

Become a co-organizer of the European Maker Week!

Don't miss the opportunity to be part of the European Maker Week taking place all over Europe from 18 to 27 May 2018! Organize an event in your city and help spreading the word about makers. Don't be scared if you never organized an event before, you can also organize a small one. You just need:

1. **A place to be at.** A FabLab, a makerspace, a hackerspace, or even a conference room or another kind of public space like a library or a museum. Schools, universities, research centers and companies can open their labs to the public. You don't need a large venue: in case you don't have much space, just be clear in the event description. Even a small but warm event can be very successful because you can talk more freely to each visitor.
2. **Makers!** People talking to the visitors, speaking in public or showing their projects, or demonstrating the digital fabrication tools, or teaching workshops. In other words: sharing their passion and their skills. If you're organizing an event inside a school, students are your makers: let them meet the public and present their achievements.
3. **A format.** Decide what your event should be about. Keep in mind that a simple event with an easily understandable program and a single key point is not less effective than a large articulated program. Mixing speeches with workshops or exhibits doesn't often work very well because it's hard to keep the schedule on time and you'd likely need distinct rooms. So, be clear about what the event is and what kind of involvement are you proposing to your visitors! See below for some suggestions about formats.
4. **A large screen or a projector.** Make sure you can show videos or photos, especially with a broadband Internet connection. While you talk about things and you show your physical projects, it's always good to show the process of making of, and the other projects from which you took inspiration. Share your passion for sharing. If you're in doubt or you need advice, please contact your local European Maker Week ambassador (see the list on the EMW website) or write to us at info@europeanmakerweek.eu.

What kind of events can I organize?

Here are some ideas:

1. Projects exhibition. Invite makers from your local community to show their projects, even if they're just experiments or work in progress. Assign a table to each project, and have the author stay by the table in order to talk to the visitors. Make sure people can touch, interact and learn. Have the author demonstrate not just the idea and the final result but also the process of making, including any prototypes.

- **Tip:** put a short written project description on the table. It will help preserving the voice of the author and it will help people who are too shy to ask for a full explanation.
- **Pro tip:** put your logo or your organization name on the table, along with the project title. People taking pictures of the project will capture them as well and they'll give credits and visibility.

2. Projects showcase. Invite about 3 makers from your local community and have them present their projects on stage (don't worry if you don't have a stage: put some chairs for the public and have the presenter stand in front of them, with a screen visible to everybody). Each maker will have 10 minutes for presenting his project, followed by 15 minutes of questions & answers.

- **Tip:** have the makers focus on their making process rather than on theory. Talking about failures, mistakes, and sharing what they actually learned from them, is much more interesting than trying to convince the public that you have a good idea. Be open!

3. Workshops about tools and technologies. Have your visitors learn from you and your makers. Explain the usage of your digital fabrication tools (3D printers, laser cutters, etc.) and your prototyping tools (Arduino, Raspberry Pi, etc.) with simple workshops where people discover that those technologies are easier than they think. Avoid having people standing all the time or sitting frontally like in a traditional classroom: if you can, have people sit all around a table so they are more encouraged to touch things and ask questions. If you expect too many people for this to happen, try to split them in more workshops. Prefer hands-on activities instead of long pure talking.

- **Pro tip:** if you expect too many people and you need to arrange them in a traditional frontal classroom without engaging them in hands-on activities, make sure your presentation is not just about theory and abstract tools. Show the process of making something. Learning by goals is much more effective in a maker context.

4. Workshops about making something. Have your visitors make something under your guidance, and take it with them. Your target audience can include kids (even together with their parents).

- **Tip:** if you need inspiration, check out Thingiverse.com and Instructables.com: you'll find many funny and instructive projects.

5. Conferences. Invite makers, experts, artisans, teachers and have them talk about their projects and how they're approaching the maker movement. Present the history and the achievements of your laboratory. Consider the conference as an occasion to do a recap about all of your activities.

- **Tip:** build exchange programs with makers from other cities or countries. Invite them to talk to your public, and go to their EMW events. An external guest presenting his activity and his point of view is always very inspirational and attracts people.

6. Maker cinema. Make your own playlist of movies, documentaries, and any other kind of videos about makers and innovators. Dig in YouTube, Vimeo and TED¹ and you'll find many instructive material to show. Offer comfortable seats to your guests and enjoy the vision.

- **Tip:** make sure to leave room for free informal networking after the projection, maybe with some drinks or food: makers and guests will be inspired by what they saw and will enjoy sharing their comments.

7. Live streaming of other EMW events. If you have a good broadband connection, arrange a live projection of things happening in other European Maker Week events. Makers act locally within a global network, and offering to your local community the opportunity to see what's happening in other places around Europe is an engaging way for showing how alive the maker community is.

8. Hackathons. This is not the easiest kind of events you might want to organize, but they can be very powerful in terms of engagement and community building. A hackathon is an event where people come together to solve problems in a competitive context. Participants typically get briefed by the organizers about goals and then form groups of about 2-5 individuals for working on projects. At the end of the hackathon, participants will pitch in front of a jury and the winners are announced. If you have never organized a hackathon, be prepared for a lot of positive energy but don't underestimate the amount of preparation work needed for making it successful. There are many instructive resources in the web; the "*Hackathon Guide*"² from J. Tauberer is a good starting point.

9. Contests. Set a goal and advertise it among your local community, design schools, universities. Organize an event where participants bring their ideas (or, better, their prototypes) and pitch in front of a jury and the public. Keep the goal wide enough for anyone to propose their distinct approach.

¹ TED talks can be projected in public as long as the event is non-commercial [<https://www.ted.com/about/ourorganization/our-policies-terms/ted-talks-usage-policy>]

² Joshua Tauberer, "*Hackathon Guide*" [<https://hackathon.guide/>]

Do you have any more hints for me?

Sure!

- **Make the event beginner friendly, accessible even to people with no previous technical experience.** Don't focus on technologies, but try to show the fun and the process of turning an idea into a learning path that finally leads to a prototype.
- **Create a friendly and informal atmosphere.** Even if you're inviting your local authorities or representatives of companies, make sure there's no barrier between you and your participants: they are not just visitors. Everyone is a maker, and they just need to discover their potential by joining your community.
- **Plan a follow up.** How can your participants keep learning? When are your next meetings or courses? Prepare business cards and forms for collecting e-mail addresses from people, and add them to your newsletter.
- **Take pictures and videos!** And share them on social networks, even if you're not a communication expert or you think that those tasks would steal your energy from the local event. If you're very lazy, tie a camera somewhere and put it in timelapse mode: you'll have an automatic reportage of what happened. If you have people giving speeches, record them. The official hashtag is #EMWeek18