

# CROCHET CODE IN YOUR MAKERSPACE

## The Background

An increasing number of libraries and community centers have received grants to open or expand their own makerspaces.

## The Challenge

Traditional hands-on maker opportunities require noisy tools. This is often directly in conflict with the tranquility of a library setting, and can be distracting to classes held in neighboring rooms in a community center.

## The Opportunity

Knitting and crochet projects bridge the gap between programming logic and hands-on crafting.

These hands-on makerspace opportunities are quiet, create very little mess, and can engage participants of all ages and experience levels. They're ideal for libraries and community centers.



## What is a Makerspace?

Makerspaces combine education and hands-on engagement. The term traditionally refers to spaces that have tools for design, prototyping, and manufacturing equipment. Makers work together, sharing knowledge and resources that wouldn't typically be available when creating projects in the garage.

However, as the scope of the maker movement has grown, grant funding has been issued to libraries and community centers. These groups have struggled to find creative ways to offer maker projects while maintaining the tranquility of the environment for traditional patrons.



## What is Crochet Code?

- The Crochet Code exhibit helped to show the parallels between the fiber arts and coding.
- The booth also gave participants an opportunity to learn about how to crochet.

## About Maker Faire Bay Area 2017

Attendees: 125,000 over 3 days

Sponsors: Intel, Google, Avnet, Microsoft, among others

Keynote Speaker: Adam Savage

Other Cool Exhibitors:

- Rick Schertle's compressed air rockets
- Bill Atkinson's interlocking toy blocks
- Learning to solder at the Google booth
- John Collins and the world record paper airplane
- Makexchange: Build a paper airplane launcher

## The Exhibit

At Maker Faire Bay Area 2017, I exhibited a topic called Crochet Code. Crochet patterns, like programming languages, have basic elements that can be assembled into loops and functions to achieve a desired output.



The exhibit had good traction with librarians and community coordinators, many of whom had received grants to set up their own makerspaces. Both groups had struggled with how to integrate hands-on maker opportunities into an otherwise quiet environment. Power tools and hammers don't integrate well with reading spaces or quiet classrooms.

## The Result

The Crochet Code concept provided an excellent bridge between programming classes that were already offered in many facilities, and a quiet way to employ that logic in a hands-on manner.