

# 3D printer wows world's top high-tech fair

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Of all the futuristic gadgets on show at CeBIT, the world's top high-tech fair, few drew bigger crowds Tuesday than a 3D printer creating solid objects in plastic from a computer display.

The machine, developed by German company "fabbster", melts plastic and then builds up incredibly fine "layers" just 88 microns (0.088 millimetres) thick, eventually producing a solid physical object with impressive detail.

The system is currently being used mainly by small businesses,

architects, designers and engineers, explained Fabian Grupp, project manager.

In theory, there is no limit to the size of the object produced, but the machine displayed at [CeBIT](#) has a maximum capacity of 22.5cm by 22.5cm by 21cm (8.8 inches by 8.8 inches by 8.3 inches), he explained.

"You can really make anything you can think of," he enthused. Coming soon is the ability to create multi-coloured objects and use different materials within the same "print-out".

The time varies from object to object, but the machine takes around one hour to "print out" a small plastic bottle.

This machine retails for 1,500 euros (\$2,000), making it attractive only for "ambitious" hobbyists, he acknowledged, although he said the price would inevitably come down as the technology improves.

"The real fun comes from designing and building your own objects, although you can also download pre-set designs from the Internet," said Grupp.

The CeBIT, the world's biggest fair for the high-tech sector is taking place until March 9 in the northern German city of Hanover.

Some 4,100 [exhibitors](#) from around 70 countries are expected to set up shop in the cavernous halls of the Hanover showgrounds.

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