



MakeShop Backgrounder

Children's Museum of Pittsburgh, in partnership with Carnegie Mellon's Entertainment Technology Center (ETC) and the University of Pittsburgh Center for Learning in Out-of-School Environments (UPCLOSE), has created *MakeShop*, a space within the Museum dedicated to nurturing and furthering informal learning opportunities and research-based understanding at the intersection of the digital and the physical. The *MakeShop* integrates digital tech projects and media access with Do It Yourself (DIY) maker elements to produce a robust place for curiosity, exploration, creativity and innovation.

MakeShop is a new 1,800 square-foot, permanent exhibit in the Children's Museum. It is a place to mess around with materials, tools and techniques. It's a space to play around with ideas and make things together.

As a physical and conceptual expansion of the Museum, where the design process, experimentation and inquiry are key concepts, visitors to *MakeShop* will engage in the process of designing, tinkering, exploring, sharing ideas and building with old and new technologies. In addition, visitors are encouraged to investigate how things work, consider materials and techniques, and develop interests and valuable skills that can extend beyond their Museum experience.

While we invite makers of all ages to explore *MakeShop*, our primary public audience for *MakeShop* is children ages eight and older and their families who visit the Museum. *MakeShop* is a space for children who wish to engage in a deeper and more sustained informal learning experience than their younger siblings, whom they accompany to the Museum. Notably, the Museum is accessible to Pittsburgh's underserved children and families through a special \$1 admission program for families with an EBT or food stamp card. Secondary audiences are the Museum's afterschool programs for underserved middle and high school students (YouthALIVE! and Volunteer), teachers within a professional development program and graduate students in Carnegie Mellon University's ETC Masters program and University of Pittsburgh's Learning Sciences and Policy.

As *MakeShop* opens to the public on Saturday, October 22, 2011, our visitors will be able to participate in projects and open-making experiences that incorporate traditional crafts such as sewing, woodworking and electronics with contemporary areas of exploration such as computer programming and video game design. With the assistance of our talented facilitators, themselves master makers—crafters, inventors, hackers, educators and artists—visitors bring their ideas to life and become members of a growing maker community.

Nationally, *MakeShop* is an engaged leader in an evolving conversation among makerspaces, exploring and evaluating the impact of making on learning for children and families.

For more information please visit our blog at www.makeshoppgh.org.