

# Having Daft Ideas

EMFCamp 2015 Workshop

# Introductions



Libby

- BBC R&D, Bristol Hackspace
- Radiodan, HackspaceHat, Catwigs



Richard

- Electric Pocket, Bristol Hackspace, Squids
- Giant Staring Eye, FootfallField, also Catwigs, and innumerable more



John

- SF Writer and devops
- John Peel Radio, Many more things, and Project Tarot

# Today's workshop

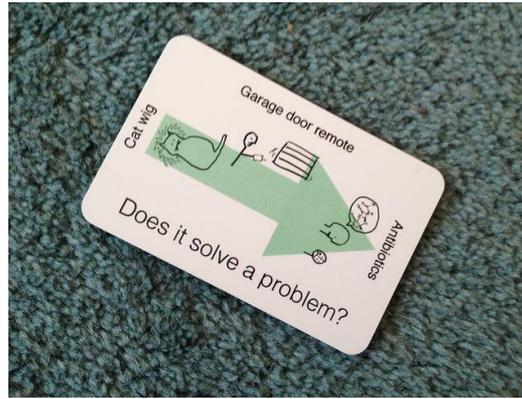
We'll

- Explain a bit about cards and inventing and why we think they go together well
- Show you one set, Inventotron-3000, our Hackspace inventing cards in action
- Make another set of cards from our collective brains

At the end of the (2 hour) workshop (with a 5 minute break in the middle)

- You should have some tools for doing your own inventing
- You should have at least one idea that you want to make RIGHT NOW
- This is an experiment, who knows what will actually happen.

# Cards



**EMFCAMP**

XIV ART

# Cards

Cards are a useful tool for unsticking your thoughts

- Oblique / blockbox tell you to *do* something - unstick your thoughts by taking a new idea seriously
- Catwigs leads you through a checklist - unstick by pursuing analogies seriously
- Project Tarot
- Inventotron tell you to *think* something - unstick by mashing ideas together

# The value of half an idea

- Taking half ideas
- Mashing them together
- Bouncing them off each other
- Letting your internal editor have a bit of time off

And so

- Unsticking your brain
- Having fun

Both of which are conducive to creativity

# The Value of Thingness

We don't really understand why, but we've observed that physical things help people think about a problem more clearly than digital ones do.

This applies both to cards - Ideas concreted by the physical tools in front of you - but also to the output of cards.

Often it's better that inventions are physical things, not, say, apps.

They're more visceral.

People have a better intuitive understanding of them.

They make an idea more real.

# Inventotron-3000

## Hackspace inventing cards

- A set of cards for inventing new daft physical things
- A tool for expanding the space of ideas and then picking the best bits

But -

- They are a product of a certain set of people and culture
- Different people means a wider, different space, and so set of possibilities
- “You can’t make what you can’t think of” (Richard Pope)

# Ok let's try them

## Inventotron instructions

- In groups of 3 or 4
- Divide the cards into three piles by type (**which**, **what** and **why**) and shuffle each pile
- Place the piles face down
- Take a card from each pile
- Interpret the cards
- Taking them seriously but flexibly, what could you build that they describe?

If you get stuck, ask for help understanding what they are or just pick another one!

Now let's make our cards:  
“Inventorama-5000”

# Instructions

Write down your half-ideas, in three categories

- **Which:** what's it made of: what's the platform, the fundamental works - (e.g. raspberry pi, papercraft, silverwork, woodcraft, French)
- **What:** what kind of thing it is - (e.g. barrel organ, gaming system, pen plotter, Minecraft, poetry, earring)
- **Why:** its purpose - why you would make something (e.g. for my pet fish; to wear; to make people laugh)

Write the category on the back of the card.

A decorative sign with the word "INTERMISSION" in a bold, white, serif font. The text is enclosed in a double-line rectangular border with ornate, symmetrical flourishes at the top, bottom, and sides. The background is black.

**INTERMISSION**

# Inventorama 5000

As before:

- In groups of 3 or 4
- Take a card from each pile
- Interpret the cards
- Taking them seriously but flexibly, what could you build that they describe?
- Record ideas that anybody likes on a card

You have 20 minutes to come up with some and then we'll discuss your favourites as a group.

# What did we invent ?

Tell us your favourites!

# Wrap-up

How you can make your own cards

- Code
- Printing
  - On a printer
  - Moo
  - Axminster bloke
- Boxes

Questions?

# Bye!

<http://inventotron-3000.com>

<http://catwigs.org>

@jarkman @\_JHR\_ @libbymiller