

Can DIY synthetic biology democratize biotechnology?

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In the 1970s a group of enthusiasts met at the Homebrew Computer Club in Silicon Valley to share information about DIY construction of computing devices. Members complained that computers would never become commonplace if they had to be built up from individual parts. Taking up the challenge, Steve Wozniak got out his soldering iron and constructed the Apple I computer, and the rest is history.

Likewise, it is suggested that synthetic biology will kick start a new [wave of innovation](#) by creating [standardized components](#) and [hiding the technical details](#) of genetic modification – theoretically allowing anyone with a good idea to make something. But for biotechnology to be truly accessible, it must be possible for non-experts to design and build using organic materials. To get some insight on the issue, I contacted members of the [London biohackspace](#) (LBHS) to find out about the realities of practicing [DIYBio](#).

In 2012 Philipp Boeing became excited about biohacking because it promised to allow anyone to dabble in bioengineering. Along with fellow members of the 2012 UCL iGEM team, Philipp envisaged working with the LBHS to create the first ‘public biobrick’ – a shareable, standardized biological part made by biohackers. To achieve this aim, the iGEM team visited the cramped conditions of the LBHS of the time.

Read full, original post: [SynBio – democratizing biotechnology?](#)