**Defense Distributed**

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**Is Information Firepower? The Wiki Weapon**

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Student Outfit Proposes to Release Open Source Printable Gun File to the World.

LITTLE ROCK, AR—August 6, 2012: A new technology is ushering a fundamental shift in how material goods are manufactured and distributed. 3D printing continues to become more sophisticated and accessible to the average consumer.

 3D plastic printers like the RepRap are approaching the ability to print 100% of their own parts, and as they are, this multiplies both the means and mode of a new method of production. This technology raises many controversial possibilities, as demonstrated by AR-15 forum user HaveBlue’s recent announcement that he had successfully printed and fired rounds with a plastic AR receiver.

 Now, a group called Defense Distributed, a grassroots research and development collective whose volunteer engineers and designers span Arkansas and Texas, are utilizing 3D printing for something they say is unprecedented. Defense Distributed is entering phase two of their development of a digital file to print a plastic civilian defense system, the WikiWeapon. “The WikiWeapon will be capable of firing one .22 round. It is both functional and symbolic”.

This breakthrough begs the question, has gun control obsolesced? Defense Distributed will not be producing any physical objects or digital files for sale. The group intends to freely share the files they create for online sharing once fully developed and tested. “When we’re done, seed and hack this file—improve it if you can” they added.

 The mission of Defense Distributed is not armament they say, but the liberation of information. “Information wants to be free” a designer tells me, “with the coming prevalence of 3D printers we hope to contribute to collapsing the distinction between digital information and physical objects”. The group hopes to catalyze our society’s conversation about the distribution of all printable commodities.

 Two prototypes are entering the second stage of development but the group of students and weekend warriors requires outside funding for a printer upgrade and more materials. Defense Distributed has begun a crowd-funding campaign at <http://indiegogo.com/wikiwep>.

Learn more about this project at [http://](http:///)Printablegun.com and participate in the conversation on twitter, @DXliberty