



Apr 14, 2015 00:00 BST

Northumbria experts will make research come alive during a weekend of creativity

Innovative staff and students from Northumbria University will be among the 'makers' at this year's spectacular Maker Faire UK.

More than 10,000 visitors are expected to descend on the International Centre for Life in Newcastle for the two-day celebration of creativity and invention across science, engineering, art, performance and craft. Academics and students from across Northumbria will bring their world-class research to life with interactive displays and engaging demonstrations at this year's event, which takes place on 25-26 April.

The University's support for Maker Faire UK further demonstrates Northumbria's commitment to inspiring more young people to get into Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines.

Lucy Winskell OBE, Northumbria University's Pro Vice-Chancellor for Business and Engagement, said: "Northumbria University is supporting Maker Faire UK because it makes a difference and helps inspire people – especially young people – to have a go and see what they can do. That's exactly what we need if we want to plug the skills gap and address the gender imbalance in STEM. It is vitally important we encourage the next generation to see the exciting range of careers available to them in this area."

She added: "Our ongoing support for this wonderful, family friendly weekend of invention and creativity further demonstrates Northumbria's commitment to driving world-class research and teaching across STEM disciplines following the launch of our innovative Think Physics project and our co-funded £6.7 million investment in new STEM facilities."

Maker Faire UK will this year be headlined by US internet sensations EepyBird who will be performing a spectacular live version of their famous 'Extreme Diet Coke and Mentos experiment'.

Geysers of soda will erupt over 25ft into the air when EepyBird's Fritz Grobe and Stephen Voltz don their lab coats and drop 624 Mentos mints into 104 two-litre bottles of Diet Coke. EepyBird will perform two shows on Saturday 25 April and one show on Sunday 26 April outdoors in Times Square outside the Life Science Centre in Newcastle.

Northumbria has been a regular supporter of Maker Faire UK in recent years as part of its ongoing partnership with the International Centre for Life. Linda Conlon, chief executive at Life, said: "It's clear from the success of previous Maker Faires that people are viewing science and engineering differently.

"While the event is for all ages, it's an important part of our efforts to inspire and support the next generation of scientists and engineers. Maker Faire really emphasises the huge range of opportunities open to young people by studying STEM subjects. So we are thrilled to have our key supporters on board, as without them, the event would not be possible."

This year's Maker Faire UK will be the first to feature an appearance by the £3m+ Think Physics project, a Northumbria-led initiative to encourage more young people, especially girls and under-represented groups, to consider studying STEM by opening their minds to science from Early Years onwards.

Think Physics director Dr Carol Davenport said: "Maker Faire UK is about encouraging young people and adults to get hands on with technology and science. With Think Physics, we aim to show young people and their parents that the creativity which is a strong part of the Maker community is key to success in science and technology.

"For our activities at Maker Faire, we're taking science ideas that young people study about in school, and using those ideas as the starting point for an adventure in making. We'll be creating light boxes with families which take concepts of light, colour, shadow and movement to create a collaborative art work. We're instrumenting familiar objects, so that they can be interpreted in unfamiliar ways. We're looking forward to sharing conversations about physics amongst parents, children and other Maker Faire visitors."

Tickets are now on sale and cost £9.95 per adult and £24.10 for a family ticket (Two adults and two children or one adult and three children). For more information or to buy tickets online, please visit www.MakerFaireUK.com

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