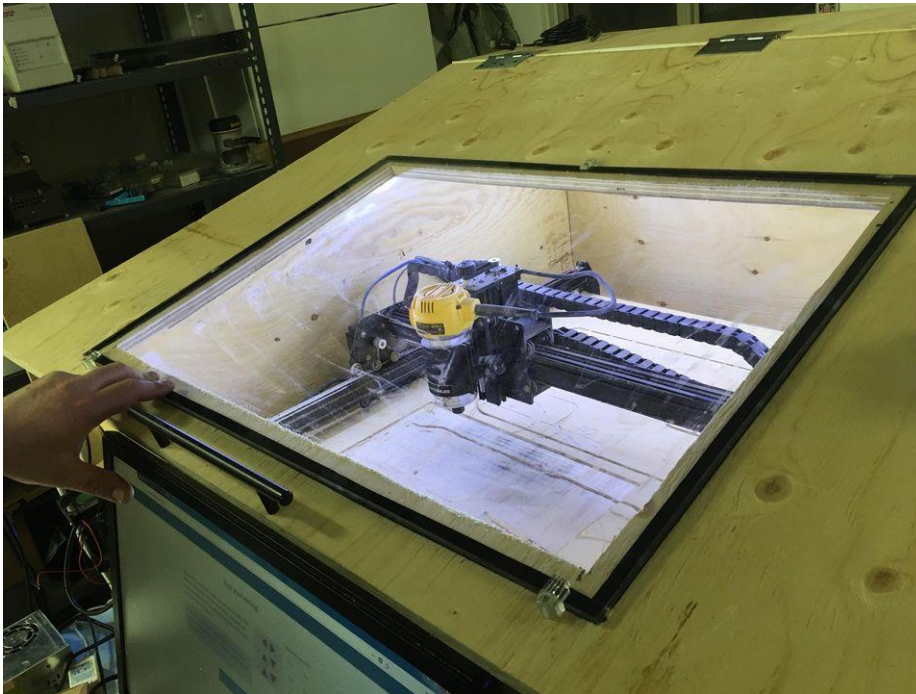
> "Hackerspaces, which first appeared in the 1990s, were places where computer nerds could collectively meet, work, and share their tools to "hack" technology to make it do what it wasn't meant to do. Hackerspaces gradually morphed into makerspaces as tools like laser cutters and 3D printers became more affordable." (para. 10).

SkullSpace offers several pieces of equipment for every member to use freely. First, the facility has a classroom. This classroom is mostly used for events. The classroom is located by

the entrance of the makerspace for easy access. It comes with a bicycle storage rack as well as a

mini repair station for fixing bike jams. They also have a few bicycles to be rented by the

members. Second, their makerspace has an electronics workbench. This workbench comes with a

"huge collection of electronic parts and tools for members to use in their projects" ("SkullSpace:

About"). Their electronics workbench comes with the following tools: "Hakko 808 Desoldering

Gun", "Saleae Logic 8 Digital Analyzer", and hand tools such as pliers, wire cutters, etc. Third,

their makerspace comes with a 3D machine where they could print their designs. Fourth, they

have a CNC (Computer Numerical Control) machine which is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2

SkullSpace's CNC machine

Note. A group of five members created this housing for their X-Carve machine.

 CNCs, according to Goodwin University (n.d.), are "automated machines, which are

operated by computers executing pre-programmed sequences of controlled commands" (para. 3).

With this machine, members can carve any designs using a program. Fifth, SkullSpace has a lounge for movie nights, playing games, or just hanging out. Lastly, it comes with a kitchen where members can "food hack"—they can create their own recipes—to share with the whole group.

ACCESSIBILITY (AND INCLUSIVITY)

SkullSpace is welcome for everyone to use. With a $40 per month membership fee, people have "24/7" access to the makerspace. Students can access the space for only $20 per month if they could provide a valid student identification card. According to SkullSpace's bylaw (2018), "A person may apply for membership only upon the invitation of an existing member." Contacting the board for membership is also allowed. If someone wishes to be a member, they could also attend SkullSpace's weekly Tuesday meetings and get help from the members about membership. If a person wishes to see what SkullSpace has to offer but is unsure whether they want to be a member, they are still welcome to attend their weekly meetings. This information can be found on their "FAQ" page. Unfortunately, SkullSpace is not wheelchair-accessible since the facility is on the second floor with no elevator access. However, SkullSpace stated that if they ever moved to a new building, they would like it to be accessible to everyone. Animals are allowed only if they are service animals, otherwise prohibited. The makerspace extremely values inclusivity, respect for everyone, cleanliness, and good manners. SkullSpace heavily restricts sexism, homophobia, racism and more. SkullSpace works in a "do-ocracy" style of management. Citing Noisebridge, another makerspace facility, SkullSpace has the following motto about "do-ocracy":

"If you want something done, do it, but remember to be excellent to each other when doing so."—Noisebridge.

EVENTS

Figure 3

Rolf Oswald Shows off his modular synthesizer system.

Note. Photo credits by Colton Hutchinson

As stated before, the makerspace has a weekly Tuesday meet-up. This is where members show their projects. It is also open to the public so members (or non-members) could view the member's projects or just see the facility. On January 20th and 21st, SkullSpace will be hosting a "Double-Feature Movie Night." This makerspace is active, and it is a great place for people to show their skills. Last 2018, SkullSpace has an event for "music enthusiasts" to "show off their modular synthesizers and learn more about their other-worldly sounds" (Colton Hutchinson,

para. 1). Last January 6th, SkullSpace held a "Synth v Software Show and Tell" where members are asked their preferred tools for music and sound production.

FINAL REMARKS

SkullSpace is advertised primarily as a "hackerspace" more than as a makerspace. Educators and students can make use of this space for computer science projects since the facility offers a 3D printing machine. A lot of students can also explore the nature of electronics since it is the makerspace's largest area. Several points are lost to their accessibility since not everyone can access the makerspace, specifically people that are in wheelchairs or those that have mobility problems. Their events are interesting because they allow people to share their knowledge and creativity by having "Show and Tell" events. However, their membership fee is quite expensive for the services they can offer. Additionally, SkullSpace seems like a very safe place to be since they value the excellence of each other. This is a great makerspace to expand your creativity and to have a safe space where your presence is valued.

References

Goodwin University. (2018, June 27). *What is CNC Machining & What Role Does It Play in Modern Manufacturing?* Goodwin University. Retrieved January 19, 2023, from https://www.goodwin.edu/enews/what-is-cnc/#:~:text=Computer%20Numerical%20Control%20machines%20are,mechanically%20automated%20by%20cams%20alone.

Hutchinson, C. (2018, February 27). [Rolf Oswald shows off his modular synthesizer system]. CBC News. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/modular-synthesizers-winnipeg-skullspace-1.4553698

Modular Synthesizer Petting Zoo [Photograph]. (2018, February 24). SkullSpace. https://skullspace.ca/2018/03/06/modular-synthesizer-petting-zoo-feb-24-2018/

Schmerker, J. (2020, April 21). *Makerspaces: What you need to know about these quirky community labs*. Integrated DNA Technologies. Retrieved January 19, 2023, from https://www.idtdna.com/pages/community/blog/post/makerspaces-here-s-what-you-need-to-know-about-these-quirky-community-labs#:~:text=Hackerspaces%2C%20which%20first%20appeared%20in,3D%20printers%20became%20more%20affordable.

SkullSpace. (n.d.). SkullSpace. Retrieved January 19, 2023, from https://skullspace.ca/

SkullSpace. (2018, February 6). [Team effort from five members means the X-Carl has a flashy new home!]. Facebook. https://www.facebook.com/SkullSpaceWpg/posts/pfbid0Dopm2Zu7mCpUee5FZxPDLL6xxq41kxXSXfjYHuB-nWAGTwbYjXuw12Uk3JTXNsFoml