



Hot issues

Can I download a car?

New website gives consumers a head start in 3D printing

The number of users connecting to each other on the internet to find, share, and create 3D printed objects has proliferated in the last few years. But what do consumers need to know before printing in 3D?

Are there risks in creating and sharing 3D printable files, how can users mitigate them, and what kinds of safeguards are in place? Who owns the designs you share, the ones you modify and how can they be used by others?

An ACCAN Grants project has answered these questions and has launched an online guide to explain what consumers need to know before printing in 3D – 3dprintinginfo.org. The new website gives consumers a range of easy to understand resources and information to help safeguard their work and take advantage of this emerging technology.

The project was completed by a team from the University of Melbourne led by Luke Heemsbergen and Robbie Fordyce. The team has put together [a scorecard](#) for various 3D printing sites, [useful tips](#) for those just getting started in the 3D printing world and a [consumer rights and responsibilities guide](#).

These free resources are the result of extensive multidisciplinary research in Australia and beyond, identifying emerging issues and trends within the consumer 3D printing space.

If you are one of the many people imagining the possibilities that 3D printing may offer, the step by step guide on the website will take you through each stage of the process – turning an idea into an actual object.

If you have decided to 3D print, check out the scorecard that shows which sites online do best at protecting your rights, and being transparent about what they do with your data. The website also features resources geared for schools and universities.

The project: [Can I download a car: Emerging consumer issues for online access, communication and sharing of 3D printer files](#) has also prepared a white paper and a report featuring a number of policy recommendations for the 3D printing space.