

Make: Technology on Your Time
Editor: Mark Frauenfelder
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In return for providing a review of the publication Make: Technology on Your Time, I was given a copy of the premiere edition by John Davey of the Philadelphia Area Computer Society, a non-profit group whose members are entitled to discounts on products sold by O'Reilly, the publisher of Make.

The premiere edition of Make Magazine was informative, enlightening and to a point entertaining. Although some of the projects contained in the publication appeared to be somewhat impractical for most of us, many others provided useful solutions to common problems and offered inexpensive alternatives for commercially available products that are sometimes not worth buying because of their prices and limitations. Make offers ingenious tips for maintaining, improving, repairing and rejuvenating mechanical and electronic devices that would normally have shorter lifetimes and end up in landfills.

Make is sort of a "Mechanics Illustrated" for the Internet crowd, with articles annotated with relevant websites that readers can access to find additional information, details and backstories about the authors, the theory behind the operation of the projects and more.

A few of the projects and alternative-use applications border on the illegal, at least in terms of voiding the warranties of the brand-name products involved, and some, when used in the wrong ways, could be potentially dangerous.

There is a legal disclaimer provided on page 8, but it's printed in relatively small text on a background that makes it a little difficult to read. The disclaimer could have been done in a larger, bolder font over a less obscured background. The magazine in its size, format and general layout, however, makes it as suitable a desk reference as a magazine you would leave on the coffee table for casual reading.

Although most of the articles are concise and written in a form that can be understood by the average reader, a few contain subjects and terminology that is of interest to those who specialize in the respective technology. Many of the articles and projects describe the maintenance and repair procedures for equipment and devices that are not likely to become obsolete in the near future, thus adding to the usefulness of the magazine's content. Instructions are presented in a straightforward manner and are accompanied by photographs and illustrations.

The publisher and editors have selected a group of contributing writers that is diverse in terms of the disciplines in which they are versed as well as being on the cutting edge of the various technologies and trends. The advertisers have also been well selected and their ads are in a form relevant and consistent with the articles of the publication.

Make avoids talking down to the reader, such as through the oversimplification of relatively complicated technologies, while still offering thorough explanations and instructions that don't bog down the reader's mind with arcane theory and terminology.

I highly recommend this publication to anyone who is technologically inclined or is just curious about how things work.

The views expressed in this review are those of the author. They do not necessarily represent the views of PACS, its board, or anyone else.