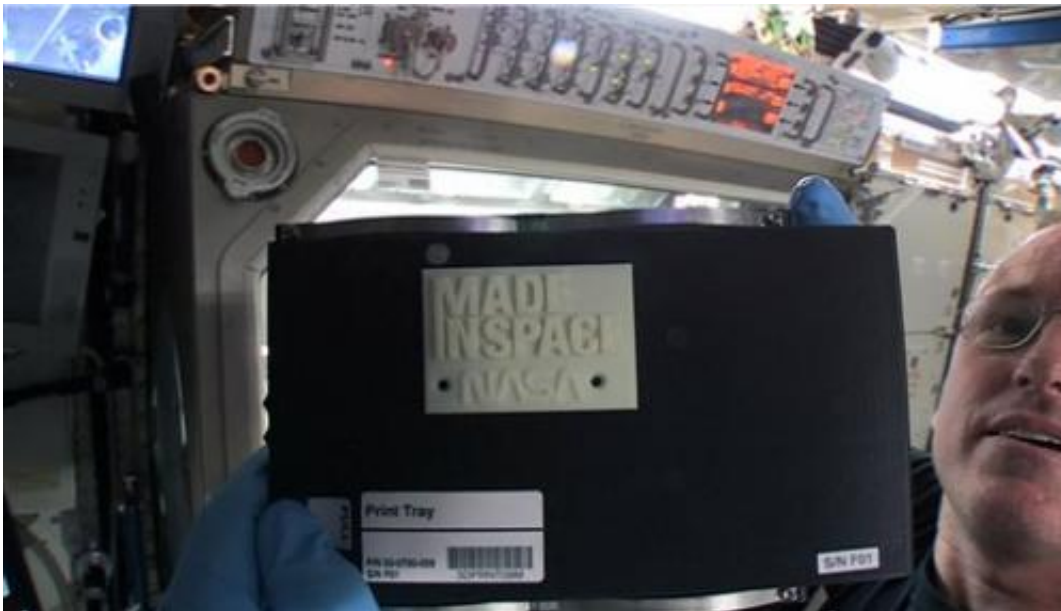


Space station's 3-D printer pops out 1st creation

November 25 2014, by Marcia Dunn



In this undated photo provided by NASA, International Space Station Commander Barry "Butch" Wilmore holds up the first object made in space with additive manufacturing or 3-D printing. Wilmore installed the printer on Nov. 17, 2014, and helped crews on the ground with the first print on Nov. 25, 2014. (AP Photo/NASA)

The first 3-D printer in space has popped out its first creation.

The 3-D printer delivered to the International Space Station two months ago made a sample part for itself this week. It churned out a faceplate for the print head casing.

Space station commander Butch Wilmore removed the small plastic creation from the printer Tuesday for eventual return to Earth. About 20 objects will be printed in the next few weeks for analysis back home, NASA said. The space agency hopes to one day use 3-D printing to make parts for broken equipment in space.

Made in Space, the California company that supplied the space station's 3-D printer, called it "a transformative moment." The newly created, rectangular faceplate—considered functional by the company—includes the Made in Space name, as well as NASA's.

"When the first human fashioned a tool from a rock, it couldn't have been conceived that one day we'd be replicating the same fundamental idea in space," Aaron Kemmer, chief executive officer, said in a statement.

Similar 3-D items will be duplicated at the company's offices for comparison.

The company will replace the orbiting demo machine with a much bigger commercial printer next year. The European Space Agency, meanwhile, plans to fly its own 3-D printer in 2015.

More information: NASA:

www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/station/main/index.html

Made in Space: www.madeinspace.us/

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Citation: Space station's 3-D printer pops out 1st creation (2014, November 25) retrieved 30 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-11-space-station-d-printer-creation.html>

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