



Tool-a-thon Toolkit

Tool Foundry: Advancing accessible tools for scientific discovery

What if everyone had access to powerful tools for scientific learning and problem solving? Scientific discovery tools — from telescopes to magnetometers — help us answer questions and generate knowledge. But many powerful tools are too expensive or too difficult for non-experts to use. We believe accessible tools can inspire a deeper interest in science and empower people to indulge their curiosity, explore their backyard, and solve problems relevant to their own communities.

The [Tool Foundry accelerator](#) is a four-month program to help inventor teams strengthen their tools and build a foundation for sustainable growth. As part of the accelerator, each cohort team will receive \$50,000 in non-dilutive funding, expert mentorship, technical guidance, virtual learning modules, user testing opportunities, and an in-person Boot Camp at the Autodesk Technology Center in San Francisco. Inventors can apply to the accelerator by submitting their prototype ideas by May 30, 2019 at toolfoundry.org.

How to host a tool-a-thon

Help local tool makers, inventors, and innovators develop accessible tool prototypes and prepare an application for the Tool Foundry accelerator by hosting a tool-a-thon! Here's a quick guide to hosting your own event at a makerspace, fabrication lab, library, school, science center, or other community organization.

What you'll need:

- **A date and time.** We recommend reserving 2+ hours for your tool-a-thon. Consider hosting your tool-a-thon in conjunction with another event: we've curated a [list of 30+ events for the science-curious](#).
- **A venue.** Book a room at a community center, library, or school; consider reaching out to local makerspaces, [Fab Labs](#), or [science centers](#) to find a partner or co-host.
- **Light food and drinks.** We suggest grab-and-go snacks and a few drink options.
- **A registration form.** [Jotform](#) and [Eventbrite](#) offer free templates for event registration. Set up an event page where participants can sign up and view event details.
- **A format.** See below three suggested formats for your tool-a-thon.

Suggested formats:

- **Exploring and ideating: Brainstorm tool ideas.** Bring a few examples of [low-cost, high-impact tools](#) for inspiration. Let participants experiment with them and start generating their own concepts. Check out the inspiration and ideation methods in [IDEO.org's DesignKit](#).
- **Designing and prototyping: Work on a concept.** Provide resources for prototyping and fabrication to help turn concepts into tools. Check out [Form Labs' prototyping guide](#) and [other links in the Tool Foundry Toolbox](#).
- **Making and breaking: Help inventors test their designs.** Support makers and inventors who have developed prototypes by testing their tools and giving real-time feedback. Check out the assemble and test section of [fictiv's Hardware Guide](#).

Getting the word out:

Once you've set up an event page with a simple registration form, promote it widely. Email invitations, send details to local media, post on your blog, and share on your social channels.

Make sure your event page and invitations include:

- **Who:** Inventors, makers, designers, citizen scientists, DIYers, tinkerers, and science-curious people
- **What:** We're hosting a tool-a-thon — aka a prototyping meetup — to help local inventors, makers, designers, and others create accessible tools for scientific discovery. At this event, you'll be able to develop a prototype for your [Tool Foundry accelerator](#) application before the May 30 deadline.
- **When:** [date and time]
- **Where:** [location address and link to map or directions]

We can help you promote your tool-a-thon!

Tag @Tool_Foundry on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#), and we'll share your post. We'd also love to know how your tool-a-thon goes — send photos and details to hello@toolfoundry.org.

Learn more about Tool Foundry:

Visit toolfoundry.org for more details. Find out when new resources are available and get the latest news from the accelerator: [Sign up to receive the Tool Foundry Journal in your inbox](#).

Questions? Email hello@toolfoundry.org.