

## Chapter 2

# Lexicon Lab

### ABSTRACT

*The Lexicon Lab provides library visitors interested in making an introduction topics such as 3D design and printing, virtual reality, and computer programming using microcontrollers, among many other topics that arise during open meeting times. The workshops for adults are meant to encourage learners to pursue certain technologies and provide them with the confidence to get started in these areas. Located in Dún Laoghaire, Ireland, the Lexicon Lab occupies around 100m<sup>2</sup> in the impressive Lexicon Library, opened in 2014. While establishing learning communities is difficult in a space that is public and free of charge, strategies have been adopted to help learners connect and learn from each other. The space has greatly benefited from the Trinity School of Computer Science and Statistics Bridge21 model of pedagogy, brought to the lab through Jake Byrne, a consultant and Creative Technology Curator at the Lexicon Lab. In this learner-centric model, technical knowledge and skills are developed through inquiry in a social context, leading to a deep interaction with the content. While not fully implemented in the Lexicon Lab, the model provides an effective framework for teaching and learning in the makerspace. This chapter explores the Lexicon Lab.*

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*What we do in Bridge21 is encouraging creative collaboration and I think that that's what you'd find in makerspace as well. Where you're not shut down from ideas and you're able to grow an idea and develop it without too much constraint. — Jake Rowan Byrne*

## ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

The Lexicon Lab is located in the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown (dlr) Library in the County of Dún Laoghaire Libraries, part of greater Dublin, Ireland. The dlr Lexicon Library was opened to the public in December of 2014 and the makerspace known as the Lexicon Lab was subsequently opened in August of 2014. The space is about 1076 ft<sup>2</sup> (100 m<sup>2</sup>). Located along the southern coast of Ireland near Dublin, which is well known for its Asylum Harbor. The library is a quick train ride from Dublin's city center and within easy walking distance from the Dún Laoghaire-Mallin railway station. According to Jake Byrne, the Creative Technology Curator (manager/creative director) for the Lexicon Lab, the space was originally designed for teens but since then the County Council has wanted more maker-type activities in the space. Byrne noted the community of Dun Laoghaire has a diverse population base. He stated:

*It's becoming a desirable place, so property prices are insane in Ireland; the demographics are shifting at the moment. ... It's not quite as separated out, so like a patchwork quilt so you get these sorts of areas of wealth. So, it's quite a mix.*

Born and raised in the area, Byrne also mentioned that Dun Laoghaire is a very progressive county in the way it votes. When compared to the rest of the country, Dun Laoghaire voters are usually outliers in the progressive ideas including financing public buildings and other social considerations, which may explain how the county came together to build the dlr Lexicon Library. Planning and development of the library progressed at what can be described as a snail's pace, and when the first plans were released some 10 years prior to the opening of dlr Lexicon Library, the idea of makerspaces was not widespread. Almost immediately after the initial opening it was decided that the library wanted to transform the Lexicon Lab space from a teen-centric area into more of a makerspace. Upon entering the space, one notices the Lexicon Lab is an open area with no partitions from other parts

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