civic lab

tools for distributed democracy, government accountability, and community engagement

CivicLab is a nonprofit social venture to create a space for activists, hacktivists and social entrepreneurs to come together to collaborate, investigate, educate and construct tools that will facilitate civic engagement. Practitioners of old school and new school social change activism together in our public store front setting.

distributed democracy

spreading out the means and methods of democratic practice to the average citizen using technology

EXAMPLES
- Citizens monitor infrastructure
- Online voting
- Participatory budget analysis and allocation

government accountability

using technology to x-ray and expose all activities of government and influences in order to reveal any potential or real conflicts-of-interest.

EXAMPLES
- Online databases
- Visualizations of processes and relationships

civic engagement

encouraging citizens to take an active and ongoing role in shaping and guiding their local communities

EXAMPLES
- Voting
- Volunteering
- Participation
- Running for local offices

The kinds of activities that we envision taking place in the CivicLab are:

- Workshops on civic journalism, activism techniques, coding, watchdog basics
- Lectures and presentations by scholars, activists and practitioners on trends in civic engagement
- Meetings and networking activities that mix activists from across the city and across interests
- A lab environment with tools, gear and work space to make objects useful for civic engagement
- Project-based work on specific issues that involve access to data and civic education
- Original research on civic engagement trends and needs
- Production of training materials such as videos, podcasts and guide books
- Publication of products that document and explain our work
- Classes taught in conjunction with civics program of local university
- Library of printed and digital references for civic engagement
- Exhibits of work related to civic engagement

The CivicLab would have a robust web site that would house data tools, reports and other content related to our work. It would also be an online community that mirrors and expands upon the community we build in the store front space. This online space would be open to activists from any location. We see classes and other training activities that happen in physical space being archived online. We also online exclusive educational materials around civic engagement being produced and parked on this web site.

Interested in designing CivicLab? Participate in the design hack:
Saturday June 16, 2012 10am - 2pm // Please RSVP for address

For more information contact Tom Tresser:

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