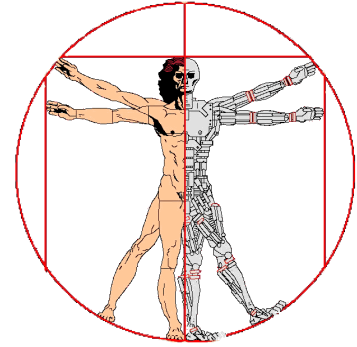


# Maker Faire Towne Hall

Comments Collected & Compiled by  
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THE ROBOT GROUP



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The Robot Group Inc. from Austin Texas participated in Maker Faire 2007. Anchoring the east side of the arena, The Robot Group's myriad of displays circled the end of the arena, centered around The Ponginator, a 20 foot tall ping pong ball shooting robot. The entire Robot Group membership participated in the preparation, setup operation and tear down of multiple displays. After the event, as a group we discussed Maker Faire and some of the "Lessons Learned" now that we had experience. I collected some of the comments and added some of my own. Here are the "top ten" comments and observations about Maker Faire Austin:

- 1) **Examine Handicap access**- The dirt floor areas were an impediment to some. Anecdote: Getting to arena floor required finding an elevator, then where the elevator exited, crossing some large power cables (i.e. too large to be crossed with a wheelchair or power chair w/o assistance)
- 2) **Explore scheduled "break"** people to "spell" Makers- The ability for Makers to leave their booth and visit the faire for "networking" would be a boon (not to mention for restroom breaks!)
- 3) **Revisit ticket price**- Cost per head to get in caused some who were unsure of Maker Faire's relevance to their life decided to skip the faire, unwilling to "gamble" that much money.
- 4) **Revisit group pricing**- Anecdote: a group of Boy Scouts from East Austin showed at the front gate and were faced with a \$25/head price for kids. They left cause they couldn't afford the tickets.
- 5) **Advertising**- Answer the question "Whats Maker Faire?" in a clear, unambiguous way for the casual observer. Point is to instill a clear enough vision that a) They know if they want to go and if not b) retain enough information to excite someone they know who might want to go
- 6) **Revisit map of the grounds & schedule of events**- Though there were brochures, many folks wandered around not knowing where/when things were. Anecdote: Some people have said "Oh we were at Maker Faire but we never saw The Robot Group". When we reply that we were in the arena, they said "Where was the arena?"
- 7) **Announced event schedule**- A PA system or some other method to announce scheduled (i.e. non-continuous) events. Anecdote: We would see people come running through the area seeking their friends/family saying "Hurry! c'mon! They're about to do the Mousetrap!"
- 8) **Help Makers meet other Makers** - Some way to allow as many makers to meet other makers as possible. Makers are so busy building & fixing their displays, or talking to the few folks that come by, they rarely get a chance to get out and see/meet other makers.
- 9) **Revisit charging admission to group or organization members** who are working for the show. Having to enumerate The Robot Group displays, then count out how many "makers" and "assistants" was an impediment to the group having sufficient people at all times to operate the booths.
- 10) **Reliable Wireless Internet access** - Last minute downloads and/or email checks were not possible in many areas of the arena. An Internet connection up, running tested and monitored from the first setup day would help make sure people can stay in touch, "blog" about their experiences and also send photo collections out to sites during the event, helping to fuel the buzz.

Please remember these are offered in a spirit of improving and assisting Maker Faire and insuring that Maker Faire 2008 is bigger and better!