

LIMOR FRIED ('LADY ADA')

Limor Fried has developed support systems for electronic hobbyists. She has done this in three ways: By supplying components and tools; by supplying 'breakout boards' and by providing online tutorials through the internet.

When Fried was still an engineering student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) she realised that people who follow electronics as a hobby face a significant problem – the suppliers of electronic components aim their services at professional buyers – manufacturers and engineers. You need to be able to work through lists of complicated specifications and then, if you can discover what you want to buy, are often faced with being required to order in quantities which are far greater than a hobbyist would need. Fried bridged this gap – she bought components in large quantities and sold them to hobbyist as they required them. She went one stage further than this, however, and assembled kits of components for particular projects. Calling herself 'Lada Ada' (after the pioneering computer programmer, Lady Ada Lovelace) she then set up a company to continue this work after she graduated. Adafruit Industries, as her company is called, has become the leading source of support for electronics hobbyists.



The support has been extended. The second way in which she offers support is through supplying 'breakout boards'. Increasingly, electronic components are becoming very small. It is common to find chips just a few millimetres square with connection leads so close no-one could possibly solder them into a circuit. In industry this assembly is achieved by automatic machines. Taking the small components and mounting them on a circuit board with accessible connections enables hobbyists to use them.

The third way in which support is offered is through on-line tutorials. Adafruit has the largest collection of on-line tutorials on electronics on the internet.

Today, Limor Fried is the Chief Executive Officer and Lead Engineer at Adafruit Industries in New York City. You can hear her talk about her work here: <https://bit.ly/2AAiFMa>