

MASS CUSTOMIZATION & OPEN INNOVATION NEWS

Notes and ideas on mass customization, personalization, customer integration, and open innovation – strategies to co-create value between manufactures and customers. Edited by Frank T. Piller.

www.mass-customization.de • Vol. 11 (2008), No. 1 • February 2008

This newsletter documents the last months' postings in Frank Piller's blog on mass customization and open innovation, <http://mass-customization.blogs.com>. This is the **direct web link** where all new contributions will be published first. Once I discover an interesting topic, I post it there. **Subscribe to the blog's RSS newsfeed to get access to all news immediately.**

The **Permalink at the end of each article** in this document is the link where you find the **full text of each post** on the web. Go also there to follow **all links and access more material**. Have fun! *Frank Piller*

Contents: What do you find in this issue?

UPCOMING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES	2
Participate at Industry Benchmarking: How good is your configuration practice?	2
Invitation: European Conference on Sports and Innovation	2
MASS CUSTOMIZATION.....	3
MCPC 2007: Finally a Conference Report & Review	3
Trend Map 2008: See where personalization, open innovation, and mass customization are in 2008.....	5
Top 10 Mass Customization Companies in 2007 -- Interview: Uche Okonkwo on the Mass Customization Trend in the Luxury Industry	6
Report in Best Practice Business Blog.....	8
User Manufacturing Trendwatching Report.....	8
Bikers Want Customized Motorcycle Seats, Custom Fit Study Finds	9
Rapid Manufacturing for Mass Customization: Good Report in DESIGN NEWS Analyzes Recent Development	10
MIT Technology Review on Ponoko: "Ponoko wants to give customers the tools to design and sell whatever they want."	12
Industry Study on State of Rapid Manufacturing and the Future of Production	12
MC Configurator Database Went Live - Great New Portal Provides Comprehensive Overview of Mass Customization Offerings	14
Video interview on mass customization and open innovation.....	15
Relaunch of Mass Customization Web Site - and further sources on the topic.....	15
INTELLIFIT Moves From Virtual Fitting (match-to-order) to True Mass Customization: Custom-made jeans with a high-tech twist	16
Personalization in Retail: How RFID tags are helping a German retailer to provide customization of the retail experience	17
Virtual Fashion Technology: New blog covers major personalization technology.....	18
Design & Configuration of Complex Products -- Insights From DTU's Product Modeling Group, one of Europe's leading centers on the mass customization.....	18
OPEN INNOVATION & CROWDSOURCING	19
Crowdsourcing methods are McKinsey's Prime Business Technology Trends to Watch In 2008.....	19
Crowd F(o)unding an Eco-Clothing Label: nvohk explores the collective customer commitment method to create a new fashion line.....	21
Update: Crowdlogoing the New Spreadshirt Tagline: New Design Competition Launched -- and finalized.....	21
Create the Shoe of you Dreams - Participate in the CEC Shoe Design Contest.....	23
Open Innovation Widget -- Fellowforce creates open line between users and companies	24
User Innovation in the Catholic Church: Dioceses of Cologne launches idea competition platform	25
Open Innovation in Switzerland: Help Major Swiss Firms to Innovate.....	25
Trendcamp Open Innovation by Net Culture Lab Austria.....	26
EVENTS & WORKSHOPS	26
RKW-Arbeitskreis Mass Customization startet am 6. März 2008.....	26
Upcoming Mass Customization Events in 2008	28
Upcoming Open Innovation & Mass Customization Related Events -- Fall / Winter 2007	28
Webinar: The Next Gen of Mass Customization: User Manufacturing, Instant Companies, and Customer Co-Creation (Nov 29, 2007 on your desktop).....	29
Rethinking Business: Products of tomorrow: Fabbing, personalization & custom manufacturing (Essen, 22. Nov 2007)	30
Frontend Europe Conference: An expensive but high-profile event on mastering customer focused innovation (Vienna, 28-31 Jan 2008).....	32
Public Lecture: Open Innovation and User Innovation (RWTH Aachen, 4. Dec 2007)	33
Public Lecture: Mass Customization and Customer Co-Creation (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, 12. Nov 2007)	34
Impress and Contact.....	36

UPCOMING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Participate at Industry Benchmarking: How good is your configuration practice?



Exclusive survey by **Aberdeen Group** wants to evaluate how companies are **profiting from configuration**. I was asked by Aberdeen to support this survey, and have looking on their questions, I believe it is a great initiative.

How do you customize or configure your products to specific customer preferences, while maximizing profitability? The Aberdeen Group is looking to answer that question.

If your company offers a mass customization configurator, weigh in on the debate by **taking a short 10 minute survey**.

Each respondent who answers the survey will receive a complimentary full copy of the report containing this study's results (a \$399 value). This report allows you to benchmark yourself against your industry peers. Individual responses will be kept strictly confidential and data will only be used in aggregate.

Questions the survey wants to ask:

- # How do you capture and validate what your customer wants?
- # What are you doing to develop accurate, yet timely quotes?
- # Do you have anything in place to help automate repetitive or tedious steps of the sales or design process?
- # Is reducing rework and returns of tailored products a concern for you?

Share your experiences to help us identify best practices for producing customized products that drive profitability.

We greatly appreciate your participation in this research effort and look forward to sharing our findings with you. BUT: Please only participate in the survey if you are offering customizable products in any industry.

Go here to the survey: aberdeen.com/survey/CustomIIMCP

February 17, 2008 | [Permalink http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2008/02/participate-at.html](http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2008/02/participate-at.html) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Invitation: European Conference on Sports and Innovation



Are you interested in the future of sports and mass customization in the sports goods industry? Then you should join this upcoming conference.

12 to 14 March 2008 in EINDHOVEN, Netherlands

The conference is an initiative by the European Action Project **INNOSPORT.EU**. In this project, a number of the core players of the European sports goods industry brainstormed in the last year **how to create a**

better platform for this important industry. I was invited to join the advisory board of this project, as mass customization and user innovation are regarded as some of the key trends in this sector.

The results of this coordinated brainstorming will be presented on the conference. This also is THE KEY EVENT if you are interested in participating in European projects around this sector.

Topics to be discussed on the event:

Sport vision 2015: What social trends are there in relation to sport? What developments are taking place in health and safety aspects? What impact can sport have on the economy? Where are the opportunities for innovation? The Sport Vision 2015 which will be presented at the conference will provide some insight into these issues about trends, needs, aspects and innovation opportunities. The programme also includes a number of workshop sessions and visits to field labs about football, sports promotion, gymnastics, swimming and horse-riding.

European platform: The European Sport Innovation Platform (ESIP) will be launched at the conference. This is a proactive networking platform at European level for high-tech companies, knowledge institutes and government, with the aim of joining forces in innovation and creating new opportunities as a result.

Free company presentation: We are pleased to offer you the opportunity to present your company free of charge during the conference. Please visit the website for more information.

International speakers who have already agreed to take part in the conference are Alberto S. Bichi – Secretary General FESI (Federation of the European Sporting Goods Industry), Antonello Marega – R&D Director of Tecnica, and Philippe Freychat – Vice-president Sporaltec and R&D Director of Decathlon.

Program and registration: For a detailed and up-to-date programme, please visit www.innosport.eu where you can also register for the conference.

Further contact: **Marc van der Zande**, [TNO Science and Industry](mailto:marc.vanderzande@tno.nl), marc.vanderzande@tno.nl

February 14, 2008 | [Permalink http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2008/02/invitation-euro.html](http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2008/02/invitation-euro.html) | [Comments \(1\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

MASS CUSTOMIZATION

MCPC 2007: Finally a Conference Report & Review



The MCPC 2007 now is over since almost a month, and finally I get the time to restart blogging. Immediately after the conference, my teaching period at [RWTH](http://www.rwth-aachen.de) started, and I was very busy in keeping my students happy.

What to write? The **MCPC 2007** was a **terrific and very rewarding event**. We were a great bunch of several hundreds of people at MIT and HEC Montreal, and the depth and quality of discussion was amazing. To get an overview, you can [download all abstracts of the conference](#) here. You also can [order the full-text proceedings](#) here.

I will not provide a long conference report here **but let our participants talk**. We received this quotes after the conference, and they summarize very neatly what was special about this conference:

"Thank you for organizing the best conference I have ever attended. This conference gave me a lot of power, ideas, and inspiration for my future research. I have been struggling in my research regarding MC for footwear for ten years. Few researchers are studying MC for the footwear industry in the US, but learning that many researchers and firms are tackling this issue in other countries, gave me inspiration. In addition, many colleagues don't realize the enormous potential of MC. Now I can perceive of a clear

future direction for MC after attending this conference." **Sage Endo, School of Business Administration, University of Mississippi**

"Excellent conference. I thought Joe Pine's talk was enough to make the conference worthwhile (it was) but then the rest of it was beyond my expectations as well. Congratulations." **Suzanne Loker; Cornell University**

"One of the best, if not the best conference I've ever been to. Right mix of theory and practice." **Oinonen Sami, Nokia**

"It has been one of the most rewarding conferences I've have attended. It was really well organized as it brought together a heterogeneous group of people who usually don't interfere with each other. The complementary competencies make an ideal arena for some really exiting stuff to happen." **Christian Thuesen, NCC Construction Denmark**

"It was an eye opener and I can't remember a time when so much new information (at least for me) was crammed into such a short time." **Art St Onge, President, St Onge Company**

"Seeing so many people trying to forward mass customization across so many different disciplines was very inspiring and I'm already looking forward to the next conference!" **Monika Desai, Footwear Entrepreneur, Boston**

And one note made all of us very proud:

"Thank you so much for getting me to speak at this week's event! I thoroughly enjoyed it, and seeing what a great group of folks you have brought together to push forward the state of art in Mass Customization." **B. Joseph Pine II, Author of "Mass Customization"**

Joe gave a really inspiring talk to start the conference. It almost was a journey though his life, starting with the very first research on mass customization and ending with its most recent book (just published this month) on Authenticity.

Joe agreed that we can share his slides and so you **can follow his thoughts at least partly on paper**. [Download his presentation here](#). (Including Joe's personal comments on screen during the presentation!).

For more conference reviews, several blogs have provided feedback:

Ronal Reddington from the Made For One Blog collected a selection of feedback from our visitors posted in several blogs. He could not make it in person to the MCPC; but contributed with this selection! **Thanks a lot, Ronal!**

Based on his original summary, here are some quotes and links to more extensive reports:

First off, **Peter Semmelhack** of Bug Labs, who spoke at MCPC 2007, wrote briefly about the event on the company's BugBloggers weblog. For some pictures, just look here.

As Ronal Reddington wrote, Bug Labs is producing an open source, modular consumer electronics platform which will allow individual users to customize gadgets. I am really looking forward to their launch at the end of this year.

Elaine Polvinen, Professor of Fashion Textile Technology at Buffalo State University, published her thoughts on the MCPC Business Seminar in Montreal on her Virtual Fashion Technology blog. Her conclusion:

"The conference was short, and jam packed with interesting presentations highlighting the latest developments in mass customization and personalization. Someone mentioned at the conference that an obstacle preventing wider scale use of mass customization and personalization was a system to input and save standardized measurements. As I listened to these comments I remembered that such a system was recently developed in Korea called i-fashion."

I-Fashion was represented with several talks during the MCPC research conference at MIT.

Michael Galpert, Chief Operations Officer of Worth100.com, [shares his notes on MPCP 2007 Pre-Conference Workshop](#) at MIT. Real notes, but interesting to read (especially for me to see what people note while I am talking :-).

Adrian Bowyer of the RepRap digital manufacturing machine (3D printer) project, [posted about his journey to Boston](#) and how he set up one of the 'Darwin' 3D printers in the conference lobby. This was one of the great exhibits we had a MIT !! And one of the most interesting discussions we had a MIT: The upcoming world of user manufacturing where cheap manufacturing infrastructure will allow users to make directly what they want ... without having to wait for a manufacturer to set up a traditional mass customization system for them.

Another home fabbing device we had on the conference was the famous **Fab@Home** machine from Cornell university ([I wrote about this before](#) in this blog).

Robert Freund [reports in German, but larger detail](#) on his impressions from the conference and the feedback he received.

Ruben Robert of open innovation accelerator FellowForce has published a short summary of his MCPC presentation 'The Business Smarts of Strangers' on the [FellowForce blog](#). And FellowForce also gave us their innovation widget for free to gather feedback and ideas for the next MCPC 2009 ! (See it on the conference web site),

The writers of the **OPENeur blog** also participated at the MCPC 2007 – [here is their preview](#).

Adam Fletcher from Spreadshirt also reported from its MCPC 2007 trip which took place while he was very busy in running the "Open Logo project" for Spreadshirt: [Posting 1](#) and [Posting 2](#)

So: A great event with great people and really interesting discussions. **The next conference will be in Europe in September/October 2009** –we have not decided yet where and are taking proposals from interested universities who want to host the 2009 conference. if you are interested, you drop me a line!

Update: On [configurator-database.com](#), you find a number of MCPC 2007 conference pictures, but -- first of all -- a number of great videos with some prominent participants.

More information:

You still can order the proceedings: They are a pretty expensive 149 USD for the booklet and CD-Rom, but the price included VAT (19% sales tax) and international shipping. The proceedings include many of the papers in full text or extended abstracts, plus access to a special web site with about 40 slide sets of the presentations and the pre-conference workshops.

November 04, 2007 | [Permalink](#) http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2007/11/mcpc-2007-final.html
| [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Trend Map 2008: See where personalization, open innovation, and mass customization are in 2008



Last year, I often showed in my presentations the **great trend map** created by **Nowandnext.com** and **Future Exploration Network**. They position in form of a subway map the major trends in society, policy, technology, and economy and thus provide a fresh look on these themes. And in case you need any buzzword for your talk or paper, they are all there.

Recently, the [2008 trend map has been published](#). It is derived from Shanghai's underground routes. Limited to just five lines, the

map uncovers key trends across Society, Politics, Demographics, Economy, and Technology.

Trends mentioned in the map include:

Simplicity, Reality mining, 3-D printers, Personalization, Geospatial web, Networked risk, Data visualisation, Open Innovation, or Constant partial attention.

But it also has nice ideas like Celebrity worship, Female chauvinism, or even Karma capitalism.

For all students, an important disclaimer from the trend map's authors: "Remember that our trend maps are generally for stimulation rather than being taken too seriously... :-)"

The trend map again is released on a Attribution-ShareAlike Creative Commons license, so readers are free to improve or modify the map!

Download the 2008 trend map as PDF here. The old 2007 trend map can be found here.

January 27, 2008 | Permalink http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2008/01/trend-map-2008.html | Comments (1) | TrackBack (0)

Top 10 Mass Customization Companies in 2007 -- Interview: Uche Okonkwo on the Mass Customization Trend in the Luxury Industry

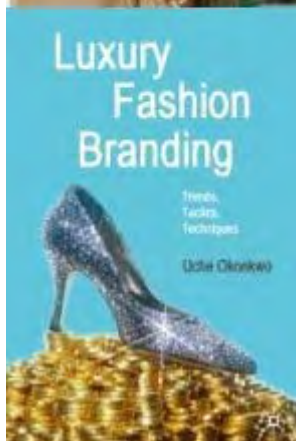


*Uche C. Okonkwo is the Executive Director & Co-founder of **Luxe, E.t.c.**, a Paris based Strategy & Management Consultancy specialized in the luxury industry. She also will be a **presenter at the MCPC 2007 conference at MIT** in Boston (Oct 7-9, 2007). In her new book, **Luxury Fashion Branding**, she also discusses the growing mass customization trend in the luxury industry.*

Uche is one of the pioneer strategy and management consultants in the luxury industry and a key player in the current re-shaping of the industry. Her company, Luxe E.t.c. advises luxury companies such as Louis Vuitton, Christian Dior, Gucci, Piaget, André Ross, Daniele de Winter among several others.

*A regular conference speaker, Uche is also the Editor of the luxury business magazine, **Luxe-Mag.Com** targeted at both the luxury business and academic communities. She has an MBA from Brunel Business School, London and is a guest lecturer and doctorate candidate at Ecole Supérieure de Commerce, Rennes.*

*Her new book, **Luxury Fashion Branding**, addresses the business of luxury fashion from a strategic viewpoint through tracing the origins of luxury fashion, assessing its consumer behaviour, retailing tactics, branding and marketing strategies, ebusiness, business modeling, the new luxury, customization strategies and best and worst practices. The chapter on mass customization in this book attracted me to contact her and ask her about the growing mass customization trend in the luxury industry.*



Ms. Okonkwo, what trends support the growth of mass customization in the luxury industry?

The major factor driving this trend is simply the changing needs of luxury consumers. Luxury consumers worldwide have evolved in recent decades and in most luxury key markets, the consumer has become highly informed and savvy about marketing techniques (and possibilities), making them appear more intelligent. And we all know that when people become more intelligent, they naturally become more demanding of choices, options and their levels of influence. In this industry, consumers want personal recognition through a more intimate relationship with the brands. One of the most efficient ways of

addressing this need is through mass customization, which provides the possibility of participation in the product creation process.

Which are some recent examples of mass customization in the luxury industry that you find most appealing?

As indicated in my book, luxury brands have been reluctant to adopt mass customization as a core aspect of their marketing/ retail strategies since it has been widely believed that mass customization robs the brands of the 'exclusive' and 'distance' factors that luxury requires to thrive. Luxury brands are however beginning to understand the multiple possibilities of customization and how these can be applied without over-exposing their brands. As a result of this scenario, there remain few examples that can be used as benchmarks. A notable one is British accessories brand, Anya Hindmarch, which allows clients to personalize their leather goods on its website. Louis Vuitton has also provided the possibility of customizing its charm bracelets on its website, in the past.

How are these developments different to the traditional bespoke or tailor-made products which often are synonymously with luxury goods?

The main feature of the current mass customization techniques for luxury companies is technology, particularly the Internet. Luxury brands have multiple possibilities to customize products, services and experiences using the Internet and their e-Databases. There is also the advanced development of customizing the customer experience through mobile applications featuring brand-specific customized content, as powered by Interactive Luxury Solutions (www.interactiveluxurysolutions.com)

Do you think that mass customization will "downgrade" the image of luxury goods if now everyone can afford a custom-made bag or custom-made shoes? How will the democratization of the bespoke tailor affect the luxury industry?

Customization in itself does not downgrade luxury goods if the other aspects of the marketing mix remain constant. There are multiple tactics that can be applied to luxury product customization that do not dilute the luxury characteristics but actually enhance the brand equity. For example, if the price of customized luxury goods remain premium and the provision of customization possibilities is time-controlled or related to special products, events or client groups, then customization will actually become an aspirational aspect of luxury retailing.

What about mass customization of services? Luxury is very much about being pampered and supported. Will mass customization also change luxury services?

Customizing luxury services is actually one of the means of enhancing intimate relations with clients and extending the pampering element. If a client walks into the Louis Vuitton store on Avenue Montaigne in Paris, and is immediately recognized, not just physically but also their product preferences, sizes and how they prefer to shop, that would be exceptional customer service. In the same way, if a client visits the Palazzo Versace in Australia and every aspect of their stay is customized according to their preferences, it will definitely enhance their brand affiliation towards Versace.

What are the main challenges in mass customization for the luxury industry still ahead?

The major challenge lies in changing the orientation and thinking of luxury companies. The majority of luxury brands have a pessimistic view of mass customization. Luxury brands need to recognize customization as a core aspect of their corporate strategies and a booster of brand equity.

What would be your main advice for a manager or a top brand in the luxury industry who wants to implement mass customization?

I would tell them to apply customization but at same time remain true to their brand identity and the core attributes that set them apart as luxury brands. This is the way to assure the feasibility of customization in the luxury arena.

To conclude: What is, in general and beyond your industry, the greatest mass customization offering ever – either one that is already existing or that you would like to get in the future?

This is a tricky one! Personally I will be thrilled the day I will walk into a luxury fashion store and receive product suggestions based on my shopping history and pre-registered preferences, both online and offline. The luxury industry is decades away from other sectors in adopting advanced customization techniques but I'd like to think that I'm wrong.

Contact Ms. Uche C. Okonkwo at [author \[at\] luxuryfashionbranding.com](mailto:author@luxuryfashionbranding.com)

August 31, 2007 | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(2\)](#)

Report in Best Practice Business Blog

Happy New Year!

Best Practice Business is a rather large German blog, and **Burkhard Schneider**, its main author, recently added more and more [good reports on new mass customization companies](#). If you understand German, very worthwhile to read.

Yesterday, as part of the usual top 10 lists popping up at the end of the year, he also created a list of ["top 10" mass customization companies in 2007](#). There are a number of great concepts, others I find less innovative, other are missing, but it is a great review of interesting concepts in the area. The blog, and the posting, are in German, but you easily will get the picture. Here is the top-10 list ([go here for further descriptions](#) and the links)

- # Mymuesli: Mass Customized Müsli
- # Blends For Friends: Mass Customized Teas
- # Vuru – Custom nutrition
- # My Twinn - custom dolls
- # Miss-Information: Custom travel books
- # flattenme: Personalized children books
- # TasteBook: Mass Customized recepies
- # Paragon Lake: mass customized jewelry
- # Cosmocards - Personal Greeting Cards
- # Zyrra – mass customized bras

January 01, 2008 | [Permalink](http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2008/01/top-10-mass-cus.html)http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2008/01/top-10-mass-cus.html
| [Comments \(1\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

User Manufacturing Trendwatching Report

MIY | MAKE IT YOURSELF



Trendwatching, a large trend research network, has recently published its **annual briefing on the main trends for 2008**. Among them is my favorite new topic, **user manufacturing** (other terms for the same idea are *desktop manufacturing*, *manufacturing as a service*, *fabbing*, ...). Named "**MIY – Make it Myself**" the Trendwatching crew is naming **user manufacturing as the next big thing in user-created content**.



"[user generated content]" is a mainstream trend now, one that keeps giving, with millions of consumers uploading their creative endeavors online, and tens of millions of others enjoying the fruits of their creativity. User-generated

content, at least in the online world, has grown from a teenage hobby to an almost equal contender to established entities in news, media, entertainment and craft."

These consumers expect to be able to create anything they want as long as it is digital, and to customize and personalize many physical goods with traditional mass customization offerings. The next step in this evolution will be their desire to transfer digitally designed products into real physical goods as well.

Trendwatching is expecting that **"MIY | MAKE IT YOURSELF (and then SIY | SELL IT YOURSELF) becomes increasingly sophisticated in the next 12 months"**.

As references, they refer to old friends which have been covered in this blog before:

New Zealand-based **Ponoko** (which works like a [Zazzle](#) for 3D objects, see my [original article](#) on them here)

Fab Lab Bcn (Barcelona) is part of the worldwide network of Fab Labs, an initiative of MIT Center for Bits and Atoms, and provides a laser-cutter, water jet, 3D printer, mini-mill and other machines for participants to use. One of Fab Lab's initiators is **Neil Gershenfeld**, professor at MIT and author of FAB: The Coming Revolution on Your Desktop.

The **Desktop Factory 3D printer**, with a list price of USD 4,995, uses an inexpensive halogen light source and drum printing technology to build robust parts from composite plastic powder, layer by layer. Desktop Factory envisages that within three years, Desktop Factory's 3D printers will be affordable for home use.

They also mention the **Swedish design group FRONT** and their [Sketch Furniture project](#). This trio materializes freehand sketches of furniture into real options. Very nice, very expensive with a chair starting at USD 10,500 per piece.

The last section of their trend report is very important to read, something that I always mention in my presentations on the **limitations of user manufacturing**:

"Now, we're not saying every consumer is going to design and manufacture his or her own furniture or appliances. Rather, MIY is yet another piece of the participation puzzle: enabling those consumers who feel like it to call the shots, bypassing traditional players. In future briefings we'll address the implications of what this choice – being able to consume ready-made or create their own versions of anything and everything – will mean for the behavior and expectations of younger generations."

Context:

- The original [Trendwatching report](#)
- My [original report about user manufacturing](#) and my definition of this idea
- My earlier [report about Ponoko \(more here\)](#).
- My earlier [report about the low cost 3D printers](#)
- If you can read **German, Jochen Krisch** had [many excellent postings on user manufacturing](#) in the last months, a very [good starting point](#) is his [recent listing of all 3D printing services](#) on the web.
- A very good starting point also is [press reports of Z-Printer](#), a manufacturer of 3D printers used to make custom objects.

January 02, 2008 | [Permalink](#) http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2008/01/user-manufacture.html
| [Comments \(1\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Bikers Want Customized Motorcycle Seats, Custom Fit Study Finds

Motorcyclists are in favor of customizing their motorcycle seats according to their body geometry. A survey on customization of motorcycle seats carried out as part of the European funded project Custom-Fit, found that **81% of the survey respondents support the idea of a customized seat.**



The **Custom-Fit project** is investigating new techniques for customizing a product based on Rapid Manufacturing (RM). The project is supported with almost 10 millions Euro by the European Community and is **one of the largest projects in the area of customization** (*Disclosure: I am a member of the project's scientific advisory board*).

As explained in the previous posting, RM allows parts to be manufactured directly and automatically using 3D computer-aided design (CAD) model. The new technique will enable consumers to buy products that are built to the exact requirements of the consumers. A motorcycle customized according to body geometry is one of the products which the project is investigating. Other possible applications of the new technique include prosthetic sockets, helmets, mandible implants and knee implants.

The survey was recently carried out by **Loughborough University** in UK, who is a partner in the project, and received 3200 responses from motorcyclists worldwide. In the survey, majority of the respondents owned a motorcycle and do not share their motorcycle with another person. Although only half of the respondents said that they had experience of discomfort from their motorcycle seats, but majority felt the discomfort during long distance travelling. In addition, more than half of the respondents are willing to pay a premium for the customized seat and many were willing to wait longer.

Professor **Richard Hague**, Head of the **Rapid Manufacturing Research Group in Loughborough University**, said: "These initial results show that there is wide support for customised goods – even if initially they are more expensive and take longer to produce." (Note: Richard Hague chairs the Rapid Manufacturing Track at the MCPC 2007 conference!)

The next phase in the project will be to investigate the technical practicality of designing a motorcycle seat based on the scan data of the consumer's body profile. Research on how to obtain the body geometry has already started and the project is now working on defining a "comfort map", which is a combination of the pressure map and the discomfort zones.

This result is used to identify the area on the seat which needs to be redesigned and the new seats will be tested on motorcycles. At the same time, the management issues involved in providing a customization service for motorcycle seats have also been studied. The project has identified the possible ways to offer the service to the consumers and is studying the supply chain implications of introducing such a service.

Context:

- More results from the Custom Fit project will be presented in several talks on the [MCPC 2007 @ MIT](#) !
- **Custom-Fit** is an industry led project to investigate the possibility of moving towards knowledge based manufacturing and customized production through integration of knowledge in Rapid Manufacturing, Information Technology and Material Science. Funded under the Sixth Framework Program, the project involves 33 partners from around Europe. The aim is to create a fully integrated system for the design, production and supply of individualized products. It has targeted product for implementing the new technology, including motorcycle seats, helmets, implants and prosthesis. Project homepage: <http://www.custom-fit.org/>

August 08, 2007 | [Permalink http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2007/08/bikers-want-cus.html](http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2007/08/bikers-want-cus.html) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Rapid Manufacturing for Mass Customization: Good Report in DESIGN NEWS Analyzes Recent Development



Joseph Ogando, Senior Editor of **DESIGN NEWS**, a trade publication, recently published a **great feature article** on "[Rapid Manufacturing's Role in the Factory of the Future](#)".

It reports on the **use of laser sintering and similar direct manufacturing technologies not just to make prototypes but also to turn out production parts**. It's a practice that goes by many names — including rapid manufacturing, direct digital manufacturing, solid freeform fabrication and low-volume-layered manufacturing. All of the names refer to the use of additive fabrication technologies, which were initially intended for prototyping, to make finished goods, instead. Rapid manufacturing is considered to be **one of the main enablers of mass customization of the future**.

The report has a number of nice case studies and analyzes the **main challenges or rapid manufacturing**:

The biggest barrier in the coming years is seen with regard to materials. Some additive parts simply don't measure up to their molded, machined and cast counterparts when it comes to tensile and other mechanical properties. ... Another material issue involves freedom of choice. With additive technologies, engineers currently have to settle for a limited materials line-up. But as the article shows, the scope of applicable materials is fast growing.

A second barrier is seen in the persistent lack of design data. "it's not so much that current prototyping materials have some shortcomings as the fact engineers have no way of knowing exactly what those shortcomings are." The article cites a lack of long-term creep and environmental data for additive plastic parts and fatigue data for metals as the most glaring examples of this data deficiency. But rapid manufacturing observers expect more and more data will become available as direct digital manufacturing becomes more popular. In the meantime, large OEMs with stringent manufacturing requirements have worked to develop their own property data.

A third barrier quoted in the report are the capabilities of the existing machinery. Making good production parts every day ups the ante on process repeatability, quality control, throughput and reliability. "Today's additive fabrication systems aren't completely ready for prime time. They're still primarily prototyping machines that you can coax into working as manufacturing systems" ^, an industry expert is quoted in the report.

But despite these limitations, the article comes to a positive conclusion:

"With all these factors weighing against direct digital manufacturing, you might wonder, why bother? But, these additive systems already offer design benefits that can offset their manufacturing limitations.

For one, additive machines can produce complex part geometries without regard to conventional manufacturing limitations. Additive fabrication methods based on powder metal beds, for example, can enable parts with interior cavities and features that could not be machined or cast — at least not in an economical one-piece part. ... The upshot of all this design freedom, and the benefit most cited by advocates of direct digital manufacturing, is parts consolidation.

How long will it take for engineers to recognize the design benefits associated with additive processes? Todd Grimm, a consultant to the rapid prototyping industry, thinks it could take 10 or even 20 more years given the current lack of familiarity with additive machines and the technical barriers associated with the machines themselves. ...

For a handful of applications, though, the future is now. The best known and highest volume direct digital manufacturing niche has, so far, involved applications where mass customization plays a role. 3D Systems' Reichental points to the hearing aids as one example and also says RM machines have seen use in the production of casting tools for Invisalign braces. And as the additive machines in general become more capable, ... they'll play a stronger role in other kinds of customized medical and dental devices whose geometry is tailored to the requirements of individual patients."

Context:

- Read the full article here: Joseph Ogando, [Rapid Manufacturing's Role in the Factory of the Future](#), Design News ^, 26 July 2007

- Other [reports on rapid manufacturing in this blog](#).

- **[Browse the program of the MCPC 2007 to explore talks and presentations on rapid manufacturing](#)** during the conference.

MIT Technology Review on Ponoko: "Ponoko wants to give customers the tools to design and sell whatever they want."



Last week, **Michael Gibson** published a [very nice analysis](#) on **Ponoko** in the **MIT Technology Review**. I [wrote](#) about this company [before](#), and the article has a nice summary of the recent developments of this user manufacturing start up.

Gibson [writes](#):

"For most companies, product design and development is a long process of trial and error, involving, among other things, in-house designers, committees, timed product releases, and, ultimately, customer feedback. Until a product sells, or if it doesn't sell, it takes up costly shelf space in either stores or warehouses.

But by letting individuals dream up, make, and then sell unique products on demand, Ponoko is attempting to eliminate the product-development wing. Ultimately, it hopes to eliminate the need for a centralized manufacturing plant as well, by recruiting a large enough community of digital manufacturers--people scattered around the world who have 3-D printers, CNC routers, and laser cutters. Moving the site of production as close as possible to the point of purchase will reduce the need for long-distance shipping.

"Just as personal computing went from the mainframe to the desktop, and the result was distributed desktop computing, we see the same trend occurring with digital manufacturing, as it moves from the warehouse to the desktop," says **Derek Elley**, the chief strategy officer for Ponoko."

At the end of the article, Gibson quotes **Phillip Torrone**, a senior editor at **Make magazine**, who tried Ponoko to create a custom stand for his iPhone:

"They did everything that was required for me to get my product," Torrone says. "Their tutorials are fine; the templates were good examples. Pretty much, they did everything right. Now the question is, is there a demand? How much money does a company like this need to make to stay afloat?"

Elley's answer is that, eventually, Ponoko's revenue will come entirely from digital services, not from manufacturing fees. The company intends to develop six revenue streams, including ad sales and commissions on design purchases."

For more analysis, [head to the full article](#).

Ponoko and related services, and the corresponding business model, are the **theme of my upcoming webinar with Pure Insights**. [More information here!](#)

November 10, 2007 | [Permalink http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2007/11/mit-technology-.html](http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2007/11/mit-technology-.html) | [Comments \(1\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Industry Study on State of Rapid Manufacturing and the Future of Production

EOS, a leading manufacturer of laser-sintering systems, recently presented a market study on the state of laser-sintering technology for production tasks (called **rapid manufacturing**, **e-Manufacturing** or also **fabbing**). These technologies have been used pre-dominantly for prototyping tasks in the past where they allowed experimentation to a much higher degree. But their real **economic impact comes from their role as a manufacturing technology**, allowing custom manufacturing with no switching cost. It is now starting to compete with conventional casting technologies.



Rapid manufacturing delivers end products, functional parts and tools directly from CAD data. A laser heats and melts powdered plastics or metals layer by layer, until the build is complete and a final product can be taken out of the system. Whether it is jewelry, clothes, lamps, chairs or functional parts for components that are being manufactured, laser sintering and similar generative manufacturing technologies enable the creation of products with highly complex and filigreed structures and forms that are unthinkable geometries for conventional series production – and each piece can be customized at no additional cost.

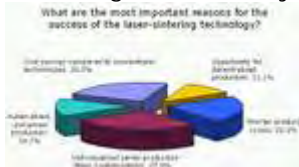
EOS is, according to its own statement, the world-leading provider of this technology with revenues in laser-sintering of 59.7 million Euro in 2007, an increase of 14 percent compared to the previous year. This number shows that the market still is very small compared to the multi-billion market of traditional production equipment.

On the recent EuroMold Trade Show, the company conducted a **survey among industry experts about the future of manufacturing**. Is individualized series production from CAD data going to prevail in the future? And which technologies will drive this type of production? The answers on this survey have been published in a recent press release.

While no information is given on the number of respondents or any basic statistical validity, and the study obviously is biased due to its originator, here some quotes from the press release which address some questions I often get from readers of this blog:

33% of the respondents believe that individualized **production with laser-sintering is already market-ready**, while 37% predict the establishment of the technology in the market within the next three years. The rest anticipate the establishment of rapid manufacturing within five years, with only 4% seeing a lag of ten years.

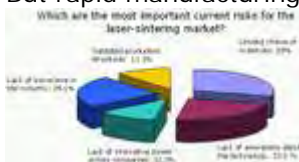
According to the survey, **rapid manufacturing is driven by the general mass customization trend**.



Both industry and end consumers increasingly request individually manufactured products, creating a potential demand for mass customization of those products. And this is exactly where rapid manufacturing comes into play: 28% of those interviewed said that the trend towards individualized series production is the most important factor for the success of the technology.

Nearly a quarter of the interviewees saw greater “cost savings compared to conventional technologies”. 22% judged that rapid manufacturing will overtake traditional technologies due to “shorter product life cycles”.

But rapid manufacturing with laser-sintering also faces a **number of challenges**: 29% of the interviewees called the limited choice of materials as the greatest barrier to implementation of rapid manufacturing technology.



Interestingly, respondents felt that the main difficulty is not so much the emerging technology itself, but rather a **lack of knowledge and openness in the industry**. Approximately a quarter of the respondents judged the “lack of know-how in the industry” as a hindrance. Companies are yet not aware about the technology or lack the capability to change their design and production processes in such a radical way.

Finally the interviewees were asked for their predictions about production methods 20 years in the future.

A clear majority (63%) forecast the broad establishment of mass customization in the Western world. 21% even believe that end customers will have their own mini-factories and produce their own products with rapid manufacturing. About 9% of those asked went so far as to remark that, in 20 years time, manual manufacturing will only take place on the PC.

Context:

- [My previous posts on rapid manufacturing](#)
- [EOS site](#) with case studies and more articles
- 3rd [International Rapid Manufacturing Conference 2008](#) in the UK - I will speak there as well!

February 02, 2008 | [Permalink http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2008/02/industry-study.html](http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2008/02/industry-study.html) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

MC Configurator Database Went Live - Great New Portal Provides Comprehensive Overview of Mass Customization Offerings

Additional Site Feature: MCPC 2007 video interviews with Joe Pine, Stan Davis, Mitchell Tseng and many other ...

CONFIGURATOR DATABASE

The unpublic beta was one of the **best kept secrets in the mass customization world** of the last months --- now it is public: The huge **database of configurators (co-design toolkits) compiled by Paul Blazek and Wolfgang Frühwirt** and their team at [Cyledge.com](#), a Vienna based consultancy in the field of configurators.

What is a configurator? Well, "simply put, a configurator is a software application for designing products exactly matching customers' individual needs", the site [says](#). As they further explain, configurators can be found in various forms and different industries. They are employed in B2B as well as B2C markets and are operated either by trained staff or customers themselves. Whereas B2B configurators are primarily used to support sales and lift production efficiency, B2C configurators are often employed as design tools that allow customers to "co-design" their own products.

What Paul and Wolfgang do not is to document configurator software providers, but real configurators on the web ... **more than 500 of them**. All arranged in a nice **database sorted by more than 85 criteria, including**



- Steps to starting (distance to the configurator, number of web pages the user has to go through in order to get to the configurator (distance from the Homepage)
- Process navigation
- Module library (pre-customized products are available for further customization)
- Automatic completion (The configuration process can be continued even if the user ignores a required decision during the configuration process. The system completes the product automatically, meaning that the user doesn't need to edit every step in order to continue the process)
- Loading Time (under 15 Seconds)
- 3D-perspective exists allowing the user to rotate the product picture 360°. (yes/no)
- Delivery time
- Weaknesses of the site as seen by the evaluator.

Well, for the public version they just reveal about ten criteria, but this already provides plenty of benefit. **You get a great overview of what is available in the world of mass customization:** Did you know

that there are six custom offerings for pets, 15 for children stuff, 37 configurators in the construction and building industries? Their rubric "[most exotic configurators](#)" list Sonor GmbH & Co. KG (custom drums), our friends from Elite Vintners (custom wine), Alois Reich (custom dirndl), Brewtopia (custom coasters), Tiny Pocket People (custom pocket dolls), or A.H.Beard Pty Ltd. (custom beds for children).

And there is much more, [over 50 pages of listings](#) ([1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [6](#) ... [51](#) ).

On top, the site has a **nice blog** (with some re-postings from my blog), a conference database, and a **great library of short videos with key persons in the mass customization world**. See [my interview with a spectacular multimedia trick :-\)](#), or here wiser voices like [Joe Pine](#), [Mitchell Tseng](#), or [Stan Davis](#) himself ... the person who has coined the term mass customization:

Most of the videos were taken at the [MCPC 2007 Conference](#). For many more videos [go to the configurator-database.com site](#).

Full disclosure: I am a [scientific advisor](#) of this project and the sponsoring company, [cyledge.com](#).

December 09, 2007 | [Permalink](#) http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2007/12/mc-configurator.html | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Video interview on mass customization and open innovation



In case you understand German and prefer to [watch a video](#) instead of reading a paper or book, this video is for you: [Förderland](#), a large German Blog on Entrepreneurship, has conducted a nice **video interview** where I explain the basic concepts of mass customization, user innovation, co-creation and how this all belongs to each other (for a more detailed version of this, [read our book](#)).

In the video, I define the the basic concepts, give some examples, talk about the challenges, **discuss, how entrepreneurs and start-ups can profit from these concepts, and name my personal best practice of a company in this area**. And: The video also offers a view into my not really tidy and organized university office (note: I recently have ordered nice new office furniture, but as this industry is not doing any mass customization at all, delivery times for this are more than two months ...)

Here is the video (or [go here to the full link and summary](#)):
Thanks to the [Exciting Commerce Blog](#) where I noticed that my interview has been published first!

Here is the video (or [go here to the full link and summary](#)):

Thanks to the [Exciting Commerce Blog](#) where I noticed that my interview has been published first!

December 28, 2007 | [Permalink](#) http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2007/12/video-interview.html | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Relaunch of Mass Customization Web Site - and further sources on the topic



Today I did a smaller but hopefully useful **relaunch of my main mass customization website**. While the website's design still is very 1990s, I hope that it is now a bit more useful and easy to find what is there. But all new content is posted to this blog anyway. The website serves as a repository to navigate through old postings and external materials. [Have a look ...](#)

And luckily, **a number of other people are creating great mass customization sites as well**, so there is much more to discover elsewhere. **Here are a few fine examples** (I am only listing new sites which have general information on the topic -- no single examples or vendors):

[Le Blog de la Mass Customization](#): Great French Blog full of MC examples. I just understand basic French, but can see the pictures and examples.

The **[Wikipedia Article on Mass Customization](#)** still is rather bad, but at least the link list in the end is getting more balanced.

[Mass Customization Resource Centre](#), Nottingham University, UK: Bart MacCarthy and his team did a great job in making this very helpful web site with plenty of literature, definitions, and articles

[Customize-your-life](#): Large mystery for me. This is a nice directory of sites offering custom-made and mass customized products, but I have no idea who is creating it and why.

[Configurator Database](#): As mentioned before, a great listing of many configuration toolkits on the web. Plus videos.

[Made For One](#): One of my favorites. News about companies using mass customization and personalization. No posts, however, in the last months.

[Mass Customization Posts in the Best Practice Business Blog](#): This is a large German blogs, and its authors recently added more and more good reports on new mass customization companies. If you understand German, very worthwhile to follow.

December 29, 2007 | [Permalink](#) http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2007/12/relaunch-of-mas.html
| [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

INTELLIFIT Moves From Virtual Fitting (match-to-order) to True Mass Customization: Custom-made jeans with a high-tech twist

Intellifit is know to me as one of the leading providers of match-to-order systems in fashion retail. They currently market a **special 3D full body scanner**. At a retail location, the consumer enters a see-through "**Intellifit Virtual Fitting Room**" (the scanner) that's 8' high and 7' wide. There, low power radio waves collect about 200 accurate body measurements in under 15 seconds – a personal "FitPrint" – **while the consumer remains fully clothed**. This data is used to match the user's measurements with sizing information of (standard) garments in the store.

According to the company, Intellifit has measured over 230,000 individuals to date, representing the largest sizing database of its kind in the world.

But now Intellifit customers will become enabled to use their profiles to **shop for custom made jeans**, and in the future, for custom pants, khakis, or shirts. Last week, the company began a test of its "Custom Jeans Center" at its company retail store outside of Philadelphia. Consumers can design their own custom-made jeans with a guarantee of a perfect fit. In the moment, retail shopping is by appointment only and includes consultation with a fashion advisor.

The customer can choose jeans from a selection of styles and washes and add details such as pocket shape and design, stitching and personalization options. The price point of the custom jeans is at about \$150.

The FitPrint is transferred electronically from the retail location to the jeans manufacturer, where the garment pieces are custom-cut by computer control. The completed custom jeans are shipped directly to the customer in 3 to 4 weeks.

"This test will help us determine the scalability of the process. With a positive result, an international roll-out will be close behind," **Rob Weber**, Intellifit's President, is quoted in a [recent press release](#).

I believe that this combination of mass customization and match-to-order is a very promising way of establishing a sustainable operation. Many consumers do not want to wait for a perfect fit that is just made for them, but also are frustrated by complexity of choice and not finding their right size in a large retail store. Also, if the system finds that a standard item on stock is providing you a good fit, the retailer will have an advantage as the inventory can be reduced. On the other hand, if a consumer does not find a standard garment according to her fit and preferences, she does not have to leave the store without a purchase -- but can be transferred to the mass customization option.

For Intellifit, entering the mass customization market also is a great way to leverage the exiting investments in building such a large database of "FitPrint" customer profiles.

Context:

- For more information and store locations, go to www.intellifit.com.
- [MVM's virtual model](#) and [Archetype's ZAFU](#) are similar matching-services in the online world.
- Report about [METRO's matching and in-store recommendation](#) service

February 15, 2008 | [Permalink http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2008/02/intellifit-move.html](http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2008/02/intellifit-move.html) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Personalization in Retail: How RFID tags are helping a German retailer to provide customization of the retail experience



Male customers at Galeria Kaufhof, when they're looking at themselves in a dressing-room mirror, can receive automated suggestions.

Roland Piquepaille wrote in a [ZD-Net Blog](#) about RFID tags that help you to choose your clothes at a German retailer close to my home.

This application fits perfectly to the discussion we had at the **MCPC 2007 Business Seminar a month ago in Montreal on "A total makeover of retail"**. Here are [some quotes from the posting](#):

"A German department store, the Galeria Kaufhof in Essen, part of the Metro retailing group, is using RFID technology in a new way. ... Men buying clothes in this store will get automatic suggestions. For example, when you go to a dressing room to try a suit, a 'smart mirror' will tell you what kind of shirt or tie you need to buy with it. Will this technology be deployed elsewhere? Time will tell.

... An RFID reader on a "smart mirror" in the change room determines which clothing has been brought into the room from the RFID tag attached to the apparel, then displays complementary clothing choices or accessories. The system is used in combination with 'smart shelves,' which can read what merchandise is currently in stock, so that customers can be shown choices in sizes that are available, and in various styles and colors.

... RFID readers are installed in walls, tables, and clothing racks of the men's department. In addition to providing METRO with data on store floor inventory in real-time, the readers enable a number of consumer-facing applications that METRO hopes will both wow customers and make their buying experience richer and more convenient. The RFID tables are hooked up to an accompanying flat screen, which displays what sizes and styles are immediately available on that table. The RFID mirrors detect which garment the customer is wearing or holding and offer recommendations for complementary items."

And of course, all this information is extremely valuable to the retail chain. Let's return to the Baseline article for its conclusion. "Bill Colleran, chief executive of Seattle-based Impinj, says the exciting thing about the Kaufhof deployment is that it demonstrates that RFID can be used in retail for much more than to wring out cost savings in the supply chain. With the use of business intelligence systems like smart mirrors and smart shelves, it can be a new sales driver. 'People joke that this is the ideal place to start because men need more help' in making choices,' he says."

Context information:

- The [full blog posting](#) of Roland Piquepaille.
- [Report in Baseline Magazine](#) which was the source of Roland's article
- [Metro press announcement](#)
- [Press release by the technology providers](#)

November 16, 2007 | [Permalink http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2007/11/personalization.html](http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2007/11/personalization.html) | [Comments \(1\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Virtual Fashion Technology: New blog covers major personalization technology

Recently I learned about a great new blog published by **Elaine Polvinen**, a professor of Fashion Textile Technology at Buffalo State College in Buffalo, New York. Elaine writes about "**Virtual Fashion Technologies**", a main enabler of mass customization and personalization in the fashion industry.

She wants to document with her blog the transition and expansion from traditional 2D designs to 2D Digital to 3D virtual for apparel textile product design, development and retailing.

Here is a selection of her recent posts:

[Transformational Avatar Retailing: The Missing Link For Mass Customization?](#)

[A Conversation with Louise Guay from My Virtual Model](#)

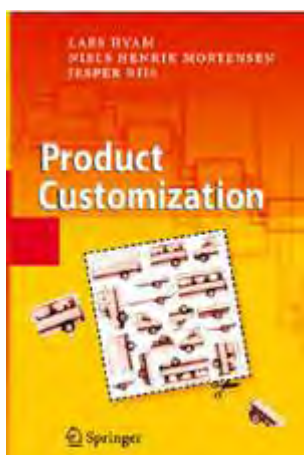
[Avatars in Second Life for Retail Marketing? It's Not Only Coming – it's Here!](#) - [Part 1](#) - [Part 2](#) - [Part 3](#).

[Highlights of MCPC 2007 in Montréal, Canada: Part 1](#) - [Part 2](#)

And much more at <http://fashiontech.wordpress.com>

January 03, 2008 | [Permalink http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2008/01/virtual-fashion.html](http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2008/01/virtual-fashion.html) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(1\)](#)

Design & Configuration of Complex Products -- Insights From DTU's Product Modeling Group, one of Europe's leading centers on the mass customization



Lars Hvam and his colleagues at **Denmark's Technical University (DTU)** in Copenhagen have built one of the **world's leading research groups in the area of product configuration and modular product design**. Their approach is that you not just should build a configurator or sales system for your existing products, but that successful configuration and mass customization demands a dedicated modular product architecture that should be developed together with the configurator.

Their work is very much driven by industry input. Lars chairs a huge **industry interest group** with more than 40 company members, many of them world market leaders in customization. The group is one of the strongest pillars in our community of mass customization researchers, and you have two chances to interact with them in the next weeks -- and a new book is summarizing their recent research:

(1) Industry Meeting on "[Product Modularization & Variety Reduction](#)" on Jan 31, 2008 in

Copenhagen.

The presentations at the meeting will include experiences from applying the principles of product modularization for managing and reducing the number of product variants at Rolls Royce Marine, Siemens and LEGO - see the agenda and register for the meeting at [this link](#). All presentations will be held in English!

(2) PETO'08 Conference on Service customization

As reported [before](#), Kasper Edwards and Lars Hvam from the Technical University of Denmark are hosting this European MC event in 2008. [More information here](#).

(3) Product Customization - A New Book by Lars Hvam, Niels Henrik Mortensen, and Jesper Riis

From the abstract (*I have not received the book yet, so this is just an announcement, not a review*):

For the majority of industrial companies, customizing products and services is among the most critical means to deliver true customer value and achieve superior competitive advantage. The challenge is not to customize products and services in itself – but to do it in a profitable way. The implementation of a product configuration system is among the most powerful ways of achieving this in practice, offering a reduction of the lead time for products and quotations, faster and more qualified responses to customer inquiries, fewer transfers of responsibility and fewer specification mistakes, a reduction of the resources spent for the specification of customized products, and the possibility of optimizing the products according to customer demands.

This book presents an operational procedure for the design of product configuration systems in industrial companies, based on the experience gained from more than 40 product configuration projects in companies providing customer tailored products and services.

Published by Springer. [ISBN: 978-3-540-71448-4](#)

For any further information in any of the topics above, just contact Lars directly:

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January 20, 2008 in | [Permalink http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2008/01/design-configur.html](http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2008/01/design-configur.html) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

OPEN INNOVATION & CROWDSOURCING

Crowdsourcing methods are McKinsey's Prime Business Technology Trends to Watch In 2008



In the recent issue of **McKinsey Quarterly**, the business journal of strategy consultants McKinsey & Co, **James Manyika, Roger Roberts** and **Kara Sprague** discuss [Eight Business Technology Trends to Watch In 2008](#). **Five of those eight relate directly to the topics of this blog:**

Four trends, **Distributing Cocreation, Using consumers as innovators, Tapping into a world of talent, and Extracting more value from interactions** are sub-sets of the larger Crowdsourcing idea.

(1) Distributing co-creation is just another term for our own "[interactive value creation](#)" or Benkler's "**commons-based peer production**" or Don Tapscott's "**Wikinomics**". No doubt that this is a mega-trend which has been described widely in the last years but which practical implementation just has started. In consequence, **McKinsey estimates that 12% of all labor activity could be transformed by more distributed and networked innovation:**

"Outsiders offer insights that help shape product development, but companies typically control the innovation process. Technology now allows companies to delegate substantial control to outsiders -- co-creation -- in essence by outsourcing innovation to business partners that work together in networks. By distributing innovation through the value chain, companies may reduce their costs and usher new products to market faster by eliminating the bottlenecks that come with total control."

Interestingly, however, in the entire McKinsey article is **no word on open source or open licensing models** ("commons-based") which are a main driver for the efficiency of distributed open systems of value co-creation. This may be perhaps too much for the typical reader of McKinsey Quarterly.

(2) Using consumers as innovators: Well, not really a new trend, **Eric von Hippel** is saying this since the 1970s, and since the beginning of industrial production consumers are inventing new products. The new trend, however, is that firms are seeing this potential and they increasingly are utilizing the capabilities for innovation. They are not just asking for feedback on their own creations, but they are integrating consumers actively in the creation of something new. MyKinsey is quoting **Threadless** here, but this is not a correct example for this trend as most the creators at Threadless are no consumers but experts!

A better example, quoted by the **iRise Blog** in a [posting on the McKinsey article](#), is **Dell's IdeaStorm**, and, on the B2B front, **Salesforce.com**. This software company is using an application for users to make suggestions to improve their CRM software. The top ideas from this contest is receiving executive-level visibility.

(3) Tapping into a world of talent is the consequence of opening your innovation and value creation process: . The people reacting on an open call for participation in the "Distributing co-creation" idea are those who are the most talented to do this work (as they have relatively lower cost to fulfill the job):

"As more and more sophisticated work takes place interactively online and new collaboration and communications tools emerge, companies can outsource increasingly specialized aspects of their work and still maintain organizational coherence. Much as technology permits them to decentralize innovation through networks or customers, it also allows them to parcel out more work to specialists, free agents, and talent networks."

This leads to a further consequence, and their next trend: **(4) Extracting more value from interactions**. The more a company is relying for value creation in its periphery, the higher is its costs for coordination compared to production cost.

"As a result, a growing proportion of the labor force in developed economies engages primarily in work that involves negotiations and conversations, knowledge, judgment, and ad hoc collaboration—tacit interactions, as we call them. By 2015 we expect employment in jobs primarily involving such interactions to account for about 44 percent of total US employment, up from 40 percent today. Europe and Japan will experience similar changes in the composition of their workforces."

This is nothing new at all, the fact, that the so-called transaction cost are dominating the overall cost in a modern economy is known since several decades. But it is good that McKinsey are stressing this relationship again – as mastering these cost will become a major capability for firms which want to profit from crowdsourcing. Technology is leading this path:

"Technology tools that promote tacit interactions, such as wikis, virtual team environments, and video-conferencing, may become no less ubiquitous than computers are now. As companies learn to use these tools, they will develop managerial innovations—smarter and faster ways for individuals and teams to create value through interactions—that will be difficult for their rivals to replicate. Companies in sectors such as health care and banking are already moving down this road. [...] But: Creating the business case for investing in interactions will be challenging—but critical—for managers."

(5) A last trend from their report is "Putting more science into management". Technology is continuously helping managers exploit ever-greater amounts of data in real-time to make smarter decisions. One of the business models which are enabled by this data-driven management is **mass customization, named by McKinsey as "the holy grail of deep customer insight"**:

"The amount of information and a manager's ability to use it have increased explosively not only for internal processes but also for the engagement of customers. The more a company knows about them, the better able it is to create offerings they want, to target them with messages that get a response, and to extract the value that an offering gives them. The holy grail of deep customer insight—more granular segmentation, low-cost experimentation, and mass customization—becomes increasingly accessible through technological innovations in data collection and processing and in manufacturing."

Go to the [original article](#) which has **plenty of good references for further reading** (requires registration, for a version of the full text of this paper, [go to ZDnet](#)).

January 05, 2008 | [Permalink](#) http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2008/01/crowdsourcing-m.html | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Crowd F(o)unding an Eco-Clothing Label: nvohk explores the collective customer commitment method to create a new fashion line

In a press release today, **nvohk** (pronounced 'invoke') announced that it has signed up over 1,250 future members for its crowdsourcing-based business model. Its founders, **Brendan T. Lynch** and **Sergio Salas**, claim that it is the "first community-managed, eco-friendly, surf-inspired clothing company."

Their idea places our "**collective customer commitment**" model into action: Get 5000 members who pay 50\$ each of funding, use the money to create an eco-friendly line of clothes, and then sell the clothes to a wider public and share the profits with the original members. Members, as part of their pre-payment, get the right to vote on new designs and co-manage some of nvohk's business decisions. Members, for example, can decide about the logo design, web design, product design, advertising, etc. In addition, nvohk will donate 10% of net profits to environmental organizations selected by its members. In the mid-term, the company wants to recruit up to 40,000 members.

The idea has some appeal. It indeed "fills a gap in the lifestyle brand arena," as the press release says. Nvohk enables consumers to get involved and participate in business decision-making and environmental causes. It also provides consumers with an entertaining platform for making a perceived positive impact on the environment.

But it also is a **clever business model** building on customer integration. For the 50\$, customers will get a special t-shirt and 25% off all nvohk products. They also get kind of a dividend: 35% of nvohk's net profits will be transferred into reward points that can be redeemed by members to purchase products. This all sounds like a self-sustaining business cycle.

If you want to invest 50\$ as well, go here: www.projectnvohk.com.

February 13, 2008 | [Permalink](#) http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2008/02/crowd-founding.html | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Update: Crowdlogoing the New Spreadshirt Tagline: New Design Competition Launched -- and finalized



(Update of the original posting from Sept 2007 -- now with the project's final result at the end of this post!).

Hey, you designers of the world. **Treat me nice: I am on the panel of the new Spreadshirt Open Logo competition :-)**. Coined the **Open Logo Project (OLP) 1.6**, this is the second time that the company has started a crowdsourcing contest for its new logo. Anyone can submit a draft logo for comment and evaluation by an expert panel, other designers and the Spreadshirt community. Each week during the contest, the top entries will win awards and a place in the overall grand final.

The last contest (hosted 1.6 years ago) received over 1000 submissions from more than 600 designers mainly in Germany and France. This time, the entire world shall participate. The contest will run from the 27th August - 14th Octo-

ber. To take part in the contest - with submissions, comments, voting or just lurking - head to <http://olp.spreadshirt.net>.

Every branding textbook, however, will tell you **not to change your logo every two (or even 1.6) years**. But "...this is not a publicity stunt," said **Jana Eggers**, Spreadshirt's new CEO. "We found a tagline that better represents what we do, and now is the right time to change our current logo to support it".

The new tagline, resulting from working with an international branding firm: "Your own label" shall reflect Spreadshirt's mission to be "the world's creative apparel platform". After deciding on the new tagline, the natural step for Spreadshirt was to turn to its community again for a logo that better supports the new tagline.

The cool thing: **Adam Fletcher**, who is coordinating the competition at Spreadshirt, even allowed me to pick my own prize. So: **I will award a first price for the most innovative design, one, that really demonstrates uniqueness and out of the box thinking**. And this price will be truly innovative and unique as well: You can win an entire mass customized outfit. More on the website!

But beyond the innovative prizes, also the **OLP idea competition itself has some nice features which make it a great example of open innovation** and sets it ahead to other design contests on the web:

They have ten different awards and prizes for different categories which also honor **not only WHAT, but HOW you design**, awarding good competition citizenship. There are prizes for community involvement, memorability, branding excellence, etc ...

This also allows Spreadshirt to think of those that offer input but can't design (I would be a perfect candidate for this). Anyone who actively contributes to the OLP community by ratings, commenting, offering feedback, starting discussions etc can win one of every shirt that Spreadshirt's "La Fraise" prints for the next year (should be around 100 shirts – so if you win, buy a new closet).

"We [want] to recognize out-of-the-box thinking, collaboration, community favorites and more," adds **Adam Fletcher**. "Even if you're not the winning designer, you can scoop a number of other prizes, or just waste a lot of your time, learn a lot from looking at the work of the other designers."

For real winning designers, they also provide more than cash, but help with the most valuable good for artists, recognition. Along with a MacBook pro and €3,000 cash, the winner will be featured with a photo and an interview in the "Computer Arts" magazine, an interview on "Computerlove" and a permanent "thank-you-page" at Spreadshirt.com

So, now get your creative fluids working ... and submit a nice logo so that I have something to judge next week !!

UPDATE: The project is over -- and it was an interesting experience for me to be on the panel of such an open innovation competition. *Here some observations:*



First: The winner: While Spreadshirt selected two first prizes for their new logo ([see the designs here](#)) and is now working with the community on improving the designs. My personal short list looked a bit different, [see it here](#).

Second: My winner: As written above, I could award my very special price for the most innovative design. My clear favorite was Labelhead, not just a logo but [an entire logo configurator](#). [Here is my long description](#) why this is the most innovative (and in any case customizable) logo! (*and this posting also gives you a rare view of my living room :-)*

Third: Participants of an open innovation project get engaged and personal: The entire competition drew more than 2800 entries, generated millions of hits and views, a lot of postings and good press for Spreadshirt -- and did not cost really too much compared to the cost of getting a professional new logo (and PR campaign) from a regular agency (cost were about 10 K Euro for prices, Adam Fletcher's salary of running the contest, and some web site programming etc ..). The best insight into the enthusi-

asm and engagement of the participants can be found in the comments to the posts, just browse through some of the winning designs or see the comment on the selection of the winners ([example](#)).

For me, it was interesting to read what people really [thought about my selections](#) (more comments [here](#)). I think I really do not look like a designer or pretend to know much about graphic design -- my task was to provide a business and customization perspective for the panel. But participants expected my real feedback on their designs ... learning_ pick panelists that really know what they are writing about.

Fourth: I learned a lot about customized toilets :) See comments [in the middle of this stream](#).

November 05, 2007 in | [Permalink](#) http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2007/11/update-crowdlogo.html
| [Comments \(3\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Create the Shoe of you Dreams - Participate in the CEC Shoe Design Contest

Open Innovation and crowdsourcing finally is arriving in the footwear industry

[Crowdsourced logos](#) were yesterday, now it is **all about shoes**. The **CEC project** is a large European research project dedicated to nothing smaller than reinventing the footwear industry. My old research group at TUM is a major partner in the project, and as part of the work, they are now running the first [European Consumer Shoe Design Contest where everyone can become a shoe designer](#).



Your task is to design a shoe model along a theme called "Original Origin". This category of aesthetic trends expresses cultural values, regional roots and techniques and at the same time uses authentic materials and innovative shapes. The contest asks everyone to play with the theme and interpret it in the most creative, but still feasible way.

More details on the contest can be found in the [CEC Contest briefing](#) which also has the exact rules of the design contest.

[Submissions](#) are evaluated by a **top-class jury** consisting of international shoe and design experts from companies like **Hugo Boss, CallagHan, Liitto, Future Concept Lab**, and **Frau**. The jury's criteria for the assessment will be design, innovativeness, feasibility, task alignment, and an overall score for excellence. In addition, also the public can vote on their favorite design and nominate a public winner.

Awards are a bit technical but provide a nice opportunity for everyone interested in footwear:

The first price is a site visit with Hugo Boss in Morrovalle/Italy to get a prototype of your design as well as to gain insight into prototyping process.

The second price is a real working prototype of your design, manufactured according to your design and mailed to you

The third price is a free participation at the "Future Vision Workshops" dedicated to the aesthetic trends in Milan (also, winners of the first and second price are invited to participate).

How to participate:

Register on cec-designcontest.net and enter the "Design Studio" to upload your design. All what you have to do is to provide a sketch or rendering of your design (and a short description). All further information can be found in the design briefing.

Submissions are accepted until December 31st, 2007. Winners will be announced on February 29th, 2008.

Now, start designing!

A personal comment at the end: The footwear industry is an extremely conservative industry far behind many other industries with regard to open innovation and customer driven value creation. So it is a real revolution that they now start such a competition. I am curious to see how this contest may change their attitude and expectations – and if the winning design ever will be produced. However, the rather long contest rules and the not too fancy prices already show how difficult it is to get their commitment. But it is a great start – and hopefully more initiatives like this will follow!

Context information:

- The contest web site: <http://www.cec-designcontest.net>
- Earlier post on the [CEC-made Shoe Research Project](#)
- Similar [ongoing competition \(open source footwear\)](#)

November 13, 2007 | [Permalink http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2007/11/create-the-shoe.html](http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2007/11/create-the-shoe.html) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Open Innovation Widget -- Fellowforce creates open line between users and companies



As of today organizations can integrate an **widget into their websites to enable consumer-generated innovation**, a solution to solicit ideas, suggestions and innovation proposals.

The widget has been developed by **FellowForce**. Their founder and Head of Marketing, **Ruben Robert**, will be a [presenter at the MCPC 2007 conference](#).

In a [press announcement](#), **Jeff Crites** from Fellowforce North America explains:

"We started our platform for Open Innovation two months ago, and since then we've received ideas and suggestions for leading brands worldwide. The idea for this new service is due in large part to a submission in our own innovation box. A Fellowforce 'Fellow', **Marcel Heinkens** of the Netherlands, suggested we offer an Open Innovation widget for websites. Today, four weeks later, we're introducing the 'Innovate Us' button, enabling any business to welcome ideas from a global force of innovators".

The 'Innovate Us' button is like a 'Digg-this' application for innovation, empowering and encouraging consumers to submit ideas to company controlled (Fellowforce enabled) innovation boxes. "We prefer to call them Innovation Boxes because consumer participation is more than just a feedback tool", adds Crites, "it's a driver for innovation. And for companies, this is like having a souped-up RSS aggregator to manage idea feeds."

What is the effect of such a widget?

Well, I think it is not largest innovation of innovation. But it is a great signal that companies are taking their users more and more seriously. Companies are making a statement that they believe in open innovation and value ideas from the outside. And I am curious to hear on Ruben's MCPC 2007 presentation how this will work out.

Context: Have a look in the updated MCPC 2007 program to find more than 20 other presentations on open innovation: http://www.mcpc07.com/draft_program_MCPC2007.pdf

August 30, 2007 | [Permalink http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2007/08/open-innovation.html](http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2007/08/open-innovation.html) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

User Innovation in the Catholic Church: Dioceses of Cologne launches idea competition platform

This is the last sign that there is something behind user & open innovation: **The Catholic Church has started an online open innovation idea competition** (well, one could say that the entire church IS a lead user invention anyway).

KJG, the Catholic youth organization of Cologne, one of Germany's largest dioceses, just launched a web site where young people are encouraged to submit ideas what they want to change at the Catholic Church.

The website aenderwas.de (German for „Make a change“) broadly asks for ideas and suggestions. You can either submit a short idea or comment, or upload a long suggestion (perhaps for a real innovative interior design of a Church that you would like to see; or the tunes of a song you would like to sing ...). Interestingly, they also ask one of the easiest but often neglected questions: If you don't go to church, why?

People who submit the best and most innovative ideas will be invited to a kind of **lead user workshop** to build on these ideas and to transfer them into more concrete offerings. But the people behind the initiative also know about the limits of this approach and acknowledge in a disclaimer that not all change requests can be incorporated immediately.

It all started, by the way, when one of the organizers was in an Executive MBA class I taught on open innovation a while ago. She immediately saw the opportunities of improving the offerings directed towards younger people by the Church, and later transferred her learning into this project.

I am very curious to see what comes out of this initiative and what will be the experiences of this project. Will such a broad call for input generate real innovative ideas? I will keep you posted – and if you have an idea what to change with the Catholic Church (from the perspective of you, the user), the opportunity is there: www.aenderwas.de (note: While God speaks all languages, you need German language skills for this).

September 10, 2007 | [Permalink http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2007/09/user-innovation.html](http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2007/09/user-innovation.html) | [Comments \(2\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Open Innovation in Switzerland: Help Major Swiss Firms to Innovate



The open innovation idea has arrived in Corporate Switzerland (in research, there already have been many activities in this country). And it is not about reinventing their chocolate or cheese ...

Open Innovation GmbH is a new intermediary in Switzerland that is building on idea competitions as a method for open innovation. The company was just launched and is now in its beta stage. Its founders are three young Swiss entrepreneurs, **Christian Hirsig** (CEO), **Reto Aebersold** (Software Development) and **Mathias Ruch** (Business Development). The pilot stage is evaluated by **Christian L uthje** from the University of Berne, one of Europe's key professors in the area of user innovation.

And they need your help:

Major Swiss corporations like **Swiss Telekom**, **Mammut** Outdoor wear, **Google Switzerland**, **Swiss Postal Services**, and many others are opening their innovation processes to the public -- and you can

participate in solving their challenges. Have a look on the web site <http://pilot.openinnovation.ch> for more information and registration.

The participation in this challenge is open to everybody (who is able to understand German, sorry!) and the best ideas are rewarded by cash in good old Swiss Franc. This open innovation projects starts on January 22nd 2008. I will keep you posted on the results of this project.

January 11, 2008 | [Permalink http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2008/01/open-innovation.html](http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2008/01/open-innovation.html)
| [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Trendcamp Open Innovation by Net Culture Lab Austria



[Net Culture Lab Austria](#) is an initiative that wants to explore what "internet culture is" and how a large corporation, **Telekom Austria**, its main sponsor, can learn from it. The project was initiated in May 2007. It supports small projects of innovative people all around Austria who want to build, experiment, create, or craft in the broad area of "net culture" (remember that Austria is one of the world's leading countries with regard to multimedia and electronic arts).

Recently, I was invited to one of their regular "**trend camp**" gatherings, and it was a great experience for me. The topic of my [1.5 day workshop](#) was **open innovation**, and we were a mixed crowd of managers of Telekom Austria (a typical former monopolist in the telecommunication industry, now under pressure in a deregulated market) and young artists, web programmers, lecturers in the area, and consultants. Organizer was [Thomas Fundneider](#) from a small innovation consultancy in Vienna.

The day was a great surprise for me: I [frequently do this kind of workshops](#) with companies, and regularly the reaction is one of fascination for the opportunities of open innovation, but always paired with a very strong resistance towards change and how this could work in their own corporation.



Not this time, however. The Telekom managers seemed to be even more open on the topic than the "net people", and thus it was a very refreshing experience, one that really filled me with hope that Crowdsourcing and open innovation really can change large corporations fundamentally.

In many small presentations by everyone from the group, and two large structures open table discussions, we generated lots of ideas and great input. I also learned a lot – and now I am curious to see what Telekom Austria will do with our results.

More reports on this Trendcamp can be found (all in GERMAN language) at [Polymatic](#), [digitalks.at](#), the [Telekom Austria Blog](#) and at [Thomas Fundneider's Blog](#)

January 05, 2008 | [Permalink http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2008/01/trendcamp-open.html](http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2008/01/trendcamp-open.html)
| [Comments \(1\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

EVENTS & WORKSHOPS

RKW-Arbeitskreis Mass Customization startet am 6. März 2008

[This is a posting in German language as it refers to an initiative in German language -- [continue in English here](#)].

Ich wurde gebeten, auf folgende Veranstaltung aufmerksam zu machen: Am 6. März 2008 startet das RKW Kompetenzzentrum einen **Arbeitskreis zum Thema „Kundenindividuelle Produktion - Mass Customization“**. Der Arbeitskreis wendet sich branchenübergreifend an Fach- und Führungskräfte (Geschäftsleitung, Vertrieb, Konstruktion und Fertigung/Produktion) aus kleinen und mittelständischen Unternehmen der Investitionsgüterindustrie. Das Ziel ist ein Erfahrungsaustausch unter Praktikern, der den Teilnehmern Anregungen für ihre eigene, ganz spezielle Unternehmenspraxis gibt und Voraussetzungen und Erfolgchancen einer wirtschaftlichen kundenindividuellen Produktion in den Mittelpunkt stellt. **Die Teilnahme am Arbeitskreis, der dreimal jährlich tagen soll, ist kostenlos.**

Die Eröffnungssitzung findet am Donnerstag, den 06. März 2008, um 15.00 Uhr im Technologie- und Innovationszentrum Gießen statt. **Anmeldung und mehr Information** bei **Dr. Heiner Depner** vom RKW, Tel. 06196-495 3221, E-Mail depner@rkw.de.

February 07, 2008 | Permalink http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2008/02/rkw-arbeitskrei.html | Comments (0) | TrackBack (0)

MCP Meetings and Conferences in 2008

In 2008, a few smaller focused events on mass customization and personalization are coming up. The next large MCPC conference will be in Europe in 2009. Before, you have the opportunity to interact on these regional events -- all taking place at very nice locations in Europe!

(1) 3rd Conference on Mass Customization and Personalization in Central Europe (MCP-CE 2008)

3-6th of June 2008, Palić - Novi Sad, Serbia



Conference chairs **Robert Freund**, UITM Poland, and **Zoran Anisic**, University of Novi Sad, Serbia are again bringing together the East European countries in this general, but regional event. This conference is a great example of our growing mass customization community. The MCP-CE 2008 is organized by the local chapter of the IIMCP, our mass customization society, and driven by the fantastic support of a group of local people!

All conference information and the call for papers: <http://www.ftn.ns.ac.yu/MCP-CE2008>



(2) 3rd Joint Conference PETO'08 and IMCM'08: Mass Customization of Services

19-20th of June 2008, Copenhagen, Denmark



Kasper Edwards and **Lars Hvam** from the Technical University of Denmark are hosting this European event this year again in Copenhagen.

Many industrial companies have successfully applied mass customization to physical products. However, **little is known on the transmission of mass customization principles to service industry**. Our question is if the service industry can benefit from research advances in mass customization. More importantly, how the mass customization of services can be achieved in the practice. This relates also to services associated with the production and sales of mass customized physical goods. Nowadays, one can hardly imagine a product without the delivery of secondary services. Customers are expecting additional services such as financial services or quickly and reliable on site repair and maintenance. In the case of mass customized products, the task faced by manufacturing companies is even harder. Customer service begins with the interaction/configuration process and ends up with the after-sales phase along product usage. The customer may later initiate a new configuration process hoping to add features to his system. This requires a configuration system able to span product families and generations.

More information and the full call for papers: <http://www.dtu.dk/sites/IMCMPETO2008.aspx>

(3) IF-MC2 2008 First International Footwear - Mass Customization Conference



10th of October 2008, Lugano, Switzerland

Sergio Dulio and **Claudio Boer** are planning this focused event on mass customization in the footwear industry. The footwear world is showing a growing interest for the application of the Mass Customization paradigm to its business processes. An increasing number of startups, new ventures and traditional producers are launching MC projects or are already in an advanced phase of exploitation of its market benefits.

The conference will survey the actual penetration of MC among footwear companies, it will present a complete analysis of its market potential and it will provide an up to date survey of the most relevant technological and organizational issues related to the adoption of MC by footwear companies. Researchers will also present the state of the art on footwear MC and future trends.

More information will follow!

December 28, 2007 | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Upcoming Open Innovation & Mass Customization Related Events -- Fall / Winter 2007

I am slow in blogging these days, but active in speaking. **Here are a number of events where we can meet in the next weeks in Germany (or even on your desktop with a new [webinar on Next Gen Mass Customization](#))**. Some are in English, some in German, some are costly to attend, some are free of charge.

First, the International Events

Rethinking Business: Products of tomorrow: Fabbing, personalization & custom manufacturing (Essen, 22 Nov 2007)

Webinar: The Next Gen of Mass Customization: User Manufacturing, Instant Companies, and Customer Co-Creation (On your desktop, 29 Nov 2007)

IMB Forum: **Open Innovation in the Textile Industries** (Cologne, 21 Nov 2007)

Frontend Europe Conference: How to master customer focused innovation (Vienna, 28-31 Jan 2008)

Second, two German public lectures

In two lectures in Munich and Aachen I provide an updated introduction into mass customization (Munich) and open innovation. These lectures are a good opportunity who want to get a personal introduction into these topics or just want to meet and discuss in person:

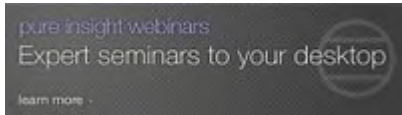
- **Mass Customization and Customer Co-Creation** (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, 12. Nov 2007)

- **Open Innovation and User Innovation** (RWTH Aachen, 4. Dec 2007)

November 09, 2007 | [Permalink](http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2007/11/upcoming-open-i.html) http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2007/11/upcoming-open-i.html
| [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Webinar: The Next Gen of Mass Customization: User Manufacturing, Instant Companies, and Customer Co-Creation (Nov 29, 2007 on your desktop)

How a new infrastructure is enabling consumers to become instant manufacturers – and your future competitor -- 10% discount for MC&OI Blog readers



I am coming back to your desktop. After the large success of an [earlier webinar on mass customization](#), London based **Pure Insights** is organizing a [second webinar on the theme](#), this time around my **new favorite topic of user manufacturing**.

The topic: We are used to have a networked laser printer on every desk in our office and in every home, enabling us to print documents on the spot which a few decades ago demanded a specialized manufacturer. The same may be happening with the production of many other goods. Today new production technologies ("fabbing") and advanced design software allow average users to produce almost everything – on their own desk. Welcome to the factory in your kitchen.

This session will discuss the upcoming user manufacturing trend, a development that recently is taking shape in larger scope and scale: **User manufacturing** refers to a public available software, manufacturing, and distribution infrastructure that enables creative users and customers to design, build, and sell own creations to a larger public – without the traditional investments in setting up a business. **User manufacturing supplements – or substitutes – mass customization strategies** which many companies have implemented. It also may become the most efficient strategy to serve the long tail of variants in many industries.

Consider **Spreadshirt**, one of the world's largest producers of graphic t-shirts. This company just allows everyone to create an own assortment of designs, and then sell this assortments in highly targeted retail outlets, online and offline, to a small market segment the user knows best. Thus, Spreadshirt does not have to predict the long tail of heterogeneity of fashion products, but just focuses on allowing users to create and sell this assortment by their own.

User manufacturing is enabled by three main technologies: (1) Easy-to-operate design software that allows users to transfer their ideas into a design. (2) Design repositories where users upload, search, and share designs with other users. This allows a community of loosely connected users to develop a large range of applications. (3) Easy-to-access flexible manufacturing technology. New rapid manufacturing technologies ("fabbing") finally deliver the dream of translating any 3-D data files into physical products -- even in you living room. Combining this technology with recent web technologies can open a radical new way to provide custom products along the entire "long tail" of demand.

User manufacturing builds on the notion that **users are not just able to configure a good within the given solution space (mass customization), but also to develop such a solution space by their own** and utilize it by producing custom products. As a result, customers are becoming not only co-designers, but also manufacturers, using an infrastructure provided by some specialized companies.

The webinar will discuss recent trends and case examples of the user manufacturing trend. We also will compare the business models of companies which are building on the user manufacturing trend and which implement and operate the underlying infrastructure for creative users to become manufacturers.

Planned session outline:



- A short review of conventional mass customization thinking
- Which recent trends and developments enhance these strategies and how mass customization is related to "The Long Tail" phenomena
- What is user manufacturing, and which trends does this strategy support?

- What are the components of an infrastructure that supports user manufacturing?
- A review of business models of established companies and recent startups which already successfully benefit from the opportunities of user manufacturing
- A discussion of the major challenges and open issues in this domain
- Session wrap-up: Idea for further action

To register, please go to <http://www.pure-insight.com/webinars/mass-customization-next-generation> and **use promotional code aix (case sensitive!) wenn registering for a 10% discount.**

Note: You also can download the webinar after its initial live broadcast – but only when joining live, you can interact and ask direct questions.

All further information [can be found here](#).

Context information

- If you prefer to see the content of this webinar in action, a [seminar on Fabbing and User generated Manufacturing in Essen](#), Germany, provides a great opportunity on Nov 22.
- My [earlier posts on user manufacturing](#)
- [Article in CNN online](#) on the fabbing trend
- [Article in New Scientist](#) on the fabbing trend
- [Article in Make magazine](#) on how to use a fabbing device

November 09, 2007 [Permalink](#) http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2007/11/webinar-the-nex.html
| [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Rethinking Business: Products of tomorrow: Fabbing, personalization & custom manufacturing (Essen, 22. Nov 2007)



A VERY interesting focused event on the new world of fabbing, laser sintering, user manufacturing, and how to make business with this will take place in **Essen (Germany) on Nov 22 afternoon & evening**. Hosted by Z-Punkt, an innovative trend consultancy, and taking place in the **Zeche Zollverein**, a spectacular industrial location, the conference promised to become a real eye-opener and point of discussion.

For more information on the theme, have a look on this [previous blog post](#): I will host a [webinar on the same topic of user manufacturing](#) on Nov 29 in case you cannot travel to Essen, Germany, for this event.

For a [list of all speakers and the detailed program](#), [please download the event flyer](#).

The event will be in German language, so all the following announcements are in German language as well.

Erfahren Sie, wie neue Materialien zu Innovationstreibern werden und warum der 3D-Druck das Business revolutioniert. Die Konferenz "[Rethinking Business #02. Produkte von morgen](#)" findet am 22. November 2007 auf der Zeche Zollverein in Essen statt. Themenschwerpunkte: Neue Materialien und individuelle Produktion.

Und noch mehr Informationen zum Thema finden Sie in einem [Interview mit Frank Piller auf dem Z-Punkt-Blog](#).

Drucken wir in ein paar Jahren unser Geschirr jeden Tag frisch aus unserem persönlichen 3D-Drucker aus? Und werden die Fallschirme der Zukunft aus Nano-Spinnfäden gefertigt? Wie neue Materialien die Produktwelt von morgen prägen und welches Innovationspotenzial in einer individualisierten Produktionsweise steckt – das diskutiert Z_punkt im Rahmen der Konferenz „Produkte von morgen“ am 22. November 2007 in der Zollverein School of Management and Design in Essen.

Die zweite Veranstaltung im Rahmen des Konferenzzyklus „Rethinking Business“ setzt den Fokus auf „Neue Materialien und Individuelle Produktion“ – und schlägt dabei die Brücke von der Vision zur Praxis. Der nach dem Open-Source-Modell „fab@home“ für 2.000,- Euro gebaute Prototyp eines einfachen 3D-Druckers geht während der Konferenz live in Produktion und vermittelt den Teilnehmern einen Eindruck von den zukünftigen Möglichkeiten einer Fabrik im Taschenformat: Mit einem für Endkunden erschwinglichen 3D-Printer könnte das Ausdrucken von Alltagsprodukten nämlich bald flächendeckend zu Hause möglich sein.

„Uns beschäftigt im Rahmen der Rethinking-Business-Reihe die Frage, wie die Wirtschaft der Zukunft funktioniert. Dieses Mal interessieren wir uns für die Produktwelt. Wir fragen: Wie sehen die Produkte der Zukunft aus? Wie werden sie entwickelt und hergestellt? Und wie müssen sich Unternehmen aufstellen, um intelligente Materialien und individuelle Produktion als Innovationstreiber zu nutzen“, sagt Andreas Neef, geschäftsführender Gesellschafter von Z_punkt.

Darauf muss die Wirtschaft vorbereitet sein – wie einst beim Siegeszug des Personal Computers. Dr. Matthias Lüken, Produktentwickler bei Henkel, und Dr. Sigurd Buchholz, Technologieexperte bei der Bayer Technology Services GmbH, berichten aus der Industrieperspektive über Anwendungsmöglichkeiten und Innovationspotenziale einer individualisierten Produktionsweise.

Weitere Infos:

Rethinking Business #02. Produkte von morgen

22 Nov 2007, 16:00 - 21:30 Uhr at Zollverein School of Management & Design, Essen

<http://www.rethinkingbusiness.de>

[Programm-Flyer](#) und [Anmeldung online](#) (Studenten können für nur 50 Euro teilnehmen !)

Info: Silke Schneider (schneider@z-punkt.de)

November 09, 2007 | [Permalink http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2007/11/rethinking-busi.html](http://mass-customization.blogs.com/mass_customization_open_i/2007/11/rethinking-busi.html) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

IMB Forum: Open Innovation in the Textile Industries (Cologne, 21 Nov 2007)



IMB is one of the largest trade shows for the textile industry, a showcase not of the latest fashions in apparel but the latest in machinery and software for the industry. The IMB main event takes place in Cologne every three years. **IMB Forum** is a smaller sister event of IMB, filling the years in between with a focused exhibition and conference.

The [fifth event of the series](#) will be held on **the Cologne Fair Ground on Wednesday, 21st November and Thursday, 22nd November 2007**. This year's conference theme is "[Information Technology for the Textile Processing and Apparel Industry](#)", and **I have the honor to provide the opening keynote for this event as part of a conference section dealing with open innovation in this sector.**

I am speaking together with **Ralf Reichwald**, my colleague and [co-author](#) from TU Munich. Our topic on the morning of Nov 21 is "**Open Innovation: Customers as active partners of companies in the textile industry.**" We will address latest trends and case studies on open innovation with a focus on the textile industries to provide an overall framework of interactive value creation.

Our talk is followed by **Andreas Milles from Spreadshirt**, who is presenting the leading implementation of open innovation and interactive value creation in Europe. **Johann Füller from Hyve**, Munich will present the work his company did with BMW to implement open innovation in this company

For the entire program, head to the [IMB forum website](#), here is a [PDF flyer for download](#).

Here is some more information from a IMB press release:

"IMB Forum, the international exhibition with an accompanying congress, which will take place at the Cologne exhibition center from November 21 to 22, 2007, has come to be one of the sector's top annual events. That's why many leading companies regard participation in the IMB Forum as an absolute must. Or, as **Holger Klappstein**, Managing Director Sales and Marketing of TXTe solutions GmbH in Halle, puts it: "The IMB Forum is one of the most important information platforms for the fashion, garment, footwear, and textile industries."

The success of the IMB Forum is based on the fact that the event perfectly supports direct dialogue between the sector's users and suppliers. This is also an important factor for **Dominik Berger**, Managing Director of RF-IT Solutions GmbH in Graz: "The IMB Forum offers us an ideal presentation platform for our goods and services in this area, while simultaneously offering us the opportunity to conduct intensive discussions with our customers."

Christiane Klaschik, Head of Marketing for ImPuls AG from Krefeld, is also well aware of this strength of the IMB Forum: "There's hardly any other trade fair where we can meet such a concentration of our target groups. Customer contact is also a very important issue for us."

Jacqueline Kellner, Head of Marketing at Lectra Deutschland GmbH, regards the IMB Forum as "one of the most professional events for presenting yourself to a high-caliber public."

"We believe in the event and clearly recognize the efforts on the part of Koelnmesse to achieve a breakthrough in terms of the degree of international participation, especially with regard to the visitors. The presence of the decision-makers, at least from the immediately neighboring countries, is a crucial step in the right direction," says **Yvonne Heinen-Foudeh**, Marketing and Communications Manager Europe of Gerber Technology GmbH in Munich."

The [IMB Forum 2007](#) will take place from Wednesday, November 21 to Thursday, November 22, 2007. The exhibition will be open to visitors on the first day from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and on the second day from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Presentations will be held in the morning and afternoon on both days.

November 09, 2007 [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(2\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Frontend Europe Conference: An expensive but high-profile event on mastering customer focused innovation (Vienna, 28-31 Jan 2008)



This is [a conference I always was interested in](#) but feared the heavy price tag. So I am glad that this time I am invited to speak and so do not have to register :-). **The second annual Front End of Innovation Conference** in Europe is taking place from 28th -31st, January 2008 in Vienna, Austria. It is the European sister event of a large, very well established US conference

Readers of my blog get 20% discount off the standard & onsite rate to join me at the event. Mention the code **SPKRM2050FP** to have the discount applied (but [the price tag still is heavy](#) – it is a typical commercial IIR conference that also uses pricing to create a high-profile crowd).

The Front End of Innovation Europe offers some of the most respected names in Innovation and R&D., including **Clayton M. Christensen** from Harvard Business School (the guy who showed that most companies fail when being faced with disruptive innovation).

This conference will address many recent innovation challenges, including: Reducing Your Carbon Footprint, Global Innovation: Bridging Cultural Differences With Asia And Beyond, Open Innovation, New Business Model Innovation, Customer Focused Innovation, Generating Breakthroughs While Reducing Risk, Linking Product Life Cycle Management With The Fuzzy Front End... and many others.

I am speaking on **Thursday, 31st January, during the "Front End Innovation Management Re-**

search Focused Academic Workshop", when I will be giving my presentation: "Bridging the Mass Customisation and Open Innovation"

During this talk, I will share some of the latest research on setting up successful mass customization systems and will discuss recent trends in product configuration systems from the perspective of strategy and marketing. Based on our own study of more than 250 mass customisers in consumer and industrial markets, the session outlines the building blocks of successful mass customisation strategies and provides ideas how to avoid the pitfalls of its implementation.

Remember: Readers of my blog get 20% discount off the standard & onsite rate to join me at the event. Mention the code SPKRM2050FP to have the discount applied.

Full information and registration: www.iirusa.com/feieurope

Or **download the official conference brochure** with much more information and all abstracts of all presentations.

November 09, 2007 [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Public Lecture: Open Innovation and User Innovation (RWTH Aachen, 4. Dec 2007)

What is open innovation? What is user innovation, and what is the real idea behind the 'lead user' concept? What are tools and methods companies can employ to profit from these buzzwords? Why does it make economic sense? When does it make no sense at all? What have we learned from case studies and pilot studies in this field? And how is Webasto, a leading German automotive supplier, profiting from creative users & customers?

These are **some of the questions Alexander Lang and I will address in a public evening lecture** at RWTH Aachen on Tue, Dec. 4. The event is hosted by the German Association of 'Wirtschaftsingenieure' (industrial engineers)..

Alex Lang and I will also talk about our experiences from a joint research project on user innovation which is co-sponsored by "**Stiftung Industrieforschung**", a large grant giving institution on Germany.

This is the first public event I am organizing in Aachen at my new university. So a special invitation to come and discuss with us. *The regular language for this event is German, but if we will have international guests, we will talk in English.*

All information (in German language) and an abstract of our talks [can be found in this PDF](#).

The event takes place on **4. Dec 2007, 7:15 - 9pm**, followed by a network reception. **Place: RWTH Aachen, Karmann-Auditorium**, Room FO 5, at Templergraben 62 (opposite of the RWTH Main Building).

The lecture is free of charge, and no registration is necessary. Just come to the room!

Here is some more information for all of our German speaking readers.

Open Innovation: Neue Ansätze zur Steigerung von Effizienz und Qualität der Produktentwicklung

Eine öffentliche Veranstaltung (Eintritt frei!) in Zusammenarbeit des Verbands Deutscher Wirtschaftsingenieure (Hochschulgruppe Aachen), des Lehrstuhls für Technologie- und Innovationsmanagement an der RWTH, der Stiftung Industrieforschung und der Webasto AG

Vorträge:

Prof. Frank Piller, RWTH-TIM: Open Innovation und Interaktive Wertschöpfung: Prinzipien und Erfolgsfaktoren

Alexander Lang, Webasto AG: "Ideen aus der zweiten Reihe" - Strategien für kundenorientierte Innovationen in der Automobilindustrie

4. Dezember 2007, 19:15 – 21:00 und anschließender Network-Empfang
RWTH Aachen, Karmann-Auditorium, Raum FO 5 (Templergraben 62 gegenüber RWTH Hauptgebäude, 1. Stock

Abstract:

Open-Source-Software ist nicht nur ein technisches oder gesellschaftliches Phänomen, sondern das dahinter stehende Wertschöpfungsprinzip erweitert herrschende Prinzipien im Innovationsmanagement zum Teil völlig – auch in anderen Bereichen jenseits der Software-Entwicklung. Auf dieser Veranstaltung soll anhand aktueller Fallbeispiele diskutiert werden, wie durch eine solche Open Innovation Effizienz und Effektivität der Neuproduktentwicklung gesteigert werden können.

Kernidee von Open Innovation ist, eine Aufgabe nicht an den "besten" bekannten internen oder externen Entwickler zu vergeben, sondern das Problem in einem offenen Netzwerk in Form eines breiten Aufrufs zur Mitwirkung auszuschreiben. Potentielle externe Problemlöser entscheiden dann durch Selbstselektion, ob sie mitwirken oder nicht.

Im Mittelpunkt stehen dabei Strategien von Unternehmen, die ihre Kunden bzw. Nutzer nicht mehr als nur passive Empfänger und Konsumenten einer von Herstellern autonom geleisteten Wertschöpfung sehen. Vielmehr treten Nutzer als Wertschöpfungspartner von Unternehmen oder anderen Nutzern auf, indem sie Produkte oder Dienstleistungen mitgestalten und teilweise sogar deren Entwicklung und Herstellung bestimmen oder übernehmen.

Bei allen Potentialen von Open Innovation zur Effizienzverbesserung in der Entwicklung stellen sich jedoch auch neue Herausforderungen. Open Innovation ist nicht einfach ein "Outsourcing" interner Entwicklungsaufgaben an die Peripherie, sondern verlangt eine aktive Beteiligung durch den Anbieter, der hierfür bestimmte Ressourcen und Fähigkeiten besitzen muss.

Dies zeigt eindrucksvoll das Beispiel der **Webasto AG**, einen führenden deutschen Automobilzulieferer. Eine Neuausrichtung des Webasto-Innovationsmanagements betont entscheidend das Potential von durch Endkunden generierte Produktideen im Entwicklungsprozess. Die so entstehenden Produkte verfügen über einen echten Mehrwert, worauf Webasto als Automobilzulieferer mit überwiegend Sonderausstattungsprodukten eminent angewiesen ist. Generell wird es bei der Vermarktung von Sonderausstattungen zukünftig noch wichtiger werden, einen echten Endkundenmehrwert klar vermitteln zu können.

Dazu entwickelte Webasto zum einen eine umfangreiche Workshop-Methodik, mit der Kunden und potentielle Nutzer in die ersten Phasen der Produktentwicklung einbezogen werden. Zum anderen nutzt das Unternehmen ein interaktives, webbasiertes Tool, mit dem die Bewertung und Speicherung von Ideen vereinfacht und standardisiert wird.

Neben den Ideen, die aus den firmeninternen Quellen sprudeln, ist es hier nun auch möglich, systematisch „Endkundenideen“ mit in die Bewertung aufzunehmen. Dies ist der letzte Baustein, der die Lücke zwischen Zulieferer und Endkunde schließt. Im Vorfeld wurde eine Methode entwickelt, die es ermöglicht, aus einer beliebigen Gruppe von Endkunden mit Hilfe eines eigenen Testverfahrens so genannte "Lead User" zu identifizieren, die dann in mehrtägigen Workshops gemeinsam mit professionellen Moderatoren völlig neuartige Ideen generieren. Der Unterschied zur Gewinnung von Ideen durch die hauseigene Entwicklung besteht in der strukturierten Vorgehensweise, die immer zuerst ein Endkunden-Bedürfnis identifiziert, bevor Funktionen daraus definiert und schließlich in Produkte überführt werden.

Die Veranstaltung basiert auf gemeinsamen Forschungsarbeiten der Referenten, die durch die Stiftung Industrieforschung im Rahmen eines aktuellen Projekts unterstützt werden.

November 09, 2007 | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Public Lecture: Mass Customization and Customer Co-Creation (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, 12. Nov 2007)



The "[Festo Program for Applied Knowing](#)" is an initiative at LMU Munich (hosted by the [Humanwissenschaftliches Zentrum](#)) that studies diverse topics around the future of knowledge work. One of their ideas is to **transfer mass customization on the field of education**. Mr. Klinger, the groups' co-director, initiated a well received workshop around this theme at MCPC 2007.

In a regular lecture series, they invite guest speakers to address a larger audience around topics of their interest. **Next Monday, Nov 12, I am invited to talk about mass customization and consumer co-creation.** This will be a basic overview using some recent case studies and examples.

I guess the official language is German but if we will have international guest, I will talk in English. And the evening may be a good opportunity for old friends or people interested in the topic in Munich to re-connect at this evening.

Date and location:

12. November 2007, 6-8 pm

Humanwissenschaftliches Zentrum

Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität

Schillerstraße 44 (Innenhof / Court yard), Munich

Room 11

The lecture is free of charge, and [registration is possible with this form](#). Or just come to the room!

November 09, 2007 | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

Impress and Contact

Mass Customization & Open Innovation News -- Notes and ideas on mass customization, personalization, customer integration, and open innovation. **Vol. 11 / 2008**. Edited by Frank T. Piller

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