# CYBERDECK COMMUNITY SURVEY 2021

1] Get a Baseline

"You're in a desert, walking along in the sand when all of a sudden you look down and see a tortoise. It's crawling toward you. You reach down and you flip the tortoise over on its back. The tortoise lays on its back, its belly baking in the hot sun, beating its legs trying to turn itself over but it can't. Not without your help. But you're not helping Leon."
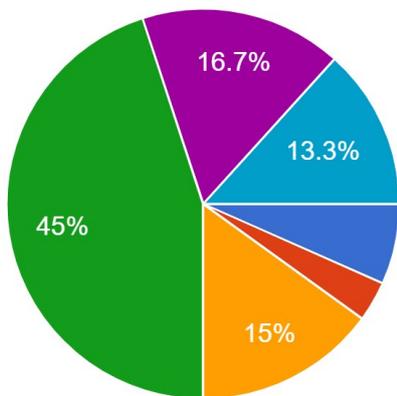
- 🔵 But, how come I'd be there?
- 🔴 I've never seen a turtle. But I understand what you mean.
- 🟠 Do you make up these questions, or do they write 'em down for you?
- 🟢 WHAT DO YOU MEAN, I'M NOT HELPING?
- 🟣 Let me tell you about my mother.
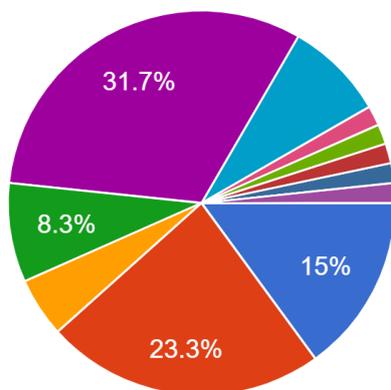- 🔵 Who's Leon? I have no idea what you're talking about.

It's that **13.3%** that are most worrying..... we must find them and purge them.

Or force them to go back and watch Blade Runner.

These numbers are unacceptable.
Unacceptable, I say.

2] Feelings on Competitions

"How do you feel about competitions for building cyberdecks and other devices?"

- ● Overwhelmed. Its too much work, and…
- ● Excited.
- ● They don't happen often enough.
- ● Contests? No time for that.
- ● Maybe, but early warning helps.
- ● Let me tell you about my mother.
- ● I'd like to participate in one, but I have…
- ● I'd love to submit an entry, but so far h…

△ 1/2 ▼

Takeaway:

31.7%:	"Early warning helps."
23.3%:	"Excited"
15%:	"Overwhelmed. Its too much work, and I can't compete."
8.3%	"Let me tell you about my mother."

- "I'd like to participate in one, but I haven't had the time/resources handy when they've come around. I really enjoy seeing everything that comes out of them though."
  (People dig contests)
- "Would love love love to, but i am busy and tired and poor. Mainly tired"
  (Contests need to be less energy intensive –
  expand the timeframe / increase early warning)
- "Arbitrary design constraints."
  (I think they're talking about the 2020 extrusion contest.
  Good point, not everyone has the stuff lying around.
  Early warning helps)
- "I'd love to submit an entry, but so far had a total 'freeze' reaction when a competition was announced. Perhaps also because my work has been a bit of a sh**show lately."
  (Um yes. Earlier warning. How can we give people helpful pushes to get started?...micro-events?)
- "Hope I can compete one time. Too expensive."
  (Early warning)

3] What you get

"What do you expect from the cyberdeck community? In other words, it's not what you can do for the deck community, but what can the deck community do for you?"

(Below is a structure of the answers, organized by gist.)

The real answers:

"Let me tell you about my mother."

"somewhere where I can share nice deck pics"

Community, Respect, Encouragement and Inspiration:

"...help everyone with solutions for whatever unique problems come their way when making these weird custom computers"

"Encouragement, share what they know."

"Generally, I come to the deck community looking for help and advice; as I'm still in the process of building my first deck, they've helped me lots."

"I like seeing everyone else's builds for inspiration. I also like discussion about different components and their suitability and/or how they can be adapted for purpose."

"I just want to talk to cool people that build cool stuf"

"I'm just grateful for the help I've been receiving. This community seems great and I can't wait to finish my build"

"provide inspiration, help and advice as well as gathering for ideas and cool parts"

"Trouble shooting, inspiration."

"Ideas. Step by step instructions."

"Support, knowledge, inspiration, comradery with like minded lunatics."

"Inspiration and help for personal decks"

"Collaboration and leaning together!"

"Mostly to see what people are creating and get inspired"

"Advice, guidance"

"I joined to enjoy the craftsmanship of others, and it fills that purpose excellently."

"I'm not very good with technology, and I (currently) don't build, but I love learning from the cyberdeck community. To learn from you techy dudes is the whole reason I'm here."

"I am interested in learning what others are making so that's easy."

"Folks showing off their decks and progress builds. Occasional cons where we talk about the nitty gritty about deck building."

"Learning more about electronics and building decks."

"Respect for one another"

"Peers who can appreciate and opine on hacks and quality work"

"Help with everything along the process of making a deck"

"I hope to exchange skills, and find solidarity with people who've got the same interests."

Counter-culture:

"I want us to lead the journey of open source computing. We can back the people making open source hardware and maybe even start a revolution."

"A shared knowledge pool, shared experience, to draw upon while slapping together hacky chimeras in rejection of commercial standards and the crushing iron fist of late stage capitalist rule. Or just because you can."

Low drama/ No Gatekeeeping

"A safe space with low drama to talk about a shared interest."

"Mostly just support, suggestions and inspirations, I don't like when communities basically prevent users from joining when they don't have a certain skill level."

Market/Encourage Creative Usage

"Support and guidance, tips, sanity checks on design. Inspire & motivate to turn a shed full of electronic parts into something better than collect dust.

Second hand market."

"Cool pics of devices, uhh second hand parts?"

"I love to follow other's builds. The logs are mostly very interesting. Also, as an embedded developer, I try to help with questions about hardware and software. (The community 'does this for me' in the sense that I simply love to help out. It clears my mind and often they're fun little puzzles.)"

Education/Tutorials

"Discord is filled with information about power, display, … but it is hard to search. Making the data more accessible would go a long way."

"An FAQ, maybe a follow along guide on how to make a cyberdeck "baby's first cyberdeck" and from there people can make changes as they see fit, but at least something to give people a baseline to aim for to make sure they make something functional"

"I would like to see bite size tutorials that help build the foundation, and skills, needed for electronic projects like a cyberdeck."

4] Deck Envy
"How many cyberdecks have you built?"
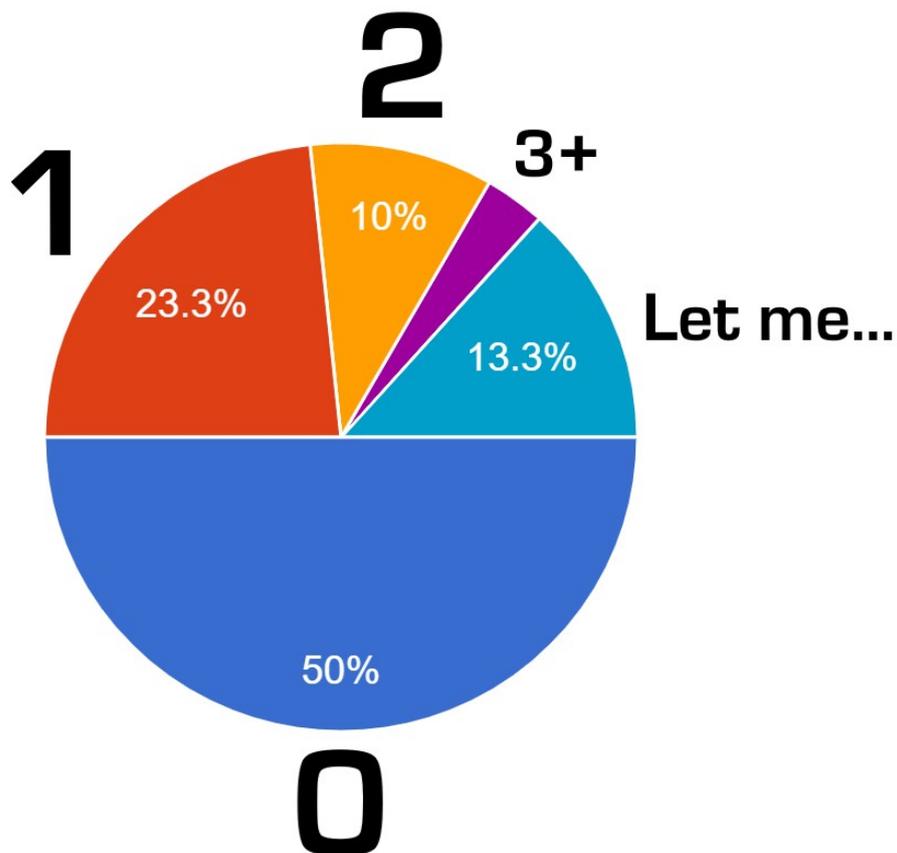
Takeaway:

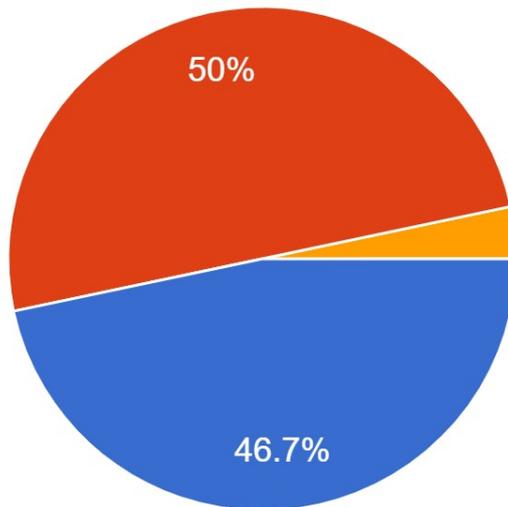How can newbies get help started on their first deck?

Finances/Complexity/Inertia/Time are the main obstacles, but they are related, and an easier pathway to building a deck could save money, time, and reduce fear.

Competitions could be a partial solution.

5] Can there only be one Hans...?
"Do you enjoy creating stupid graphics?"

- 🔴 I make stupid graphics, but only in my free time.
- 🟠 The design and making of stupid graphics is my job.
- 🔵 No, for I cannot make stupid graphics.

50%

46.7%

Takeaway:

Why don't we have more stupid graphics?

Stupid graphics apparently are quite a popular pastime: Peeps would likely respond well to competitions for making dumb graphics.

6] Can you code?
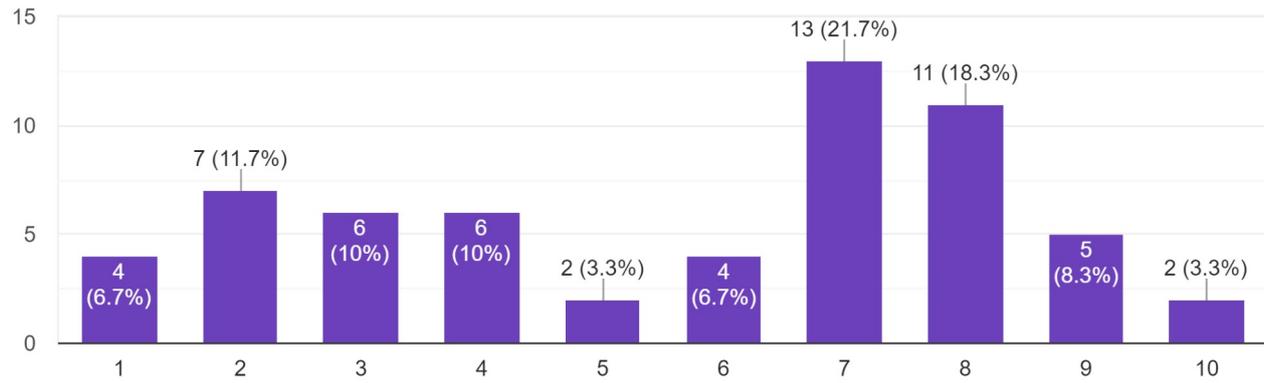
Takeaway:

Not much that can be done here – but encouraging people to try code hardware more might shift this graph to a slight bell-shape.

Its a nice goal.

7] Secret Skills
"What unique skill do you possess that you'd like to get a chance at showing off in a low-pressure tech competition?"

"Let me tell you about my mother."

Not filling forms"

"High-powered dad jokes"

"I can solder while drunk."

"Most of my truly unique skills can't be shown off."

"Combining traditional crafts with technology

"Deck design

"Im pretty good at breaking stuff

"my only unique skill is tenacity

"I am not special. I am a meat popsicle

"Creating cool wallpapers with blender hehe

"n/a I don't participate in competition as a rule

"Maybe something programming related

"general fab work"

"Time travel, can go forward, reverse needs work."

"Hard to say. 3d modeling, batteries, basic elec"

"My ability to chug water"

"improv hardware building, silly, bloody mess"

"I guess PCB design? Maybe Welding?"

"The ability to brick technology in minutes."

"Quick coding."

"Being really good at Ultimate Marvel vs. Capcom 3"

"stretching out MCUs and using them for a lot more"

"Fancy custom electronics"

"Building other things besides cyberdecks"

"Ugly barely functional hardware"

"...im here to learn such skills...i can use cowsay"

"Graphics, mini-decks, deck designs, design a UI"

"The incredible ability redesign to design it wrong"

"Twerking."

"Would love to show off a deck with modular keeb."

"Graphic design"

"Surrounding myself with talented people who help"

"80s aesthetics (Unique, not really)

"OS customization

"Harmonica

"Sound design

"I have no tech skills, but I do art/visual stuff"

"full device making"

"The ugliness of my designs"

"3D Modeling"

"Audio wiring."

"hitting things with hammers."

"3D design"

"Robotics"

mechanical keyboard builds

Takeaway:
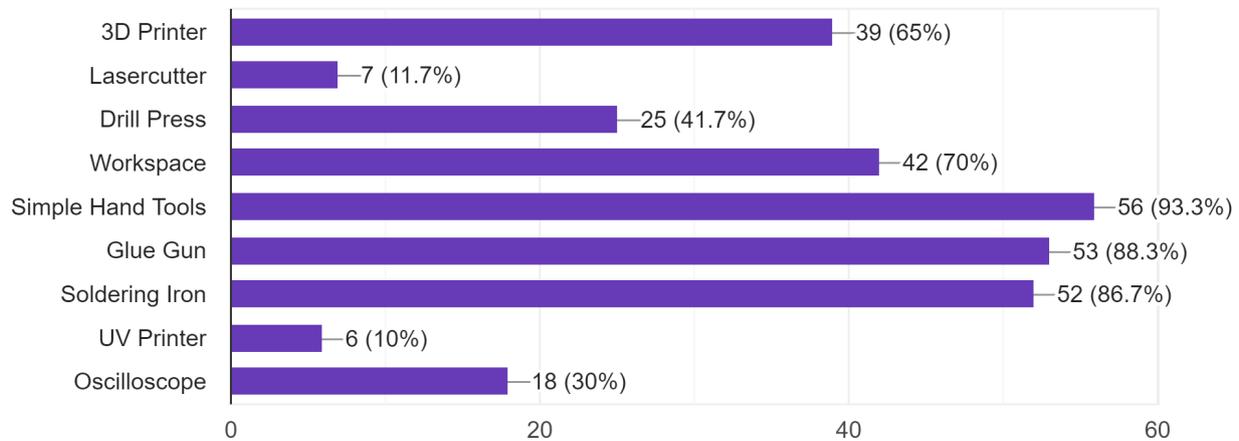**Definite lack of skills, but also lack of confidence.**

The intimidation of running in competitions against peeps with better gear, more time, and more technical knowledge shouldn't be minimized.

Something low-budged, low pressure, just to get these people safely in the water. No being overly-condenscing, no gate-keeping, and avoiding oppressively competitive tasks – this can help encourage participation.

Designing competitions ONLY for newbies, as well as weird competitions with weird themes will bring out really interesting creations and give our community useful technical experience. And most importantly - confidence

8] Gear

Tool	Count
3D Printer	39 (65%)
Lasercutter	7 (11.7%)
Drill Press	25 (41.7%)
Workspace	42 (70%)
Simple Hand Tools	56 (93.3%)
Glue Gun	53 (88.3%)
Soldering Iron	52 (86.7%)
UV Printer	6 (10%)
Oscilloscope	18 (30%)

Takeaway:

Lack of tools can exclude quite seriously. 70% of respondents actually have a workspace, but a smaller amount have 3D-printers.

Its not possible to include everyone, but competitions for peeps with limited or specific tools could also shake out more participation, as well as more exotic and unexpected creations.

Competitions with specific themes only for people with the monster tools (like CNC, laser, and the entire stack) would be very interesting in its own right.

9] Brave Solders of the Empire
"Can you solder?"

- I'm pretty good at soldering.
- 33.3%
- Solder? What?
- 43.3%
- 18.3%
- Not great, not terrible.
- A little, but not well.
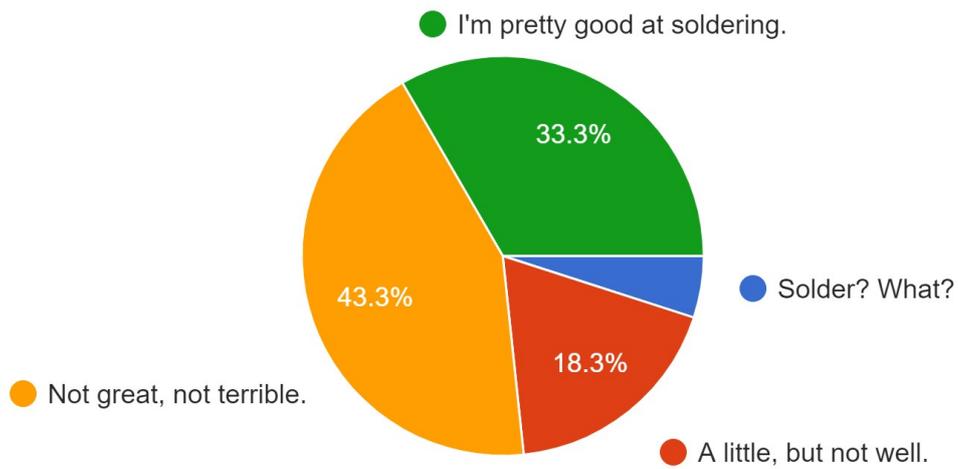
Takeaway:

Not too surprising, but I think any activities for encouraging soldering would be welcome.

10] Materials
"What materials have you worked with?"

"You made this a radio button instead of checkboxes ya dingus"

A long and very difficult to summarize list came from this question, compounded by the fact that I messed up the settings for checkbox vs radio. Thought I fixed it, but apparently not. Oh well. I'm a dingus.

Takeaway:
The basic gist was that people work on materials that go beyond the basics that we might expect, ie. 3D Printer Filament.

Based on the results, below is a list of materials that could be used as themes for deck competitions:

Wood
Cardboard
Trash
Wireframe
Tribal Themed
Bone/Organic
Fabric
Resin
PCB
Soviet Kitsch
Let me tell you about my mother
Marble – Vapourwave Themed
Radiation Hazard
Leather
Car Interior
Military
Heavy Metal
Brass – Pirate
Acrylic
80s PC

11] The Survey Takes a Dark Turn
"Which of the following are you scared of?"

|	
Batteries that explode	—19 (31.7%)
Talking in public with other people	—16 (26.7%)
Videoing Myself	—17 (28.3%)
• • •	
Dying alone among unfinished projects	—23 (38.3%)
• • •	
Dying alone with dementia surrounded by mountains of aliexpress/amazon purchases of bulk electronics components, never to be used, a waste of hopes and dreams	—28 (46.7%)

Takeaway:

Wow.

Now that we know what the deepest fears of our community look like (I'm sure many are still in denial...), it might be interesting to talk about how we can complete projects together.

12] I was worried a bit there...
"Is this survey too long?"

- 🔵 No
- 🔴 Yes
- 🟠 Let me tell you about my mother.

53.3%

41.7%
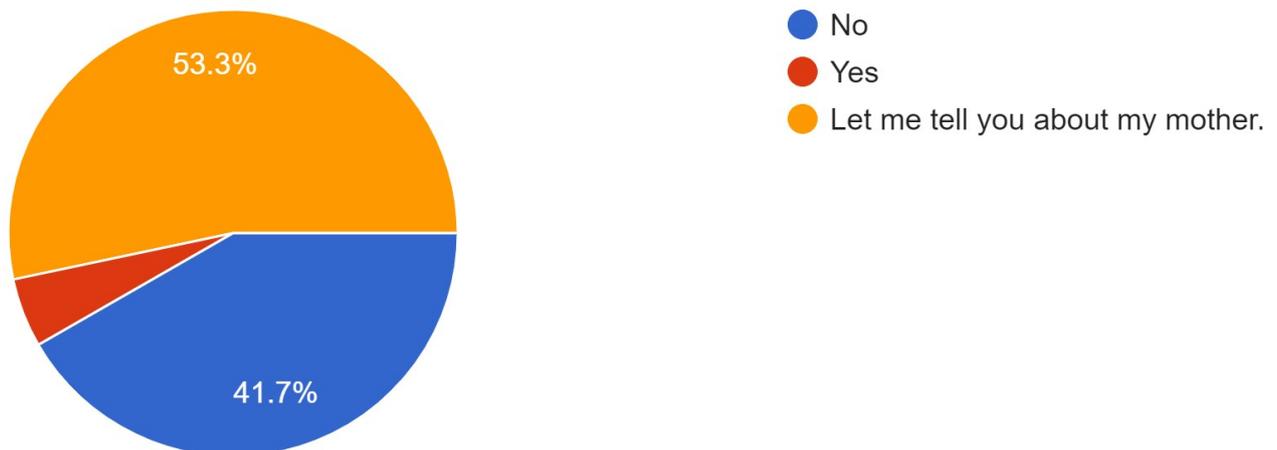
13] *Ideas, suggestions?*

THE BEST STUFF:

"Let me tell you about my mother."

...

"dont survey me"

How about you try use proper punctuation, instead of messing up my survey? Huh? Why not try that huh?

"This survey should be longer"

Crikey. You really can't please some people....

"Contests: I would enjoy some more sticker and wallpaper competitions."

Cool idea.

"Are you testing if I'm a replicant or a Lesbian?"

Just answer the question

COMPETITION IDEAS:

I welcome the idea for rig building competition, although I'm not certain I will be able to participate due to other things that keep eating up my time.

Time, time, time.

It would be fun if there was accessory projects that could be stand alone or be combined with a cyberdeck. Maybe something like a tamagotchi that can send and receive data, or some sort of wearable tech / jewelry type of thing.

Kawaii/Wearable/Tamagochi/Ridiculous Fashion Accessory/More Oreo Holders.

Got it.

"A standard entry deck build that is updated biyearly? Like where the community creates a buy list and maybe a tutorial for this year's meta entry deck?"

This already exists, but not in a mature form.

Its not impossible, but its a lot of work and needs more love.

I totally geeked out when I read the first question, that was awesome. Whoever made this survey is great.

I totally agree.

"perhaps competitions better suited to people without 3d printers? and competitions that are cover a longer time, cos some people only have a few evenings free a week."

Yup.

STRUCTURE:

"Maybe something like a forum for slower, more persistent, communication via posts? Big discord channels move so fast I can't keep up, never know what's going on, and feel like there's no point to get into the conversation because I can't sit and watch it."

I think Discord is basically made by and for people with ADHD, so I feel your pain, but can't help you there. Don't ask me, I just write surveys, man.

"High speed discord chats aren't for everyone."

It be like this.

"Channels about communicating the stages of decks, like what ideas do people have, sketches, choosing components for your deck."

Its already like this, but it could always be better, or be more on-topic. True.

TUTORIALS AND NEWBIE FRIENDLINESS:

"More help with power, more parts listed."

Ah yes. The age-old struggle for power. Its as old as mobile   computing itself...

"Possibly a wiki/online tabular format for parts reference, perhaps an extremely basic approach to how PCPartPicker works for compatibility (roughly)."

"Idea for an event/stream: I'd love to see some walkthroughs of how people have designed their own boards: what's the practical workflow, suggestions for what to avoid at first, things to consider that the tools don't necessarily get right like routing, sizing, impedance. Sure, there are a ton of tutorials out there, but I need need someone with some experience to give me some bearings."

"Let me tell you about my mother."

Can't argue with that.

"Some good tutorials on things that are intimidating for new decks/makers- things like batteries. Might be a bit out of touch, been caught up in some Real life stuff and not as involved in the community this past two months."

Yup.

"More guides, how to would be great for getting started.
A forum for more targeted help (separated threads, ...)"

Like....?

VARIED COMMUNITY:

Channels for non english speakers

> Wish you'd said what languages specifically...

"providing spotlights to makers in the community and outreaching to makers of related things outside the community"

> Help us find them! If you actively do it, it will help us achieve this   cool goal. There is always work to be done. Do it.

"The "part of the world" section is missing some parts of the world."

> Tell me about it.
>
> I'm the only one who lives in Asia.
>
> And it means fig-all.

Partner with an art community for an art contest to design devices, elements, stickers, and then host a cyberdeck "make it real" contest to incorporate the winning pieces into execution.

> Help us find them!

I think there isn't enough diversity. it seems that the only people who are here are people who 3D print, and that's all that is talked about. I wish there were more artists and generalists. Its also not very inviting for women.

> This.
>
> It really is true. Our Discord is, without a doubt, an extreme   sausage party. Like most makerspaces and tech spaces.
>
> But making it more inviting to the many talented women makers   would be a lot of fun and lead to cool stuff.

Encourage members to build more feminine projects, to draw in a different crowd of makers.

> Yus. Very yus.

I think it's the right size. Enough to keep alive for a long time, not enough to attract too much attention from many manufacturers and online wannabe pundit's. Part of the allure is it not going mainstream. That's the punk in cyberpunk.

> Hence The Purge

The ROS community has a need for cyberdecks, they just don't know it yet.

> Go tell them.
>
> [guessing he means Robot Operating System?]

I think the community is already very inclusive. By it's nature cyberdecking is only going to appeal to a fairly niche demographic...

> Cool.

Try to pull people from the HAM radio community. They build "go boxes" that resemble cyberdecks/ recovery kits all the time. Most are used in a practical way for long distance coms and packet radio/ HAM email.

> Cool idea. The experience they will bring would be vast.

I think the variety will come with exposure. Honestly, this is a more diverse group than most other discords servers I'm in.

> [wipes tear from eye]

Ban assholes sooner before they drive people away.

> Names, we need names!

Maybe try and contact and collaborate with youtubers like what Zack freedman did (that's how I found the cyberdeck community)

> Underway.

Only been on 24hrs, but it looks good so far. There's enough people doing progressive things like posting pronouns etc. Rules look very clear and open. I like it.

I'd just like to thank everyone for making me feel welcome.

Consider letting me tell you about my mother.

"lower the minim bar for tech stuff. Like a sbc may only be 20-50$, but the screen is at least a hundred, and a battery is probobly in the same range. I don't know a good solution that doesn't require changing the state of the world but i mean as a pipe dream :>"

> We can't do much about that, but we can make competitions that cover longer periods.

"Let me tell you about my mother."

> ...

Thanks all for your input, and I hope you enjoy reading this.

Please continue to support the community, share your deck pics, share ideas, ask good questions, and actively find opportunities for us to make cool content.