

Hackerspaces used to turn ideas turn into reality

August 27 2014, by Emaun Kashfi

At HeatSync Labs, the tables are littered with computer chips, pens, pads and tools while the room is abuzz with the chatter of would-be inventors hoping to change the world—or just make cool things. They are part of a growing global movement of so-called hackerspaces.

The idea for places where people could experiment began to take shape in the U.S. after Mitch Altman, 57, founder of a similar setup in San Francisco called Noisebridge, and other Americans attended a 2007 computing conference in Germany where panelists spoke of their own hackerspaces. Altman returned home, met with fellow tinkerers and rented a space for Noisebridge the next year.

Similar workshops were opening up across the country and dozens more have popped up since. More than 1,600 are now operating worldwide.

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Citation: Hackerspaces used to turn ideas turn into reality (2014, August 27) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-08-hackerspaces-ideas-reality.html>

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