

student as producer

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Hack the Curriculum. Hug the City

Marcin Kolakowski and James Irvine, University of Lincoln

Abstract

Apparently the smallest city in the UK – Lincoln – effectively started to be a university city in 1996. The usual “town and gown” division soon became apparent. Spatial and cultural separation between the academic and ‘non-academic’ residents became reality which many were ready to accept. Not all, however. The new “student as producer” ethos has opened new doors and new perspectives on ways in which the city and the university could cohabit. An example of cooperation between tutors and a 3rd year student of the architectural course gives an example of how a practical research project could not only turn into an exciting research project but become a real catalyst moment in transforming the city on a cultural and social level. This project has so far been strongly related to the idea of hackspace – which as a phenomenon often takes the form of physical space serving as a social hub that allows tool sharing and interaction between people representing different interests, skills and interests. ‘Hack-culture’ and Hackspaces became an opportunity for creating practical social hubs to promote ideas of social cooperation, democratisation of technology and empowerment. Lincoln Hackspace project started as a student project but thanks to the student as producer culture it has turned into a socially relevant initiative which created a much needed active bridge between the university and the town and has a great real chance to create a qualitative change in the life of Lincoln. This project could become an intriguing example of how cooperation between students and tutors could not only open an opportunity to ‘hack’ the curriculum turning it into a socially relevant student-led project, but even more importantly, it is a chance for the university to finally hug the city.

Presenter details

Dr. Marcin Mateusz Kołakowski

Lecturer at University of Lincoln, School of Architecture

James Irvine

Student at University of Lincoln, School of Architecture