3-D Printing 101: A quick guide to the world of 3-D Printing.

Questo non e' un mio post ma parla di un mercato, quello delle stampanti 3D, dove il mercato "will jump" da 3.8 miliardi di dollari del 2014 a 16,2 miliardi di dollari nell'anno 2018 … secondo me c'e' da pensarci ! buona lettura…

The post 3-D Printing 101: A quick guide to the world of 3-D Printing. appeared first on Interesting Engineering.

3-D printing is no longer out of reach for the home user. With the technology maturing, prices are beginning to come down from their atmospheric highs and into the range of the everyday user. Much like computers, tablets, and mobile phones, 3-D printers can be found at your typical electronics store, or online from retailers like Amazon and Best Buy.

Movers and Makers

The Maker Movement has spawned an interest in creation at all levels. 3-D printing, once thought to be in the realm of science fiction or something from the far future, became a commercial reality only recently. Statista projects that the global market for 3-D printing, materials and associated services will jump from **$3.8 billion in 2014 to $16.2 billion by the year 2018.**

Among industry and business users, adoption rates are only at 12 percent, according to ZDNet, for the moment, with 19 percent planning to adopt and implement the technology within the next 12 months. With applications in many industries such as medical technology, aerospace engineering, and construction, innovations are occurring almost daily; much in the way that CNC (Computer Numerical Control) machines changed

precision production from an assembly line of workers to an assembly line of machines programmed to make the same part or item without error time after time. While CNC machines remain out of reach for most potential users because of cost, training, regulations and other factors, 3-D printers are becoming far more common than many might believe.

The ability for Joe and Jane end-user to design, prototype, produce, market, and sell their own goods has tremendous potential for opening up an otherwise sluggish channel of untapped innovation. The Maker Faire, which bills itself as "The Greatest Show and Tell on Earth," holds some 50 events both large and small across the United States, and has just jumped the Atlantic to present a MakerCon in Norway. Maker inspired startups such as CustomMade, Tech Shop, and Etsy have grown in value by millions of dollars, and are among the hardest properties for venture capitalists, inside or outside of the Silicon Valley, to unseat.

However, to those within the Maker Movement, they do not feel anywhere near the mainstream. While the movement is in line with eco-friendly, locavore, and artisanal aesthetics, certainly developing trends, many insiders feel that things are still in the bubbling upstage, as reported by The Verge. However, that outsider feeling may not last too long as there is a huge push to get maker tools and 3-D tech into classrooms, which will instill a love of creativity and experimentation from an early age.

While some feel that the maker movement is another iteration of a hipster fad with a disdain for the mainstream, this DIY movement on steroids shows no signs of slowing, no signs of stopping, and is instead taking on new passengers for the ride of a lifetime.

The World of DIY and the Future of Industry

Websites such as IndieGoGo, KickStarter, GoFundMe and others

are taking venture capital out of the hands of the few and putting it back into the hands of the many. Among campaigns are 3-D printing campaigns seeking alternative channels with which to finance their businesses. These range from 3-D printed art to artificial hearts and prosthetics. There are even plans to create printable houses, cars, and even clothing.

The ramifications for the economy are difficult to comprehend at this early stage though. What will happen to the construction industry when you can print a house, or to shopping malls when all you need to do is print a new outfit? While there is a fair amount of kicking and screaming on behalf of one point of view or another, the economy will certainly make some shifts.

However, it should be pointed out that some 60 years after people envisioned robots taking over all the jobs formerly done by humans, very little of this has actually come to pass. Certainly with computers no one ever imagined at the outset of the digital age that people would see technology such as barcoding equipment, eCommerce platforms like Shopify, or online browser games. But things seldom go as anyone might expect. After all, who can forget that in 1995, Time magazine declared the Internet as being “over.” Even industry giants like Microsoft agreed.

Instead, 22 years later, the Internet is stronger than ever, thriving, and growing despite ideological battles that rage around the perimeter and inside the beltway of Washington DC. You cannot tell the course a new technology will take just because certain innovations that will enable a given course have not yet come into being. There is no such thing as foretelling the future, no crystal ball, and no certainty as to where 3-D printing will take the world.

If anything is certain, it is only that controversy exists now, and will exist in the future, though possibly around a

different set of circumstances than you see today.