Critical Making

Matt Ratto

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Associate Professor in the Faculty of Information at UToronto.

Specializes in blurred boundaries.

Wrote his doctoral thesis on the Linux development community.

Coined 'critical making' in 2007.

What is critical making?

"The concept of work that combines humanities insights and engineering practices."

What?

Distinct digital and physical practices are becoming increasingly entangled, through the development of new technology.

Critical making explores this entanglement and the new concepts that arise from it, through direct interaction with these new technologies.

Open Design

In critical making, the final product or service created is irrelevant, while sharing the experience of makers is essential.

Open design technologies and processes that allow the distribution and sharing of technical work are indispensable in this regard.

Not just a new practice

In the era of physical computing, understanding how technology fits into society is important for makers and social scientists alike.

Beyond creating new products and services through "commons-based peer production", open design facilitates better understanding of the connection between social life and technical work.
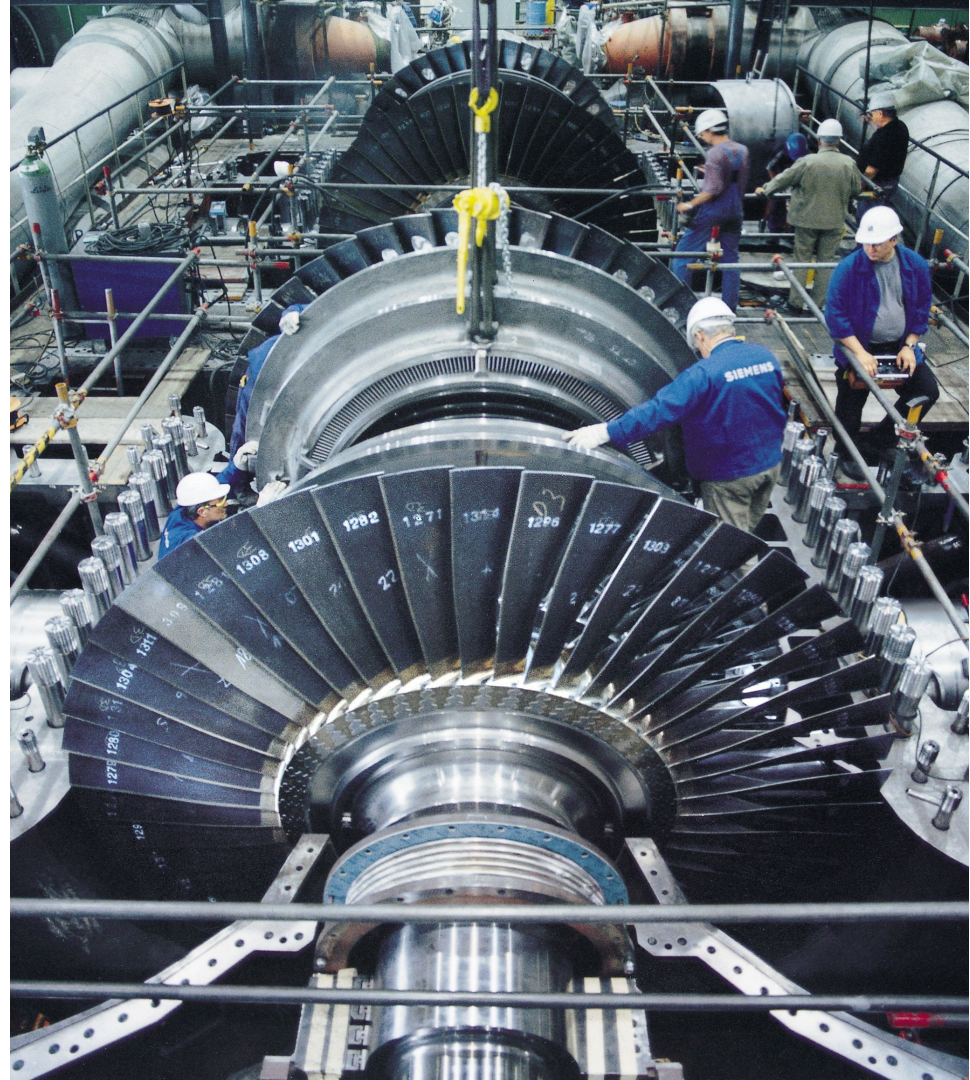
Questions

- ❏ Can you think of any "novel understandings" you have come to in the process of making (specifically in this class)?

- ❏ Have you gone from "caring about" something to "caring for" it solely through making? (It can be as trivial or substantial as you'd like.)

- ❏ Do you consider the Interactive Media Lab to be a Critical Making Lab? Why (not)?

- ❏ Would you support the addition of a compulsory philosophy course to engineering programs and vice-versa? Why (not)?

- ❏ Do you think the distinction between digital and physical rights and practices is justified? How can they be compared through making?