

Site links digital with fabrication choices

ShopBot and Ponoko have combined on joint venture to bring together small shops with local CNC machinery operators

By Jennifer Hicks

STAFF WRITER

The September launch of *100k Garages.com* began a new concept of custom fabrication. The interactive Web site is an online community linking small-shop owners who want to have something digitally fabricated by CNC machinery owners. By linking woodworkers to CNC shops located in their communities, the process will be easier and less costly to business owners, according to CNC manufacturer ShopBot, who developed the site in partnership with Ponoko online making system.

ShopBot president Ted Hall says the site embraces a unique "maker-to-fabber" concept that allows parts and projects to be specified precisely for pro-

duction by means of digital technology. The "makers" are the small-shop owners who can use the site to post their digital versions of their custom designs made in CAD programs. The "fabbers" are the CNC machinery owners who do the cutting.

Use of the site is free to everyone. A maker can search for a local CNC workshop on a map and contact the shop directly, or a maker can submit a request on the site's JobBoard and choose from bids submitted by a range of ShopBot owners. The site also offers resources and tools for turning an idea into a design.

Before the site was established, there were few ways for people to access shops with more sophisticated technology, such as ShopBot CNC machinery, says Hall. Such jobs were often found

by looking in a directory of shops that subcontract.

"The difference between our site and the directory is the existence of digital fabrication. Now you can have a CAD drawing represented in a way that you can just hand the drawing to someone and they can reproduce it using a digital cutting tool," says Hall, adding that the site will feature ShopBot owners in the first six months. Shop owners with other CNC brands may be allowed to participate afterwards.

Ponoko, which powers the 100k Garages' site, became interested in working with ShopBot because it offers similar services, says Hall. The Ponoko online marketplace allows makers to have their product designs instantly priced online, then made and delivered to them. Clients can take a simple drawing, get a quick bid, have it laser-cut and mailed to them. But laser cuts are limited with respect to surface area.

During the first two weeks of its initial launch in September, 100kGarages recorded 2,000 hits per day. Already, about 100 ShopBot owners have signed up and about two dozen jobs have been posted on the JobBoard. Hall projects at least 2,000 ShopBot owners will be in-

terested. Currently, about 6,000 ShopBot machines have been sold and are in use throughout the world.

The site is still a work in progress, says Hall. By December, the developers hope to have the process simplified to offer instantaneous quotes on site, for which clients will be able to pay fabricators online using a credit card.

For information, visit www.100kgarages.com.

Delta, DeWalt unveil new saw blades

By Jennifer Hicks

STAFF WRITER

Delta Machinery has introduced a new line of 16 premium full-kerf woodworking saw blades. The blades range in diameter from 10" to 12", with an additional five blades measuring 220 to 300 mm for a variety of ma-



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