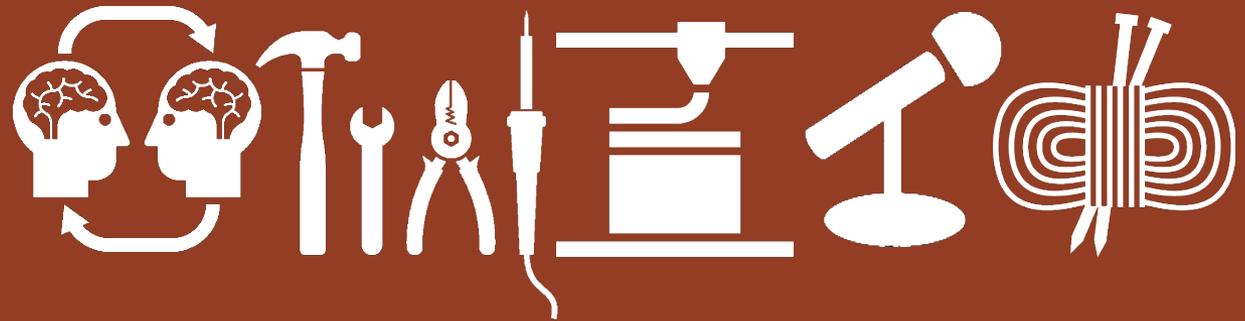


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# POWERING A MAKERSPACE FOR YOUR COMMUNITY

## Lessons from library makerspace research



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# BACKGROUND

- 19 years in public libraries
  - 1<sup>st</sup> public library makerspace in WI
  - Left libraries because I was saddened by state of public research
- Multi-site ethnographic study
  - 3 libraries of various locations/sizes
  - 61 long interviews, 115 total participants
  - 400+ hours of participant observation over 6 months



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# BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

- Kept hearing about:
  - How to develop a makerspace
  - How people learn in a makerspace
  - Why makerspaces are awesome in libraries
  - What library staff need to work in makerspaces
  - What tools are needed in a makerspace
  - And ALWAYS this one weird word was invoked...



“empowering”

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Who HAS the power to begin with?  
If they are willing to share it, are they also willing to withhold it?

empowering”

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“empowering”

What kinds of power?

Is it perceived as power by all the stakeholders?



Who HAS the power to begin with?  
If they are willing to share it, are they also willing to withhold it?

How is power being shared or enacted?  
What practices block or facilitate power,  
and for whom?

“empowering”

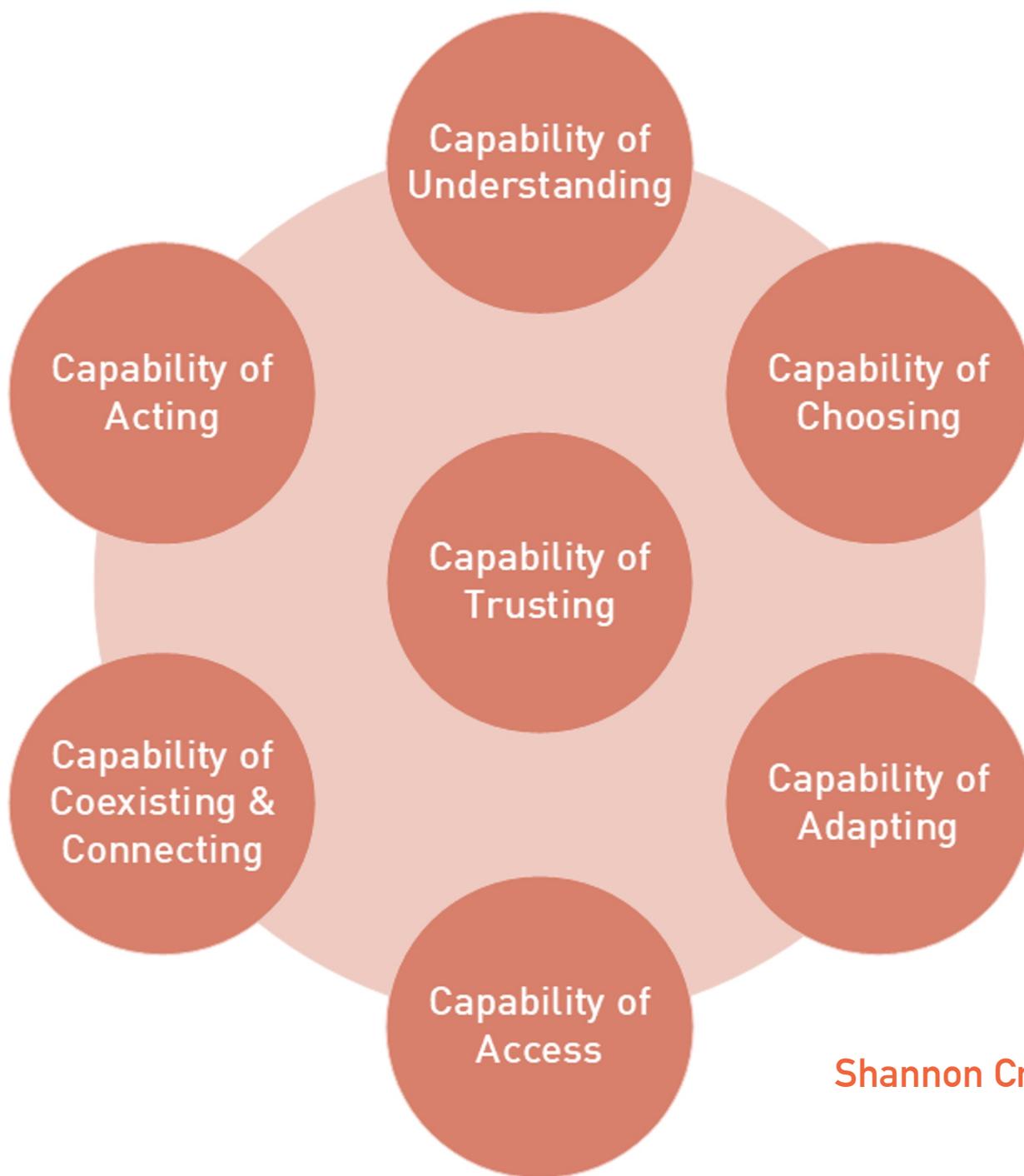
What kinds of power?  
Is it perceived as power by all the stakeholders?



**Tools foster conviviality to the extent to which they can be easily used, by anybody, as often or as seldom as desired, for the accomplishment of a purpose chosen by the user.**

(Illich, 1973, p. 22)

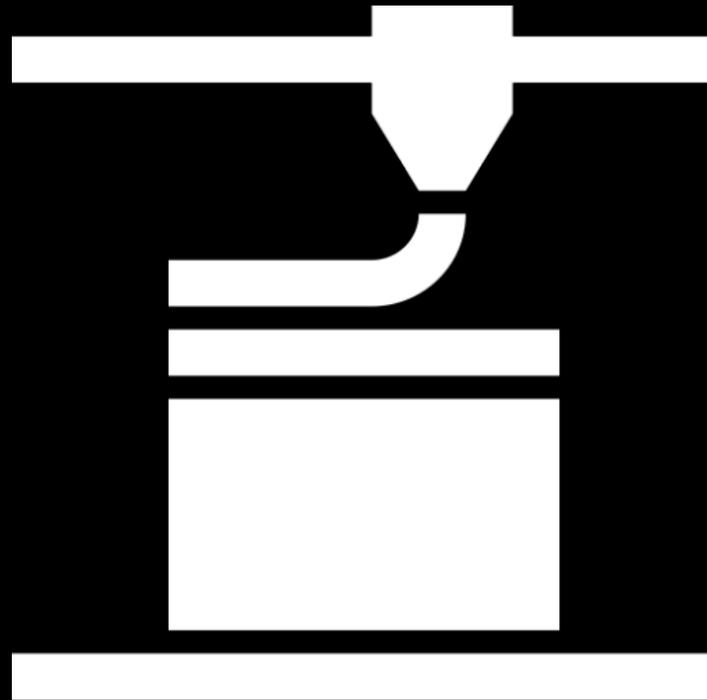




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# 1. Capability of all the parts of access: physical, intellectual & sociocultural



# Access

Innovate • Create •

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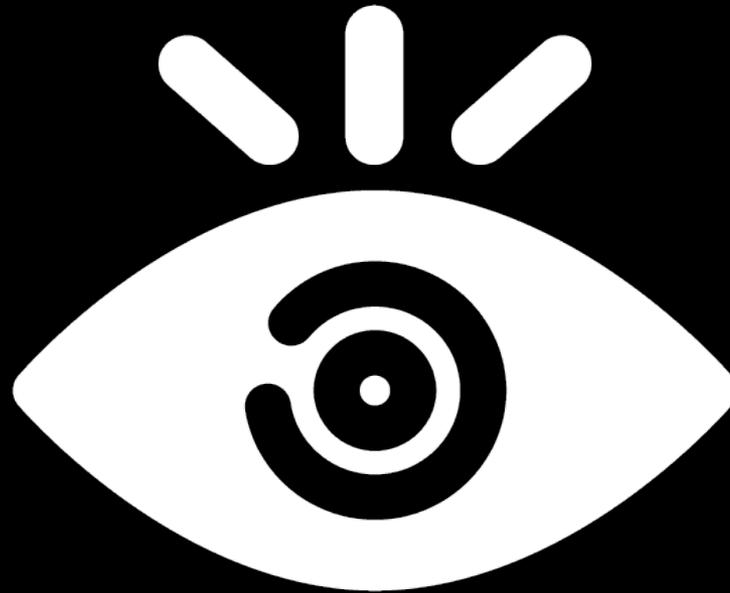
# Access



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## 2. Capability of understanding oneself and one's needs in the context of the space





# Understanding

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# Understanding



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### 3. Capability of Trusting



**Trust**



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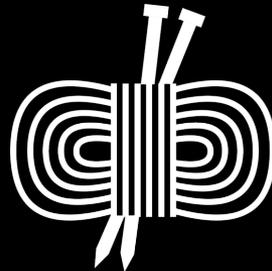
# Trust

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## 4. Capability of Acting (rather than being acted-upon), and which involves three sub-capabilities:

- a. Having some type of say in what occurred in these spaces
- b. Being able to give of one's own expertise in the spaces
- c. Balancing needed help and institutional control and the range of contingencies possible in the spaces



# Acting: Having a Say



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# Acting: Help vs. Control



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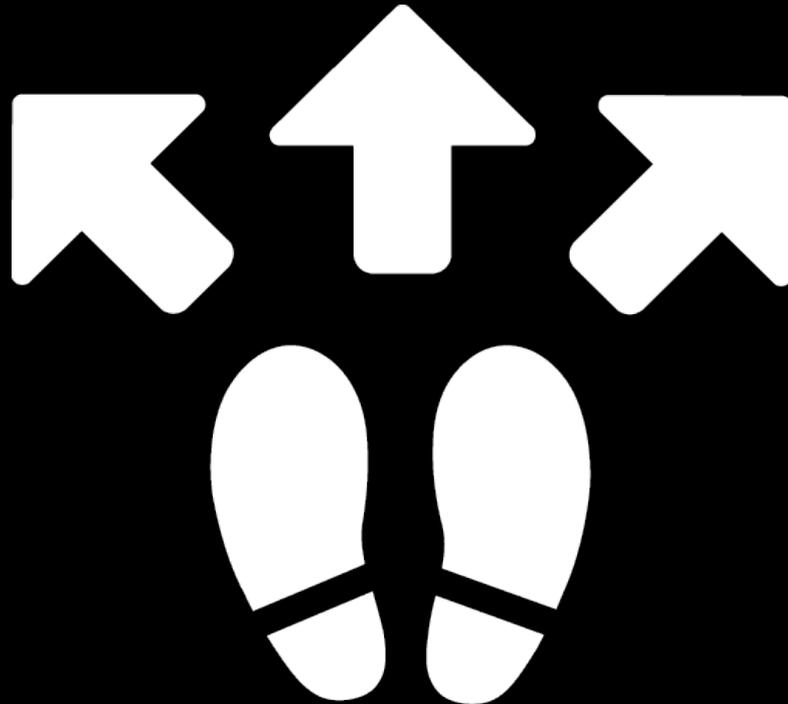


# Acting: Able to Enrich

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# 5. Capability of Choosing (specifically, one's means and ends)



# I WANT TO MAKE:

MUSIC IN THE STUDIO

Etchings / Printmaking

☆ PORTRAIT STUDIO ☆

Soldering  
everything

Substrate out of  
for jewelry

LASER CUT  
MIRrors!

Moveable Art

quilt/wall  
hangings

leaves

I can help!  
Met Kotstas (mechanical)

3D-Making  
wood art

Ice cream / cake

3D Printer FEN

Shop-making  
making with  
logs - more space

What I want  
made  
Paul's Project

Paul's Bathroom  
Only Private Please  
Keep out! Do Not Enter  
OR save  
Paul's Closets  
Only Private  
Please Keep out  
Do Not Enter

Choosing

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# Choosing



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## 6. Capability of Coexisting & Connecting



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# Connecting & Coexisting

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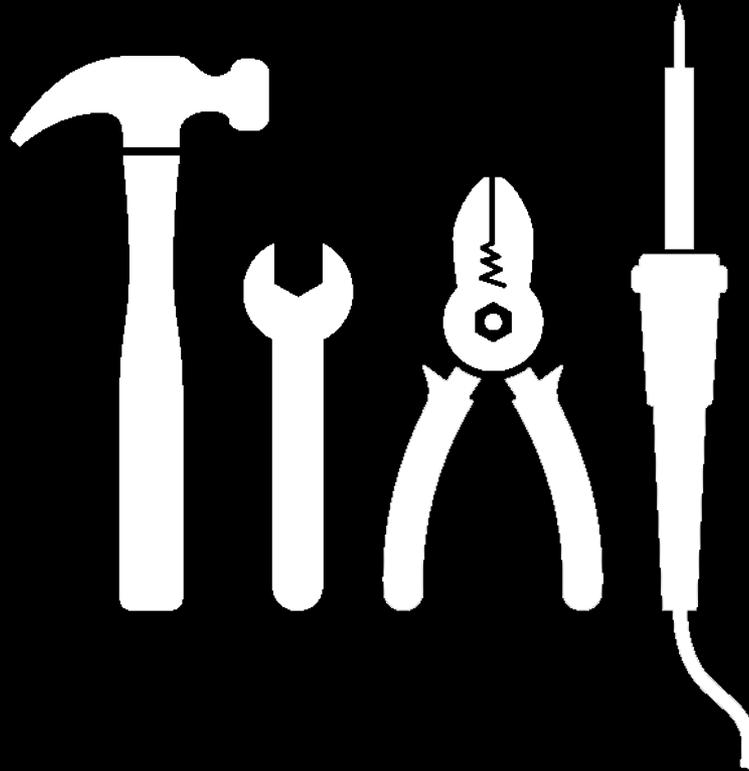
# Connecting & Coexisting



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## 7. Capability of adapting (or making oneself comfortable in the environment)



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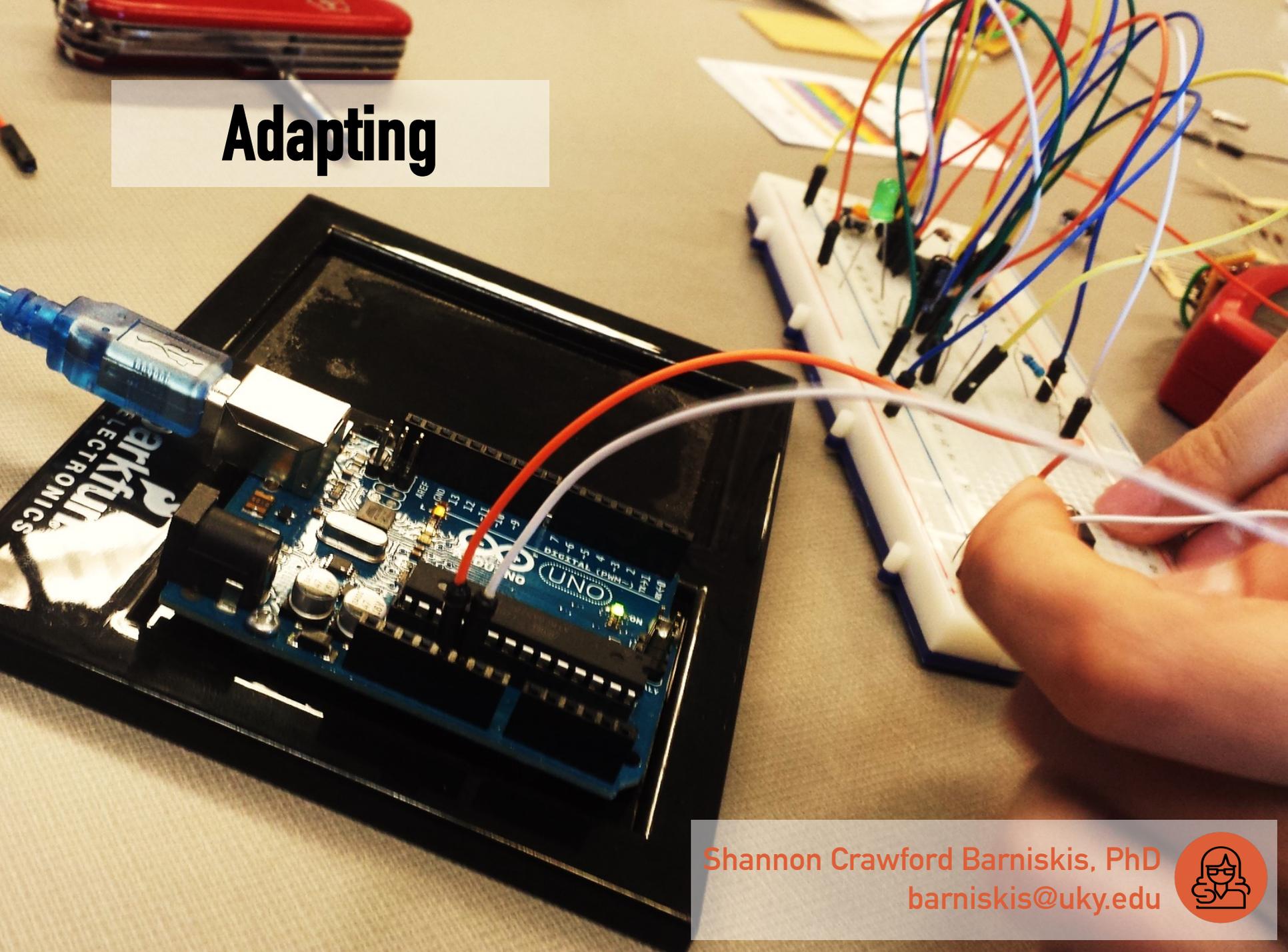
# Adapting



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# Adapting



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# 8 Key Takeaways

## Public Library Creative Places:

- Reproduce extant inequities
- Require particular dispositions—but can develop these dispositions
- Are convivial tools —for SOME people and in SOME libraries—and conviviality masks for others
- Are not always particularly social spaces—but social connections are desirable





# Conviviality Masks

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# 8 Key Takeaways

## Public Library Creative Places:

- Limit conviviality with a “hidden curriculum” and institutional values of uplift
- Require social trust & social infrastructuring
- Are serving two audiences — serious leisure audiences & Casual leisure audiences — and not doing either well
- Need tools to develop and assess conviviality

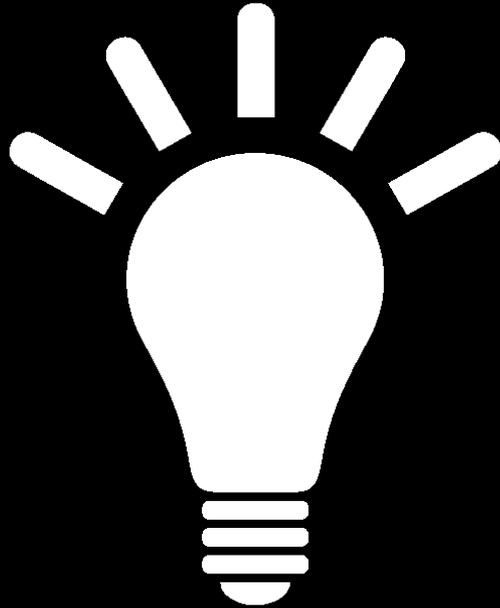


# Casual Leisure



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# Powering a Makerspace with Convivial Tools: The C3

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# C3: Convivial Capabilities Checklist as a Path Toward Authentic Power

1. Capability of Access (physical, intellectual & sociocultural)
2. Capability of Understanding (both oneself and one's needs in the context of the space)
3. Capability of Trusting
4. Capability of Acting (rather than being acted-upon), and which involves three sub-capabilities
  - a. Having some type of say in what occurred in these spaces
  - b. Being able to give of one's own expertise in the spaces
  - c. Balancing needed help and institutional control and the range of contingencies possible in the spaces
5. Capability of Choosing (specifically, one's means and ends)
6. Capability of Coexisting and Connecting
7. Capability of Adapting (or making oneself comfortable in the environment)



# What can go wrong/right?

Which ideas work for your community (NOT simply you or your library)?

Have you ASKED? Have you asked people who DON'T use the library?

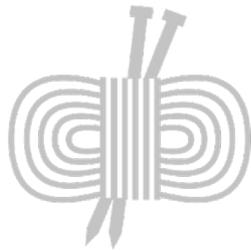
What are the barriers to convivial tools in your community?





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# Sources

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