



Contribution ID: 1457

Type: **Invited Speaker / Conférencier invité**

From Particle Physics to Education: The Role of Tinkering

Tuesday, 14 June 2016 09:15 (30 minutes)

The love of tinkering is perhaps the single most universal trait among scientists. From designing an experiment to building a computer application to solving a differential equation, the cycle of “observe - explain - test - revise” is at the root of the scientific creative process.

Driven by the love of tinkering, we have developed a small low-cost wireless lab system with the goal of putting powerful scientific instrumentation in the hands of every student, both inside and outside of the classroom. I will describe this project and how it is radically changing our view of introductory physics labs at the University of Illinois.

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Session Classification: T1-2 Lab Revitalisation: Innovative and Distance Undergraduate Labs (DPE) / Revitalisation de labos : laboratoires de premier cycle innovateurs et à distance (DEP)

Track Classification: Physics Education / Enseignement de la physique (DPE-DEP)