

Building the New Economy Proposal

Melissa Fuller

The World Health Organisation estimates that today, there are 1 billion people with a disability world wide and only 1 in 10 people in need have access to assistive technology. With an ageing global population and a rise in non-communicable diseases, more than 2 billion people will need at least 1 assistive product by 2050.

AbilityMate is an open-source community inventing products for an inclusive society. We believe every person with a disability should have access to the assistive devices they need. That is why we are creating a global commons of open-source designs. For the last year we have been adding to and refining this collection through Make-a-Thon events where teams of Human Centred Designers, Carers, Occupational Therapists and people with disabilities have co-created dozens of products specific to a person's needs.

AbilityMate is leading the assistive technology industry into the next industrial revolution by establishing localised maker-spaces where products can be produced by people with disabilities. These makers are trained on technologies such as 3D printing, 3D scanning, electronics and programming.

I'd like to present AbilityMate's guiding principles to lower costs, heighten awareness and increase availability of assistive technology by creating a global commons of designs and democratising the manufacturing of assistive technology. My presentation will also cover how Makers can earn money by using their skills "for good", designing and making stuff that actually matters and makes a difference in someone's life.

In summary my presentation will be about how AbilityMate is catalysing a new economy and blurring the lines between designer, maker and consumer with people who have disabilities.

Conference Themes: Work, exchange, care.

Bio:

Melissa Fuller is an entrepreneur and advocate of a sustainable and ethical future that is informed and encouraged by the principles of the next industrial revolution. A catalyst for a new economy, her focus is on the intersection of design and manufacturing, and how that can create greater equality in society. Melissa is co-founded 3 socially progressive organisations including ThreeFarm Network (<http://www.threefarm.com>), MakersPlace Inc

