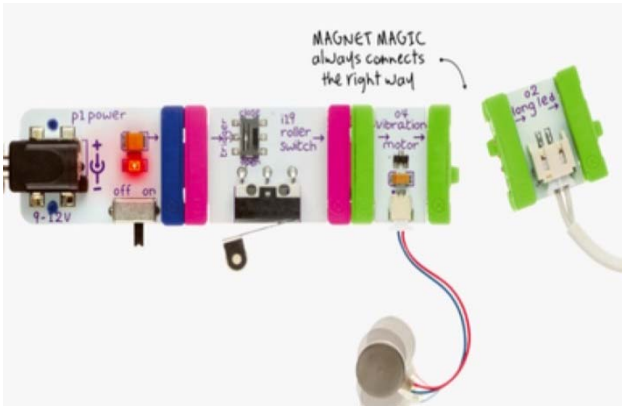
littleBits—magnetic electronic building blocks for creation and creativity

http://littlebits.cc/



Created by Ayah Bdeir-a female engineer

Costs: kits start at $100.00—you will need a critical mass of Bits to make them work in a makerspace

Sales and Discounts: Sign up as an educator at the web site and you will be ready to buy when things go on sale, as they do frequently.

Education benefits: Great section on web site just for educators, with lessons, resources, challenges, and conversation—very well worth the free registration. They have a section linking the Bits to standards and a section for librarians.

Pros:

- Very engaging—it is hard to keep your hands off these
- Very girl-friendly
- Very easy to have success right away
- New Bits and new sets coming out frequently
- Great educator resources and online community
- They even have an app for both IOS and Android—build on the go

Cons:

- Storage must be thought out and makers must learn to respect the Bits
- Batteries wear out. Makers must learn to store batteries safely
- Getting enough Bits for a critical mass can be costly
- Bits can be fragile but customer service is good if you feel that it was a design flaw

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Lessons learned:

- Carefully consider buying Bits individually vs. the kits. Look carefully at what you will use and what you will not in a kit.
- Dismantle the kits and sort pieces by color. Keep the instructions but don't let the kids limit themselves to the kit projects.
- Register on the web site. It pays off.
- LittleBIts lend themselves to introducing kids to electronics, before and after deconstructing computers and other electronics.

Craft supplies to have on hand:

- Large plastic cups
- Pompoms
- Pipe cleaners
- Craft sticks
- Tiny plastic cups
- Yarn
- Ribbon
- Random stuff

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