

Production knowledge is power. Where can we find it?

The internet was created by a visionary, Sir Tim Berners-Lee, and that in itself is a great accolade to have on one's LinkedIn. Berners-Lee is arguably the greatest connector of knowledge and information in history.

Temps de lecture : minute

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Building on the works of Samuel Morse and Alexander Graham Bell, Berners-Lee has allowed billions of people to share, learn, connect, trade, and wind away the hours with games, videos, stories, artworks and so much more. His belief in humanity, powered by technology, has made the world more interconnected than Morse or Graham Bell could ever have dreamed of.

Whatever you think of the 'modern internet', and the projects running in parallel on the dark web, web3, Inrupt, Solid, or the multitude of other alternatives popping up as a response to the walled gardens of multinationals, there is no doubt in my mind that his vision for a connected world has been realised and is an overwhelming success. Humanity has flourished, largely due to the opportunity he provided us.

As with any groundbreaking technology, there are a few that make the most noise in the wrong ways. But there is a constant majority that powers forward doing either great things or simply day-to-day things. They deserve these freedoms they have been given and some praise from time to time.

Sir Tim has revolutionised humanity. He believes that the internet should be a basic human right. And to a certain extent, I believe the world of

production should be too.

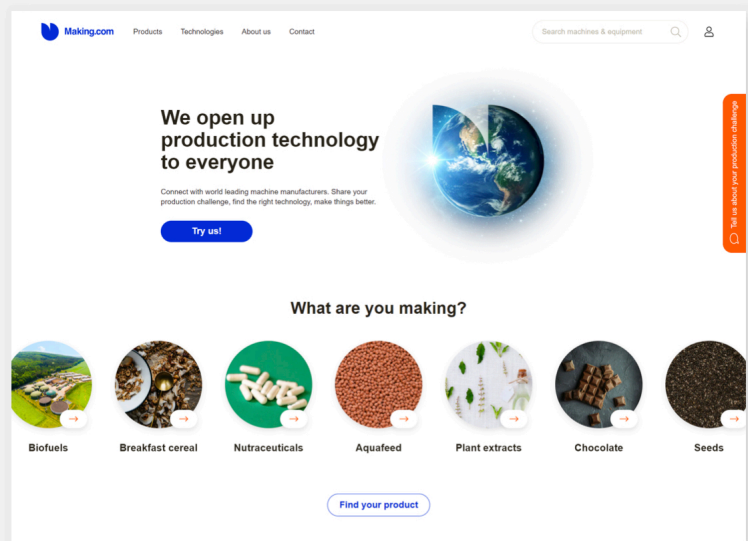
If we go a bit further back in time, production used to be small, local, normally a family affair. Prior to the internet, the industrial revolution represented a monumental time of growth and expansion for humanity. We went from small to industrial, hand-made to production lines, rural to urban - in a very short period of time.

Drawing a parallel to the internet, most of us will look at it as development. However much there are negatives, the overriding theme is progress.

Since this evolution happened, though, the world of production has been concentrated in a few minds that own the knowledge, data, expertise and machinery that makes just about everything in humanity. The difference, as I see it, is that they don't do it on purpose; they just didn't have a World Wide Web to call it theirs. At least, it is not organised in a way they can use it. Believe it or not, manufacturing is still an offline world in the 21st century.

Imagine you are about to make a new product, or you found a better way of making one. Now you'll need to find partners who are going to engineer and build the technology that is going to make your product. Where do you start? If you are working for a company that already owns production plants, you'll start with your existing technology partners. If that doesn't work, you'll fall back on word-of-mouth as you ask around in your network. And if that doesn't work, you'll travel to a specialised industry fair.

1. Welcome to Making.com



Finding the right technology online is much more difficult than you suspect. Why hasn't this part of manufacturing evolved? Are there too many machine and equipment manufacturers to sort through? Is it because machines, from a distance, tend to become abstract shapes in variations of stainless-steel grey? Or are the walled gardens of multinationals that present technology on the World Wide Web just not very helpful?

Look at the IP for the everlasting lightbulb, and more than likely, technologies from Nicola Tesla that the world will never see. Siloed information holds us back. It increases the gap between those that want to change, and those that have the power and willingness to drive this change.

We share Berners-Lee's vision of open-source knowledge, expertise, openness and freedom to have a go. In our manufacturing world, we launched *Making.com*, our own little WWW to get the freedom of the digital world and connect it, finally, with the physical industrial world that

produces the things we use and need every day. We map the products the world is making and link you back to the people with the technologies to make them better.

People learn by doing, and to deal with the challenges around us, everyone should have the right to touch and feel, test and build. It is the connections like the World Wide Web shows us every day, that can help us make things better. Because for every fake-news spouting former president, a million engineers, florists, scientists, librarians, teachers and charity workers get things done, quietly and empowered.

Humanity is on the cusp of change, once again. There is no reason that today can't be the day that kick-starts a new industrial revolution. But only if it's one for everyone. We want to build a movement, opening production knowledge for the many, not the few. We want to empower people to improve or create better products. So that they can say on LinkedIn that they did their part to keep the world habitable for humans.

Notes: Jorrit and making.com will be attending Web Summit and are around for a chat about sustainability, production, the wider internet or simply to get caught up in the excitement in Lisbon. Or pop by stand A-310 on Thursday, November 04. Pavilion 2.

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