

Why a MakerLab in a Library?

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As you may have heard, Albertsons Library added a [MakerLab](#) over the summer. It is now open offering a wide range of technology including 3D printers, Raspberry PI, Arduinos, Green Screen technology, audio, image and video editing, and more.

Libraries have a long storied history of offering the tools and resources that people need to do research and develop scholarly and creative products. To us, adding a maker space is no different than having a computer lab with searchable databases and journals, word processing software, scanners and printers alongside our books.

Although colleges often have these facilities, typically they are funded with fees from their students. Thus, it is often the case that students only have access to particular equipment and labs if they are working on a degree in the college that offers the equipment or built the lab. Students often lose access to equipment when a particular class is completed and frequently they work primarily with students in their own discipline. This is where libraries fill a niche.

Albertsons Library is open to anyone regardless of their discipline. Boise State students have access to our MakerLab regardless of their degree. And it's not just access to tools. We're creating a space where students of all degrees and programs can meet, talk, and discuss ideas. Where students can apply things they've learned in the classroom or found through research, experiment and experience failure in an informal setting. Where they can share the problems they've encountered and enlist other students to help with problem solving. A place where a chance encounter has the potential to teach students the value of problem solving teams across disciplines.

Faculty will benefit as well. The MakerLab team is available to work with faculty members, subject librarians and others to find ways to integrate these technologies into class assignments. There will be regular workshops designed to teach faculty and students how to use the technology, and DIY tutorials if you learn best on your own.

A university library's role is to support research and learning. Albertsons Library can play a key role in helping *"create a signature, high-quality educational experience for all students"* (Strategic Plan, Boise State University 2012-2017), by providing spaces, tools and resources that increase the richness, depth and breadth of their experience, in ways that demonstrate what they learned and what they can do beyond the transcript of the courses they took.

That is why we built the Makerlab.

