

## INTRODUCTION



**Medialab-Prado is a programme of Madrid City Council** aimed at the production, research, and dissemination of digital culture and of the area where art, science, technology, and society intersect. Medialab-Prado at La Plaza de las Letras was born on September 2007 and conceived as a second stage project of the previous medialabmadrid, located at Conde Duque Cultural Center since 2002.

Medialab-Prado offers workshops, exhibitions, lectures, seminars, experimental audio/video sessions, debate groups, presentations, etc. All activities are free and open to the public.

Our primary objective is to create a structure where both research and production are processes permeable to user participation. To that end, Medialab-Prado offers:

- A permanent information, reception, and meeting space attended by cultural mediators.
- Open calls for the presentation of proposals and participation in the collaborative development of projects.

We have several on-going programmes, which are as follows:

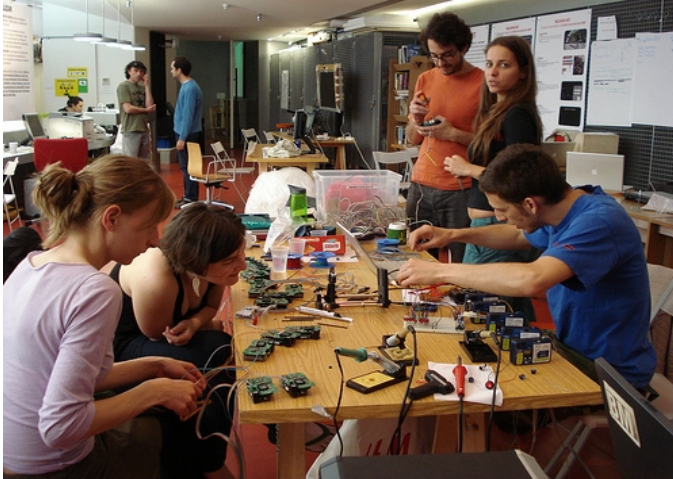
- [Interactivos?](#): Creative uses of electronics and programming
- [Inclusiva.net](#): Research and reflections on the network culture
- [Visualizar](#): Data visualization tools and strategies
- [Laboratorio del Procomún \(Commons Lab\)](#): Trans-disciplinary discussion on the Commons
- [AVLAB](#): Audio-visual and sound creation

Each one of this programmes is organized to this end as a hybrid between a workshop, an exhibition, and a seminar, a space for reflection, research, and collaborative work is created.

Medialab-Prado's two-week workshops are conceived as collaborative work spaces for the exchange of theoretical and practical knowledge and training in relation to digital culture. The goal is to create a community of active users and support the knowledge and the strategies they need to develop their own projects. Through an international open call aimed at artists, engineers, musicians, programmers, designers, architects, etc, Medialab-Prado supports the development of projects within a set of inter-disciplinary work groups. Once the projects are selected, a second call is published, so that other participants can apply to become part of the work groups. The process is open to the public from beginning to end. Parallel to the open call for projects Medialab-Prado issues a call for papers to be publicly presented during a seminar.

## ACTIVITIES

### International Advanced Project Development Workshops



Interactivos?08: Vision Play workshop. K. Sobecka's project: *Immodesty*.

Through a call targeted at artists, engineers, musicians, programmers, designers, architects, and hackers, Medialab-Prado attempts to present a **set of projects** for their collective development, within a set of inter-disciplinary work groups. Once the projects have been selected after the first call, a second call will be published -**call for collaborators**-, so that other participants can apply to become part of the work groups assigned to one of the selected projects. The process is open to the public from beginning to end.

Parallel to the open call for projects Medialab-Prado issues a **call for papers** to be publicly presented. The purpose of this call is the selection of a maximum of 8/10 theoretical and research papers around the subject matter of the Programme, for their public presentation during the event.

The space for reflection and discussion is developed within a **seminar** related to the different ongoing lines of work, that usually occurs just before the workshop starts.

After each workshop is finished, developed projects stay in showcase for a period of a month, so visitors can see the results and understand the process thanks to the help of the cultural mediators.

**INTERACTIVOS?** Platform is a good example. Since 2006, 7 workshops had taken place, 4 in Madrid, 1 in New York (Eyebeam), 1 in México City (Spanish Cultural Center – AECl) and 1 in Lima (Perú).

**VISUALIZAR** platform, focused on data visualization, has already celebrated two workshops in order to create software and installations that allow new ways of approaching and understanding big databases (Visualizar07 and Visualizar08: Database City) and a new one in November 2009: Visualizar09: Public Data, Data.

### Short workshops

In addition to the workshops of two weeks (4 a year) we also have **shorter workshops** of 4/5 days aimed at local users for the development of skills and technical knowledge at different levels, such a Creative Programming or Creative Electronic for Artistic Uses, Netlabels, etc.

### Fridays OpenLab

On the other hand every Friday we have an open laboratory under the name of [Viernes Openlab](#) where different groups gather to work in specific areas. The objectives of the groups that gather are :

- Development of projects and prototypes
- Theoretical discussion
- Consultancy and help for the projects that are being developed
- Meeting point and presentation of collaboration proposals

### Thursdays at Medialab-Prado

This programme offers, every Thursday afternoon, a meeting place for debate, reflection and public presentation on issues associated with the lines of work in progress. The idea is to create a communication space for the local community with thinkers, creators and institutions. The sessions are structured around a presentation or round table discussion by the guests followed by a debate involving all attendees. These events involve Commons Labs sessions, work group meetings, presentations, seminars, etc.

### AVLAB meetings



Gimferno performing at the 10<sup>th</sup> AVLAB Meeting (December 2007)

[The AVLAB meetings](#) are monthly gatherings (one Saturday per month) of people with common interests in the fields of experimental, electronic and electro-acoustical music, sound art, interactive devices and live audio and video processing in general. The meetings arose out

of an idea to offer a physical location for the sharing of knowledge, criticism and opinions about the creation process in these fields.

At each session, three or four musicians, DJs, VJs or others are invited to offer a brief conceptual and technical presentation of their work, followed by a practical demonstration. The attendees have the opportunity to see the instruments and tools used by each artist, how they produce their work and under what type of licence they are registered. The object is to offer a complement to the dynamic of live concerts and performances, which usually take place at night and in contexts where the public stage structure creates a separation that makes dialogue difficult.

What the projects presented in AVLAB have in common is their eagerness to experiment, even though they have very diverse orientations and do not always use “new technologies”.

### Work groups



Light, space and Perception workgroup related events.

Medialab-Prado's work groups are made up of local and national users who get together periodically in order to tackle different topics and to develop projects in a collaborative environment. Up to now, there are four different groups:

· **[Architectures of the culture of tomorrow-tomorrow:](#)** on interactions between cultural centers, architecture, city and its inhabitants. Coordinated by the authors of the winning project for the renovation of the future Serrería Belga Cultural Center, and Medialab-Prado.

· **[Light, Space and Perception:](#)** research and experimentation with light, projection and visual perception from different points of view, gathering people from different fields such as architecture, visual arts, city planning, stage design, programming, physics, etc. Coordinated by Daniel Canogar, Julian Oliver and Pablo Valbuena

· **[Fridays OpenLab:](#)** Meeting and experimentation space for all those interested in developing or collaborating in projects or prototypes involving electronic interactive devices, computer vision, performing arts, etc.

· **[Commons Lab Work Groups:](#)** Six groups debating about the “Commons” through different perspectives: *Obsoletos*, by Basurama (re-using obsolete electronic devices); *Muerto y mil veces muerto: El largo camino desde el autor romántico al procomún*, by Jesús Carrillo and Jordi Claramonte (new theories about the rol of the “author”); *Ontología jurídica libre*, by Javier de la Cueva (law ontologies); *La hemeroteca audiovisual como procomún*, by Tíscar Lara (public availability of audiovisual material); *Cultura(s) de lo común*, by Andoni Alonso and Antonio Lafuente (theories about the “commons”); *Cuerpo Común*, by Jaime del Val (new perspectives of the perception of the body as a “common”).

Two new groups have recently been created:

· **PlayLab: Experimentation with videogames**, coordinated by Flavio Escribano and his platform ArsGames. The project, defined as an space for experimentation, creation, learning and diffusion of videogames, has the purpose of developing a variety of collaborative actions during the next months. To that effect, a work group will be created for exploring -in a collective, interdisciplinary and collaborative way- the use of software and hardware tools, as well as methodologies of creation that are related to videogames and its applications in other contexts (culture, music, art, education, etc.)

· **HelloWorld! Contemporary Stage Creation and New Technologies**: Conceived as a workshop series, this platform aims to produce a series of small format shows based on the application of experimental, creative work with digital technologies in field of contemporary performance.

## ORGANIZATION AND WORK STRUCTURES

In considering possible models for social interaction and participation in a space devoted to digital culture, it is essential to take into account precisely those new forms of relationship, participation and collective creation which are found on the Internet. With regard to choosing organization and management structures for a physical space devoted to culture, inspiration can be found in phenomena such as free software virtual communities, Wikipedia or the collective classification of Web content, which involves collective work. Other examples are exchange networks, the dissolution of hierarchy, and the distribution of authority.

In such a model it should be possible for any user—be they experts, aficionados, or visitors coming into contact with the given setting for the first time—to take part in the development of the activities underway, deciding his or her degree of involvement. The physical space should serve as a place for people, with different levels of specialization and from diverse fields of knowledge, to meet and exchange information and knowledge.

To put this model into practice, **Medialab-Prado**:

- Works with **“open” management formats**, combining the guidance of professional experts with open calls for the presentation of proposals which are carried out collaboratively. Management is distributed through the creation of a network of “curators”, each of whom directs one of the organization’s ongoing projects.
- Organizes **production workshops based on collaborative work**. In these workshops, artists, programmers, students and researchers from various disciplines take part in a process of collective creation and learning which is transparent and open to the public.
- Assigns great importance to the role played by **“cultural mediators”**, who work “on the ground” as receptors and dynamizers within the work space: they investigate, orient, connect different types of knowledge, and foster contact among all those involved (the public, artists, experts, etc.) in the range of different activities.
- Fosters the use of **free and open code hardware and software**, which fall within the philosophy of free access to knowledge and collaborative work.
- **Publishes all its contents online (texts, images and videos)** –unless the authors of those contents give other instructions – under **Creative Commons BY-SA** public licence. (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.5/es/>)



Medialab-Prado is a program of the Department of Arts of Madrid City Council.

**Free admission**

Mon- Fri: 10am - 8pm

Sat: 11am – 8pm

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