

Content: FabLabs, the “Fabulous Laboratories”

In 1998, Neil Gershenfeld projected the creation of digital fabrication laboratories, commonly known FabLabs, through which speculates the most of interactivity between man/machine, getting this connection the most income in favor of entrepreneurship and innovation. As general, these places open to creativity can be defined as space equipped with a set of industrial tools for rapid prototyping such as small and large cutters cut, laser cutting and vinyl cutting, also featuring a bench electronics, computers and computer programming tools supported by open source software. Previously designed on the computer in 2D format, ideas are then materialized in three dimensions, using the machines available, ensuring the rule number one of these laboratories: Do It Yourself.

Professor at MIT, Gershenfeld created the project as part of a course called How to do (almost) anything, in order to use it only for research purposes. The success and interest surpassed the limits of MIT and FabLabs quickly dissipated by the World. Then came the first international FabLab, implemented in July 2002 at the Institute of Technology of Costa Rica in the city of Carthage.

As financial resources, the FabLabs almost always have the support of an institution concerned (schools, universities or companies) that is responsible for space for a minimum of two to four years. The cost of equipment can be around seventy and one hundred thousand euros.

The promotion of inventive capacity of citizens in order to solve problems, came to be the success of these laboratories. In a logic of open source, both in knowledge sharing, as accessibility to a FabLab, all projects developed in these labs are networked. The interaction and exchange between nations prevails, giving each the ability to access and re-use solutions disclosed, adapting them to their reality.

In short, Gershenfeld says he did not bring the invention, because it is all over the world. The only thing missing people are the means for the invention. They understand the problems, FabLabs provide the means for the solution.