

Digital Zurich Hub

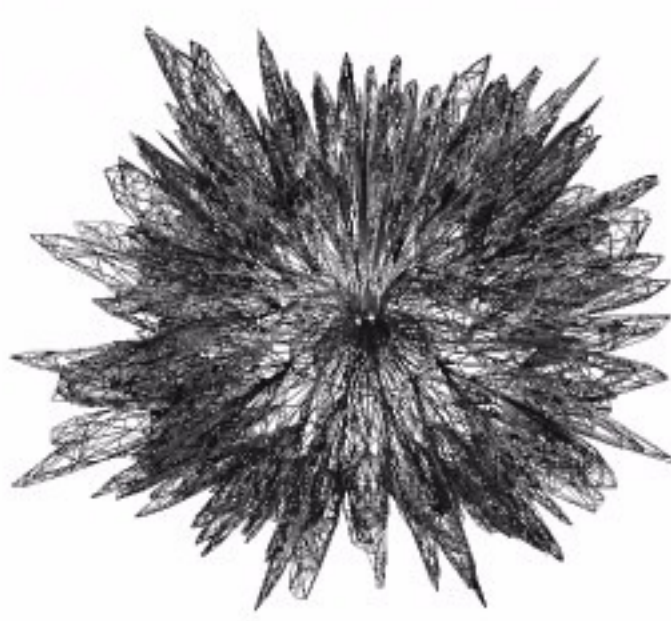
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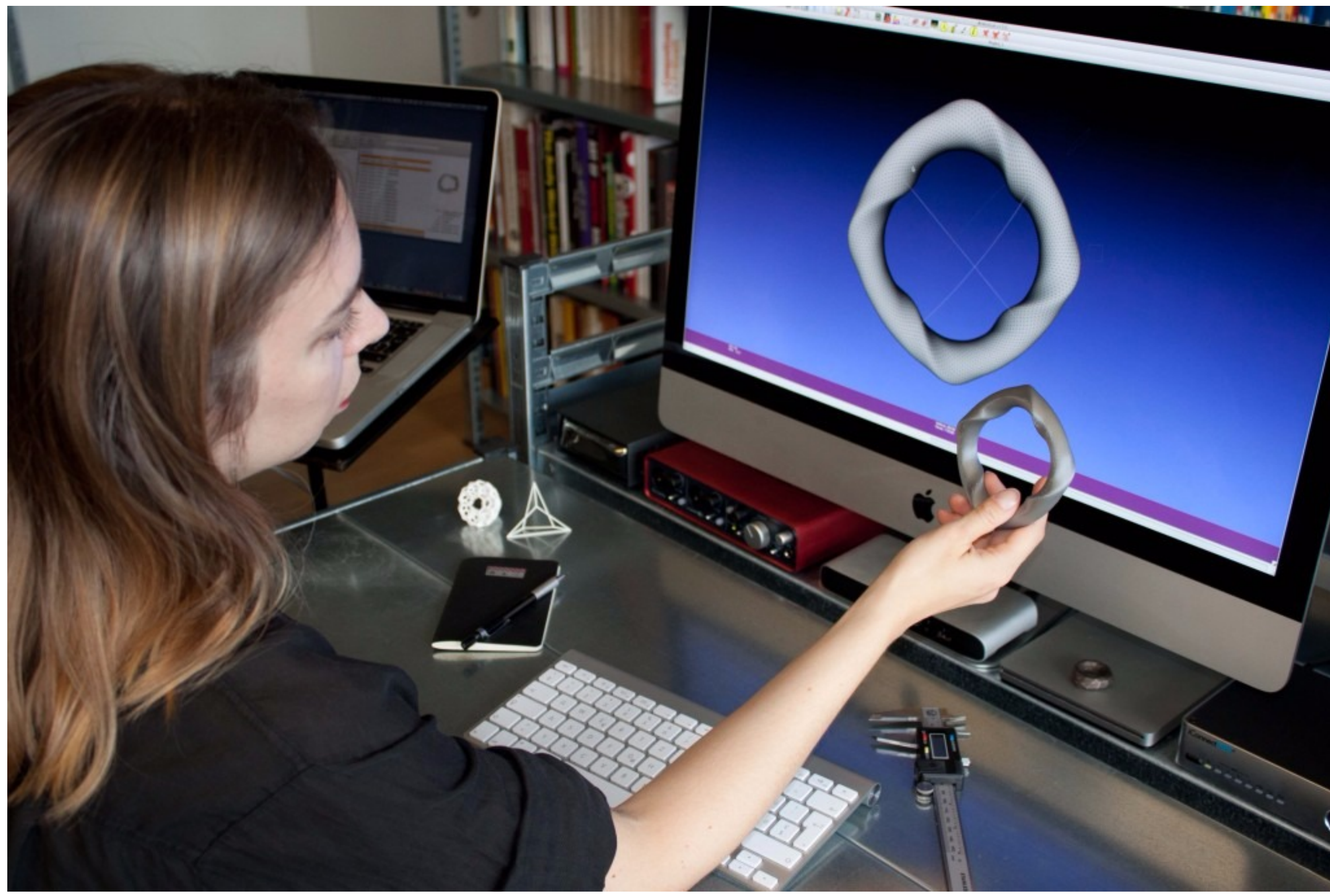
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Digital workers: interview with digital artisan Consuelo Keller

January 20, 2016 / DigiZH

Deepen the benefits of **digital working** is the main objective of our **upcoming event**. Waiting for that, we thought it would be interesting interviewing a professional who represents a new category of workers: the digital ones. We met **Consuelo Keller**, Swiss designer and digital artisan who creates **3D printed jewelry and accessories**. She currently lives and works in Zurich, where her label [**digimorphé**] was founded in 2013.



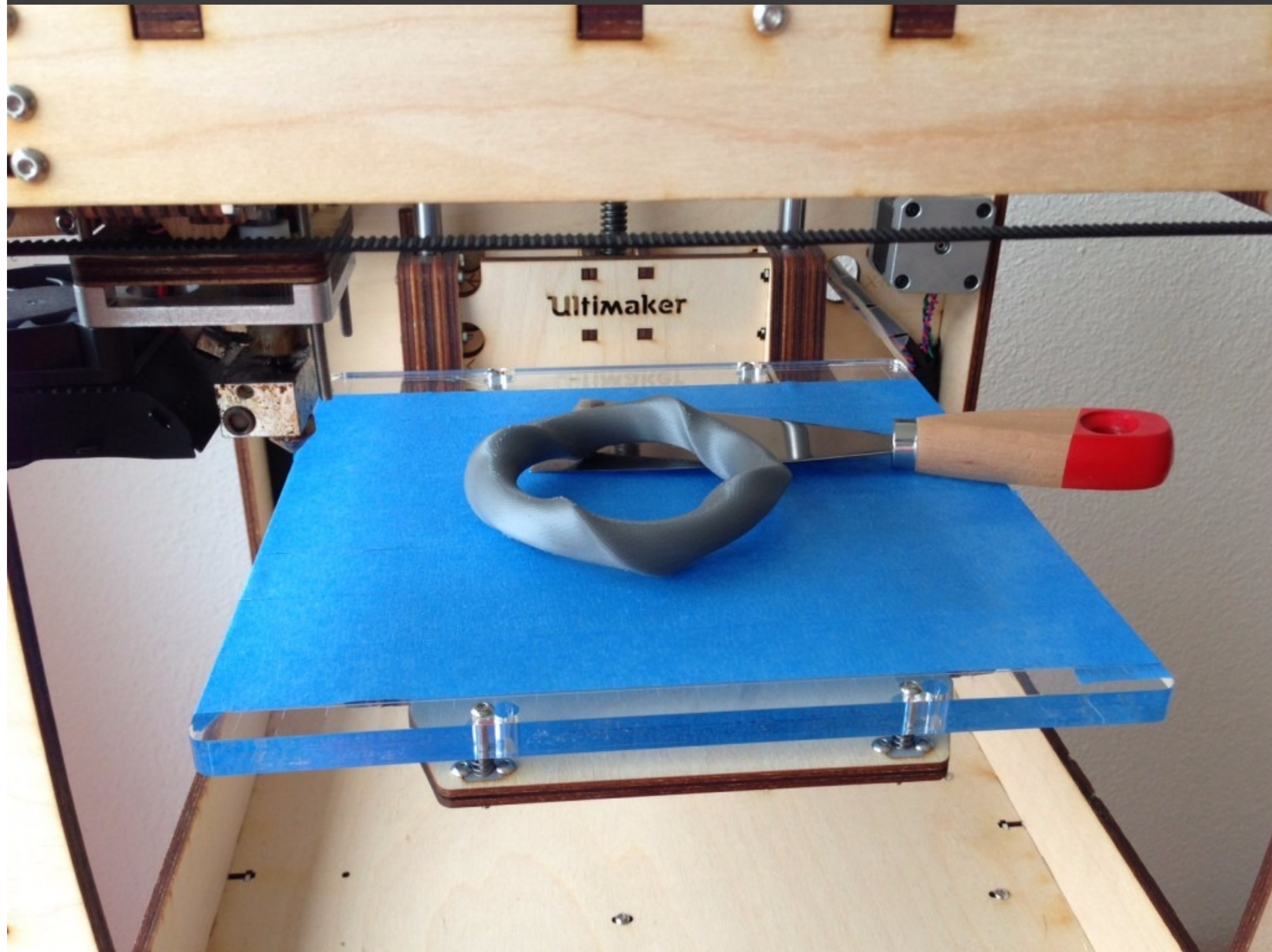
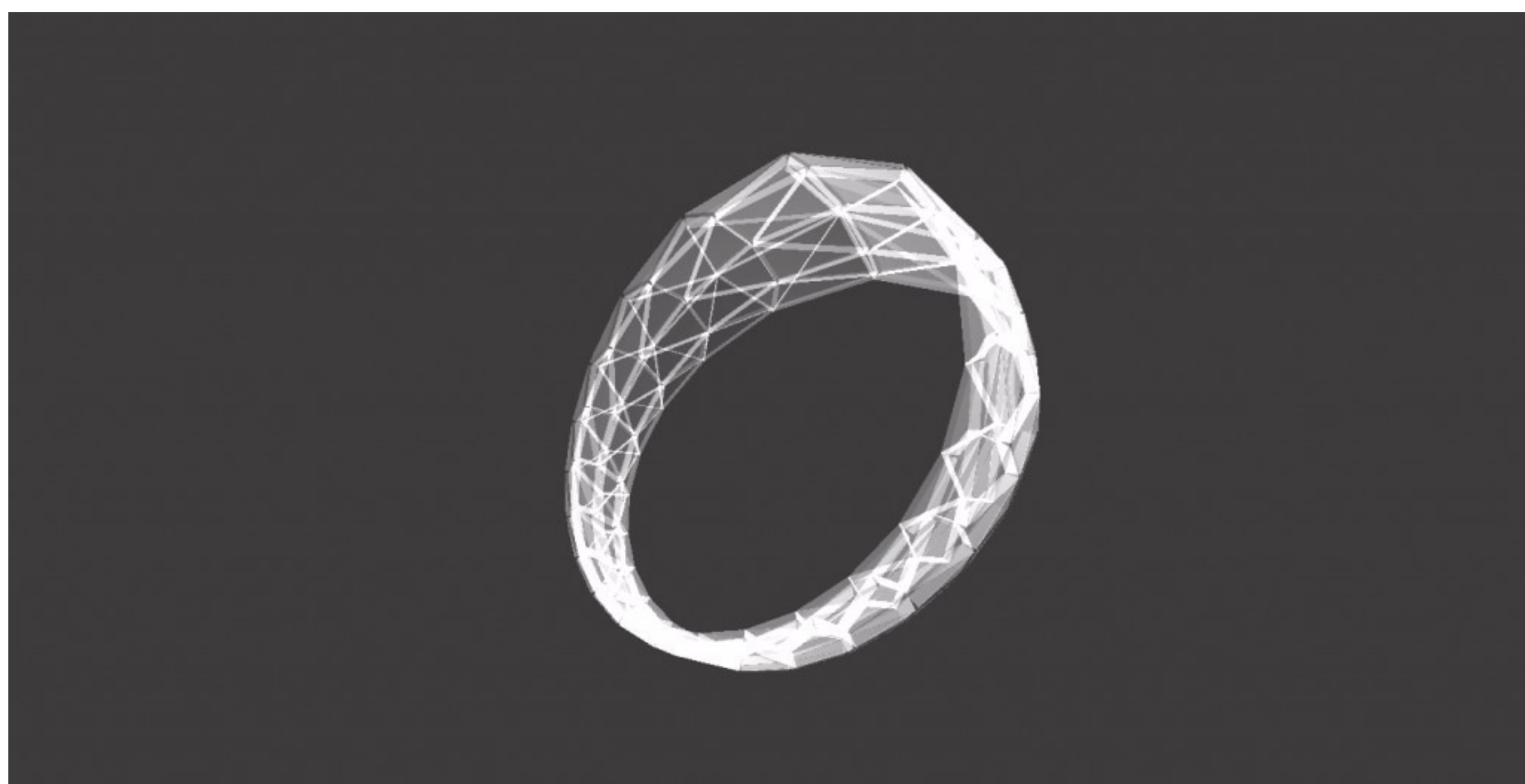
Consuelo you originally were an aerchaeologist. What brought you to move from something very “traditional” to a new job that has an important digital component?

On first sight, those domains appear distant, but there is a red thread, a continuity in my path. I really do benefit from my humanistic background in many ways and I still deal with material culture. The need for documentation in archaeology drew me to photography and computer graphics and from there I kept investigating different domains related to visual culture and new technologies. With **what I'm doing now** I can merge my manifold interests and passions.

What are the biggest benefits since you “went digital”?

I have gained **really powerful tools** to support me in each phase of what I do. From sketching and designing through **code and CAD software**, to prototyping with a desktop **3D printer**, to production with professional grade **digital fabrication tools**, to **reaching my customers through the web and social media**. **With the help of digital tools I can do things that just a few years ago would have been impossible** or out of my reach, being able to control the whole chain from design to manufacturing to selling and marketing.

With digital tools I can do things that just a few years ago would have been impossible



Why did you choose 3D printing and what is one of the most challenging creations you designed?

I chose 3D printing because it gives me the power and the flexibility of working in a “digital chain”. Each new project poses new challenges, new questions and

What are the challenges your clients face when they discover your creations? Are they familiar with 3D printed objects?

One of the challenges lays in my **use of some materials that are not (yet) common** in the realm of jewelry, **like laser sintered nylon**. It has properties that make it ideal for jewelry (freedom of shapes, lightness etc.), but since most customers are not familiar with the material, **explanations and reassurances** about its suitability for daily use **are often required**.



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I could fill pages with the pros and can hardly find any cons. I learned programming thanks to the open source programming software “Processing” that was developed at the MIT specifically to promote software literacy within the visual arts. Together with other open source resources like the electronics prototyping platform “Arduino”, it was the gate to the world I am in now. Also the 3D printers I use for prototyping (Ultimaker) are open source and profit from the large community around it. Every day I wonder and I am grateful for those incredible tools and for the great people behind them.

THESE RESULTS ARE IN ACCORD WITH THE FINDINGS OF OTHER RESEARCHERS WHO HAVE SHOWN THAT THE PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION THAT IS LITERATE IN A COUNTRY IS A GOOD INDICATOR OF THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

Zurich is playing at the forefront in many domains, for example with the chair for "Digital Building Technologies" at ETH Zurich, that researches in new building technologies based on the integration of computational design methods, **digital fabrication** and new materials. There are also initiatives targeted to broad

As a city it is important to create and maintain the general conditions for **allowing innovation to grow and people to thrive**. This touches many different fields

and can go from financial incentives to teaching to code in schools.

What do you think is going to happen in the near future about the use of 3D printers from “non-digital people”?

I don't see the “3D printer in every home” prophecy fulfilled any time soon: consumer 3D printers are limited in materials and speed and do require time and effort to operate. They don't fulfill the needs of the average consumer who does not have the need of being a designer nor a manufacturer. On the other hand a thriving

The DigiZIL team thanks Conacul for her time and her very interesting answers. For those of you who will take part to our event on 2nd February, come say hello!