UK maker community gains access to professionally machined parts

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The maker movement – the rapidly-growing community of individual and micro-scale industrial inventors, designers, hackers and tinkerers – is being hailed by many as the next industrial revolution. But the maker movement is so often hampered by makers' needs to have key parts custom-machined in small volumes or as one-offs, while most of the machining world is set up to service giant industrial clients. Machining-4u.co.uk offers a UK marketplace that solves the problem, putting makers in touch with a vast network of machinists prepared to work on a small scale.

The Machining-4u.co.uk marketplace is a simple trading platform where makers post their machining needs and machinists quote for the work. It was launched quietly in 2015 and has grown organically, with little publicity to date, but has already seen more than 1,500 orders made and delivered.

The idea came – as may be expected – from makers: Stephane Gomez and his co-founders Simon Latour and Stephanie Brian. **Stephane Gomez says**: "*Simon, Stephanie and I are friends and avid makers who were often frustrated when we tried to source custom-made parts for cars, motorcycles, drones, aircraft, machinery and more. Machining companies either rejected our requests as too small to bother with or quoted us ludicrous prices for such small production runs.*"

So the trio – two engineers and a marketing specialist – built Machining-4u.co.uk to solve not only their own problem but – spotting a gap in the market – the needs of the UK maker movement.

The site connects customers (makers) directly with machinists. Customers draw the part they require and post a request with blueprints and descriptions. Professional machinists submit proposals to create the part(s) and the customer selects their preferred supplier. Payment is held in a secure account while the parts are machined and delivered, then released once the customer approves the quality and leaves a review of the machinist's work. The reviews ensure that customers can check a machinist's past performance before committing to a proposal.

Gomez continues: "*The maker movement is a true 'power to the people' culture, which is why it's taken off so widely. Technological progress combined with widespread online information and a refreshed interest in DIY means that anyone can become a part of the maker culture. But to realise their ideas, makers often need specialist machine suppliers. That's why Machining-4u.co.uk is now becoming part of the UK backbone for the maker movement.*"

UK-based customer John says: "*I finally found the solution to all my machined part needs! The workshop on the corner was not really interested in my ideas, but on machining-4u I got two offers right away! My chosen machinist delivered the parts in just a week and I was thrilled. I was able to inspect the delivered parts before my payment was processed which gave me the confidence to do my first online order on the site.*"

Stephane Gomez and his co-founders are now seeking to increase the UK maker community's awareness of the valuable resource.

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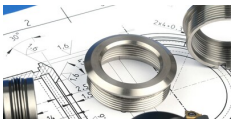
Notes for editors

Background notes on the maker movement

The maker movement is a revolution in production – the making of things – that contrasts the increasingly global nature of much of industry with a rapidly growing array of self-motivated individuals and small-scale makers who create and innovate with originality and flair, and who not only have ideas but make their ideas a reality. Makers are blending discarded electronics with custom-made small parts and a vast range of raw materials to produce original products for their own use or for small batch sales.

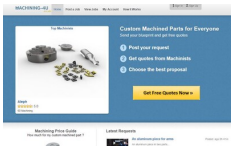
It is a surprisingly large movement, for a fledgling industry, as partly evidenced by the rise of maker fairs. It is huge in the US, where the Atmel Corporation has calculated that there are some 135 million adult

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makers(1), and is now taking the rest of the world by storm. In 2014, two maker fairs in the Bay Area and New York attracted 215,000 attendees(2). Kickstarter projects in the same year drew in $529 million of funding, equating to over $1,000 a minute(3). According to the World Bank, the global crowdfunding market could be worth as much as $96 billion by 2025(4) – that's approaching twice the size of the current global venture capital industry. Meanwhile, based on data analysed by Markets and Markets, the 3D printing market is expected to exceed $30 billion in value by 2022(5).

Sources:

(1) http://time.com/104210/maker-faire-maker-movement/

(2) http://makerfaire.com/makerfairehistory/

(3) https://www.kickstarter.com/year/2014/data

(4) http://fortune.com/2014/04/17/why-investors-are-pouring-millions-into-crowdfunding/

(5) http://www.marketsandmarkets.com/PressReleases/3d-printing.asp

For more information please visit www.machining-4u.co.uk or contact

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