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Feb. 5, 2007 issue - Homemade goods aren't usually made by machine, but soon they may be. Researchers at Cornell University have created a low-cost home-assembly device that can make three-dimensional objects. It hooks up to a PC, like a printer, and uses an injector to deposit material, building up an object layer by layer. "We have printed a variety of simple objects like a watchband, a squirt bottle, and various 3-D geometrical shapes and texts, from soft silicone rubber," said Lipson in an e-mail. "Others have used it to print other 3-D shapes from clay, Play-Doh, and even chocolate and icing." Lipson's lab has published the specs to the machine and has even posted instructions on how to build one at fabathome.com. The parts cost \$2,400. He's hoping that hobbyists will help refine the design. Ultimately, such home-fab machines may change the way we design, manufacture and consume products.

—Patrick Falby

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