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<b>Application Data Sheet 37 CFR 1.76</b>		Attorney Docket Number	MBOT-0030-P60
		Application Number	
Title of Invention	THREE-DIMENSIONAL PRINTING IMPROVEMENTS		
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<input type="checkbox"/> Portions or all of the application associated with this Application Data Sheet may fall under a Secrecy Order pursuant to 37 CFR 5.2. (Paper filers only. Applications that fall under Secrecy Order may not be filed electronically.)
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## Inventor Information:

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<b>Legal Name</b>					
<b>Prefix</b>	<b>Given Name</b>	<b>Middle Name</b>	<b>Family Name</b>	<b>Suffix</b>	
	Gregory	Alan	Borenstein		
<b>Residence Information (Select One)</b> <input checked="" type="radio"/> US Residency <input type="radio"/> Non US Residency <input type="radio"/> Active US Military Service					
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<b>City</b>	Brooklyn	<b>State/Province</b>	NY		
<b>Postal Code</b>	11217	<b>Country</b> <sup>i</sup>	US		
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	John	Michael	Briscella		
<b>Residence Information (Select One)</b> <input checked="" type="radio"/> US Residency <input type="radio"/> Non US Residency <input type="radio"/> Active US Military Service					
<b>City</b>	Brooklyn	<b>State/Province</b>	NY	<b>Country of Residence</b> <sup>i</sup>	US
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<b>Postal Code</b>	11217	<b>Country</b> <sup>i</sup>	US		
<b>Inventor 3</b>					<input type="button" value="Remove"/>
<b>Legal Name</b>					
<b>Prefix</b>	<b>Given Name</b>	<b>Middle Name</b>	<b>Family Name</b>	<b>Suffix</b>	
	Anthony	James	Buser		
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		Application Number			
Title of Invention	THREE-DIMENSIONAL PRINTING IMPROVEMENTS				
City	Reading	State/Province	PA	Country of Residence i	US
<b>Mailing Address of Inventor:</b>					
Address 1	MakerBot Industries, LLC				
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City	Brooklyn	State/Province		NY	
Postal Code	11217	Country i		US	
Inventor 4					<input type="button" value="Remove"/>
Legal Name					
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	John	S.	Dimatos		
Residence Information (Select One) <input checked="" type="radio"/> US Residency <input type="radio"/> Non US Residency <input type="radio"/> Active US Military Service					
City	Brooklyn	State/Province	NY	Country of Residence i	US
<b>Mailing Address of Inventor:</b>					
Address 1	MakerBot Industries, LLC				
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City	Brooklyn	State/Province		NY	
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Inventor 5					<input type="button" value="Remove"/>
Legal Name					
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	Ariel		Douglas		
Residence Information (Select One) <input checked="" type="radio"/> US Residency <input type="radio"/> Non US Residency <input type="radio"/> Active US Military Service					
City	Brooklyn	State/Province	NY	Country of Residence i	US
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Address 1	MakerBot Industries, LLC				
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Postal Code	11217	Country i		US	
Inventor 6					<input type="button" value="Remove"/>
Legal Name					
Prefix	Given Name	Middle Name	Family Name	Suffix	
	Harry	Elliot	Mulliken		
Residence Information (Select One) <input checked="" type="radio"/> US Residency <input type="radio"/> Non US Residency <input type="radio"/> Active US Military Service					
City	Hamilton	State/Province	NJ	Country of Residence i	US

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Address 1	MakerBot Industries, LLC			
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City	Brooklyn	State/Province	NY	
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Inventor 7				<input type="button" value="Remove"/>
<b>Legal Name</b>				
Prefix	Given Name	Middle Name	Family Name	Suffix
	Charles	E.	Pax	
<b>Residence Information (Select One)</b> <input checked="" type="radio"/> US Residency <input type="radio"/> Non US Residency <input type="radio"/> Active US Military Service				
City	Brooklyn	State/Province	NY	Country of Residence <sup>i</sup>
				US
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Postal Code	11217	Country <sup>1</sup>	US	
Inventor 8				<input type="button" value="Remove"/>
<b>Legal Name</b>				
Prefix	Given Name	Middle Name	Family Name	Suffix
	Matthew	W.	Samsonoff	
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City	Brooklyn	State/Province	NY	Country of Residence <sup>i</sup>
				US
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City	Brooklyn	State/Province	NY	
Postal Code	11217	Country <sup>1</sup>	US	
Inventor 9				<input type="button" value="Remove"/>
<b>Legal Name</b>				
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	Peter	Joseph	Schmehl	
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City	New York	State/Province	NY	Country of Residence <sup>i</sup>
				US

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City	Brooklyn	State/Province	NY	
Postal Code	11217	Country	US	
All Inventors Must Be Listed - Additional Inventor Information blocks may be generated within this form by selecting the <b>Add</b> button.				<input type="button" value="Add"/>

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**Application Information:**

Title of the Invention	THREE-DIMENSIONAL PRINTING IMPROVEMENTS		
Attorney Docket Number	MBOT-0030-P60	Small Entity Status Claimed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Application Type	Provisional		
Subject Matter	Utility		
Suggested Class (if any)		Sub Class (if any)	
Suggested Technology Center (if any)			
Total Number of Drawing Sheets (if any)	18	Suggested Figure for Publication (if any)	

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<input type="checkbox"/> Request Early Publication (Fee required at time of Request 37 CFR 1.219)
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Request Not to Publish.</b> I hereby request that the attached application not be published under 35 U.S.C. 122(b) and certify that the invention disclosed in the attached application <b>has not and will not</b> be the subject of an application filed in another country, or under a multilateral international agreement, that requires publication at eighteen months after filing.

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Title of Invention	THREE-DIMENSIONAL PRINTING IMPROVEMENTS		
Customer Number	43520		

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Prior Application Status			<input type="button" value="Remove"/>
Application Number	Continuity Type	Prior Application Number	Filing Date (YYYY-MM-DD)
Additional Domestic Benefit/National Stage Data may be generated within this form by selecting the <b>Add</b> button.			<input type="button" value="Add"/>

**Foreign Priority Information:**

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			<input type="button" value="Remove"/>
Application Number	Country <sup>i</sup>	Filing Date (YYYY-MM-DD)	Priority Claimed
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Additional Foreign Priority Data may be generated within this form by selecting the <b>Add</b> button.			<input type="button" value="Add"/>

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<input type="checkbox"/> Authorization to Permit Access to the Instant Application by the Participating Offices
<p>If checked, the undersigned hereby grants the USPTO authority to provide the European Patent Office (EPO), the Japan Patent Office (JPO), the Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO), the World Intellectual Property Office (WIPO), and any other intellectual property offices in which a foreign application claiming priority to the instant patent application is filed access to the instant patent application. See 37 CFR 1.14(c) and (h). This box should not be checked if the applicant does not wish the EPO, JPO, KIPO, WIPO, or other intellectual property office in which a foreign application claiming priority to the instant patent application is filed to have access to the instant patent application.</p> <p>In accordance with 37 CFR 1.14(h)(3), access will be provided to a copy of the instant patent application with respect to: 1) the instant patent application-as-filed; 2) any foreign application to which the instant patent application claims priority under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d) if a copy of the foreign application that satisfies the certified copy requirement of 37 CFR 1.55 has been filed in the instant patent application; and 3) any U.S. application-as-filed from which benefit is sought in the instant patent application.</p> <p>In accordance with 37 CFR 1.14(c), access may be provided to information concerning the date of filing this Authorization.</p>

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**Applicant Information:**

Providing assignment information in this section does not substitute for compliance with any requirement of part 3 of Title 37 of CFR to have an assignment recorded by the Office.

**Applicant 1**

If the applicant is the inventor (or the remaining joint inventor or inventors under 37 CFR 1.45), this section should not be completed. The information to be provided in this section is the name and address of the legal representative who is the applicant under 37 CFR 1.43; or the name and address of the assignee, person to whom the inventor is under an obligation to assign the invention, or person who otherwise shows sufficient proprietary interest in the matter who is the applicant under 37 CFR 1.46. If the applicant is an applicant under 37 CFR 1.46 (assignee, person to whom the inventor is obligated to assign, or person who otherwise shows sufficient proprietary interest) together with one or more joint inventors, then the joint inventor or inventors who are also the applicant should be identified in this section.

- Assignee
  Legal Representative under 35 U.S.C. 117  
 Person to whom the inventor is obligated to assign.
  Person who shows sufficient proprietary interest

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Name of the Deceased or Legally Incapacitated Inventor :

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Country <sup>i</sup>		Postal Code	
Phone Number		Fax Number	
Email Address			

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**Signature:**

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<b>Signature</b>	/John Nortrup/		Date (YYYY-MM-DD)	2012-10-29	
First Name	John	Last Name	Nortrup	Registration Number	59063

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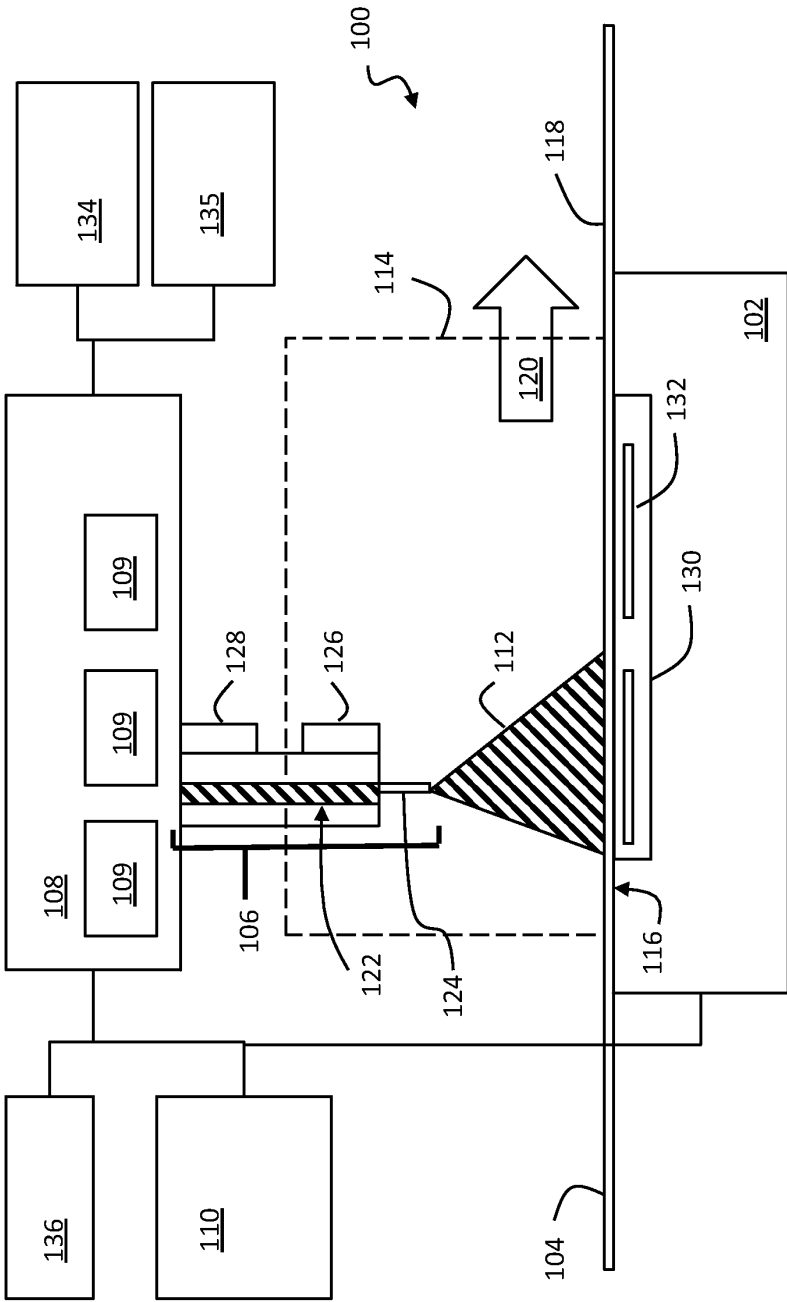


Fig. 1

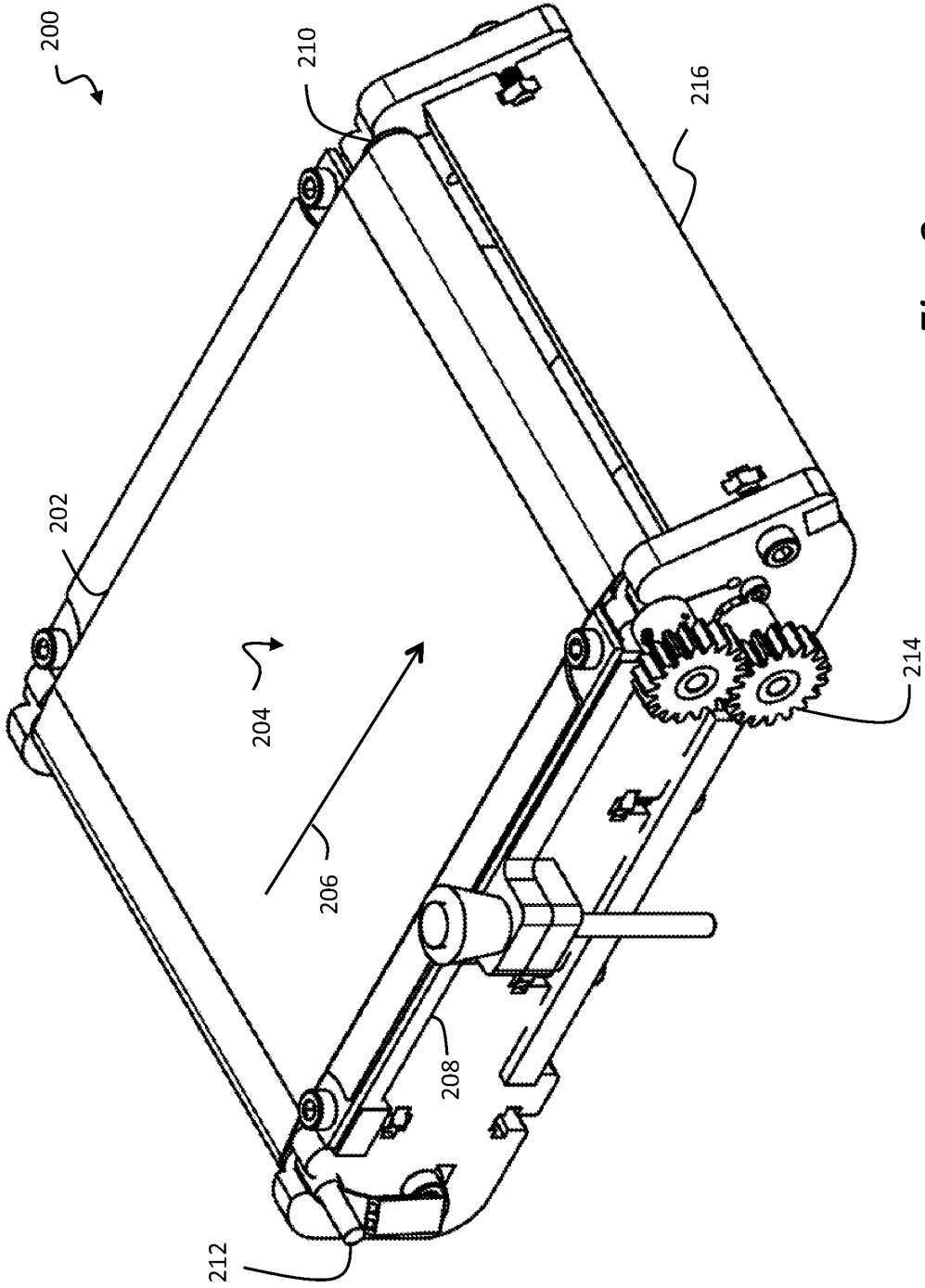


Fig. 2

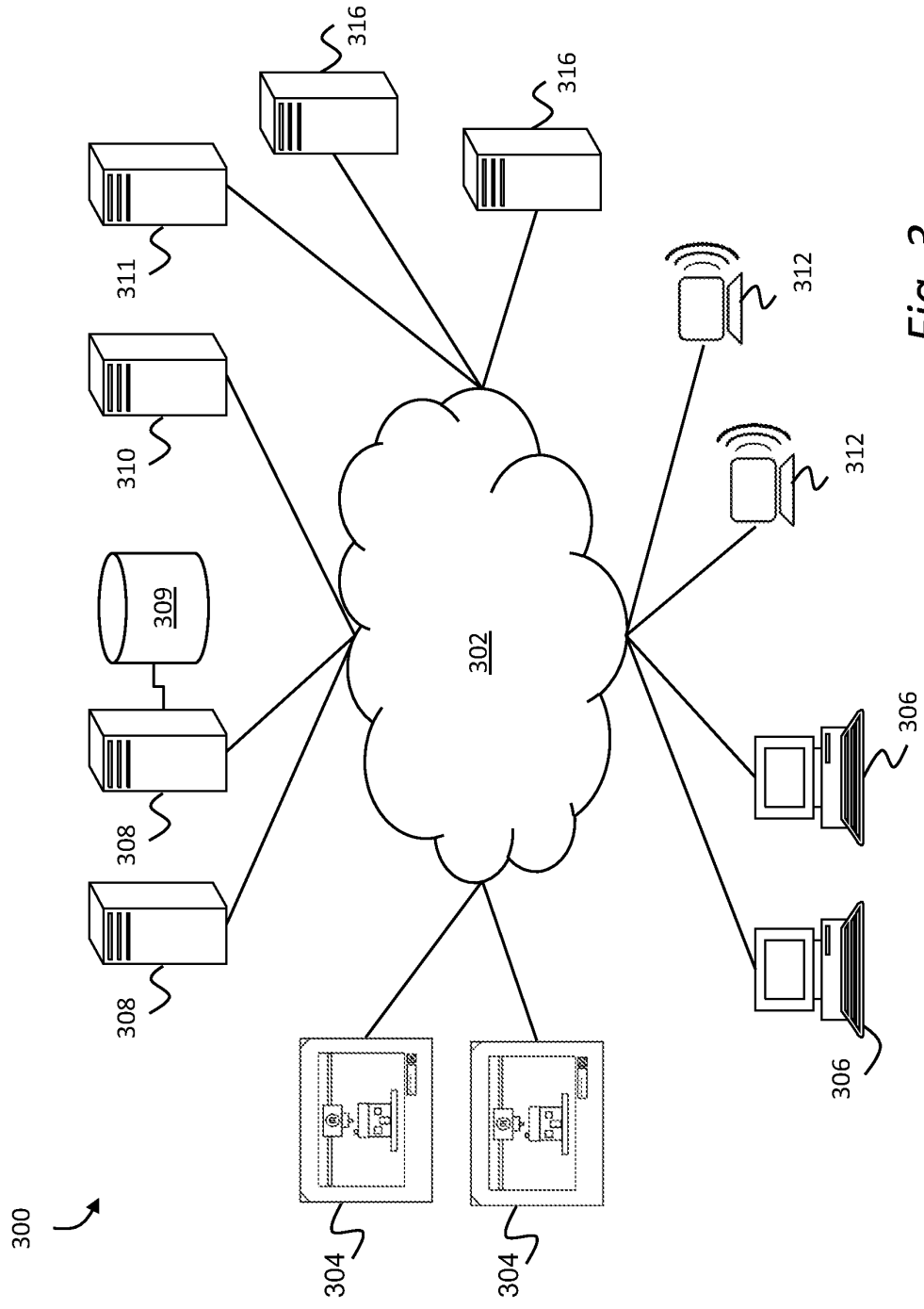


Fig. 3

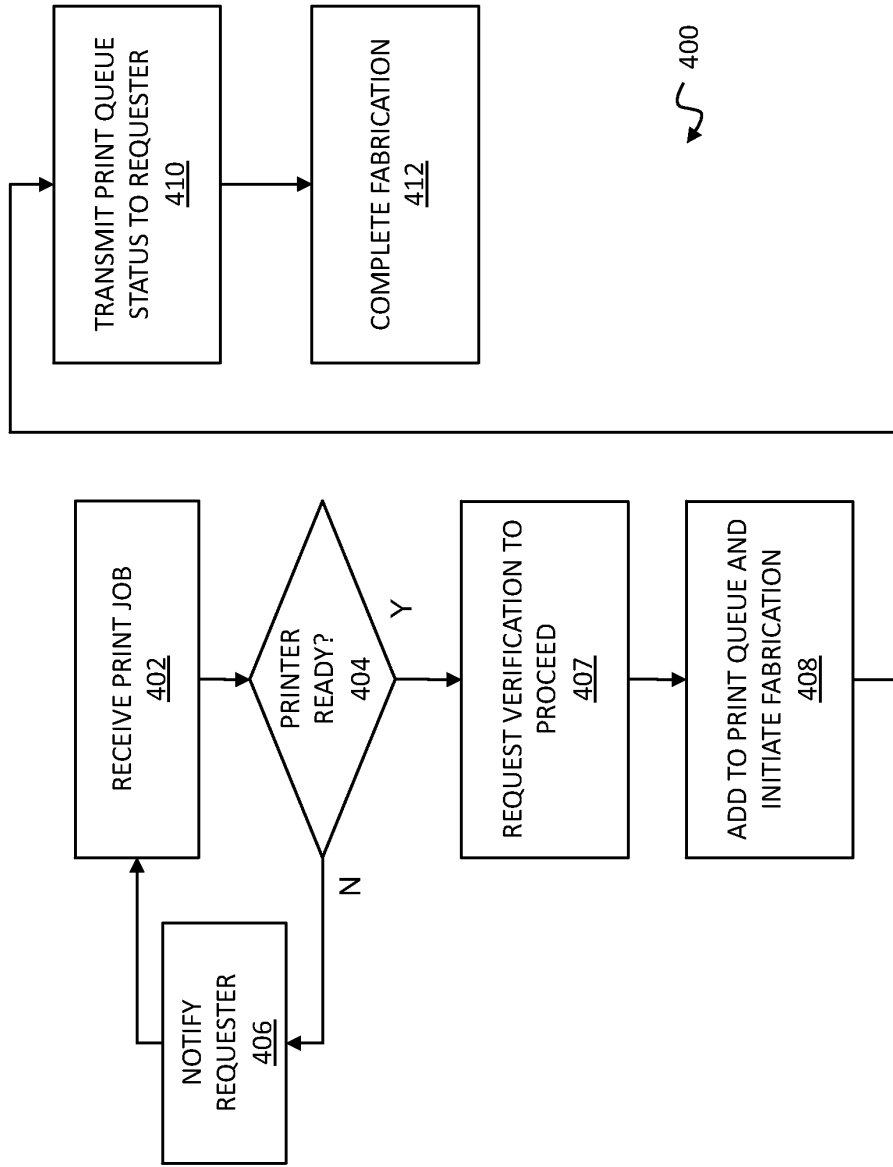


Fig. 4

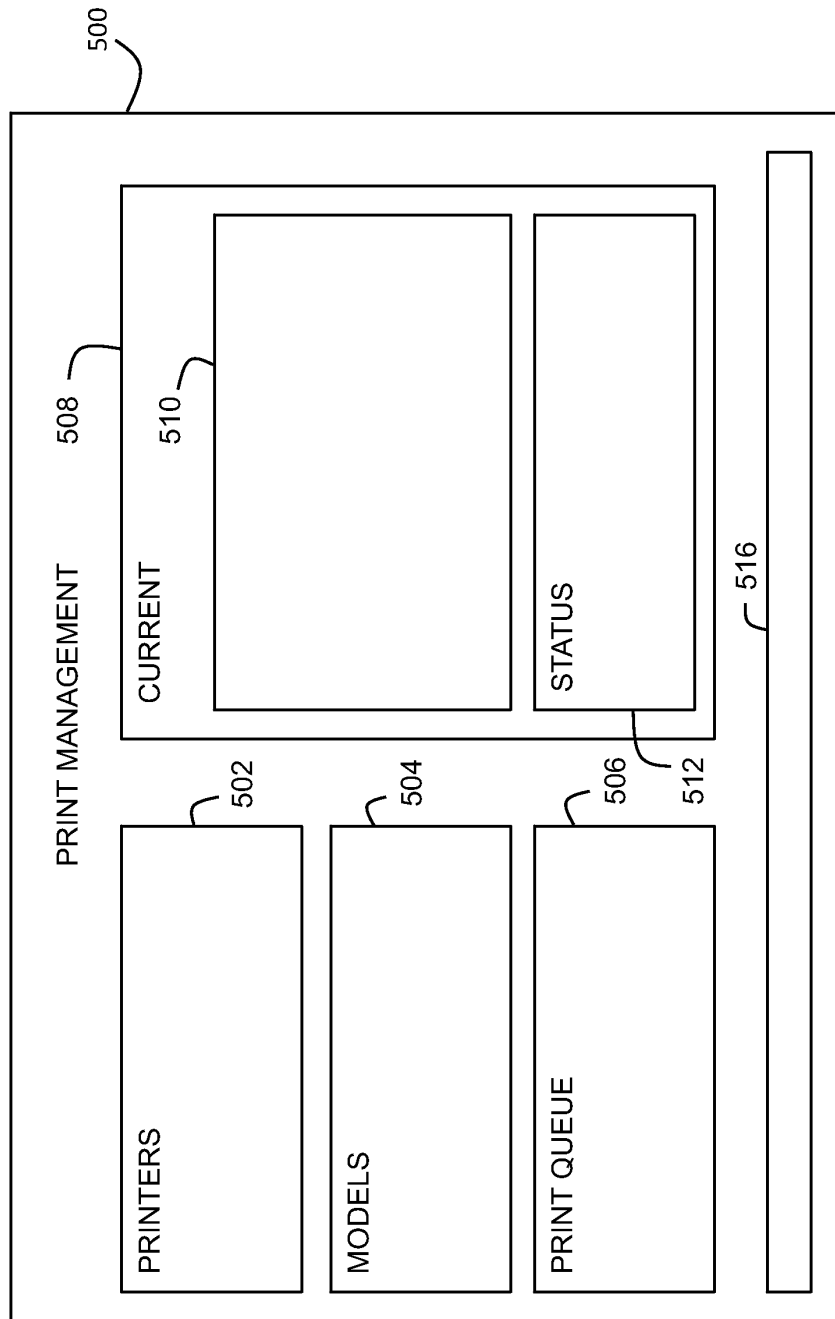


Fig. 5

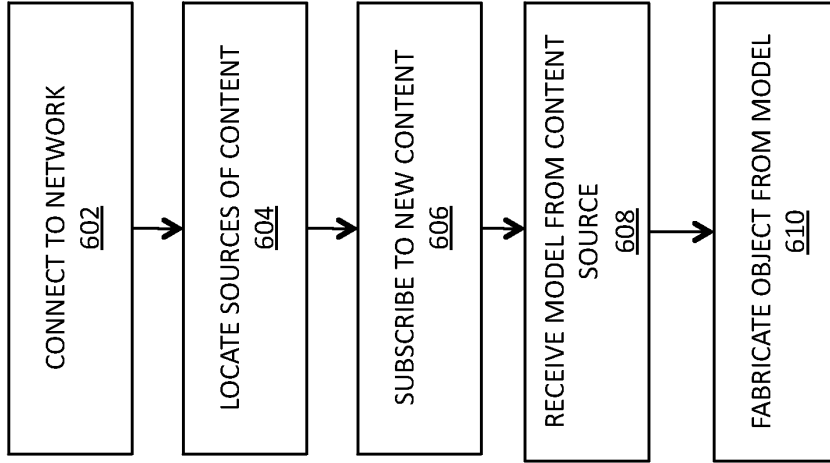


Fig. 6

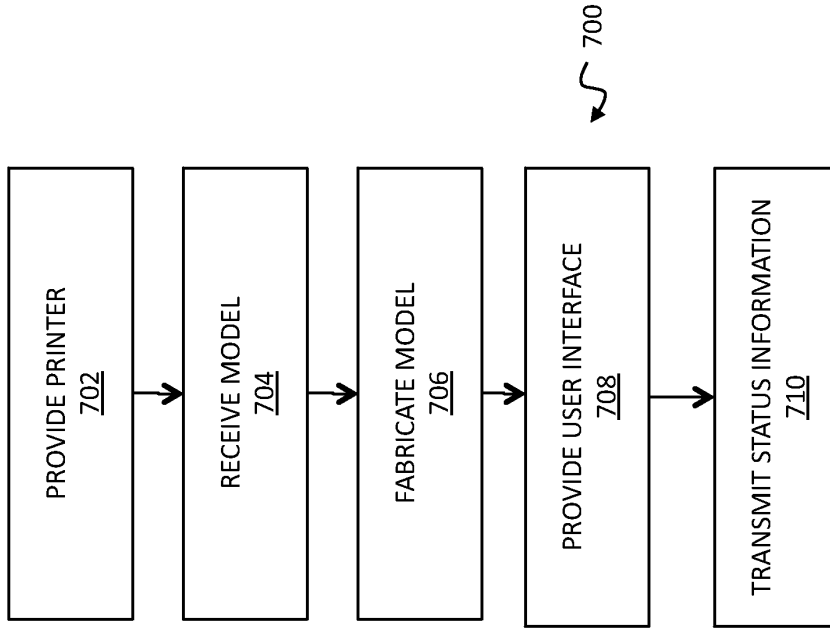
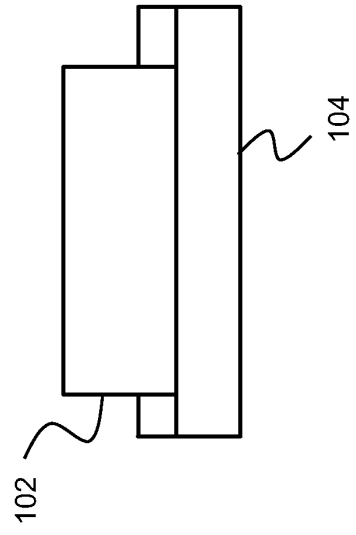


Fig. 7



*Fig. 1X*

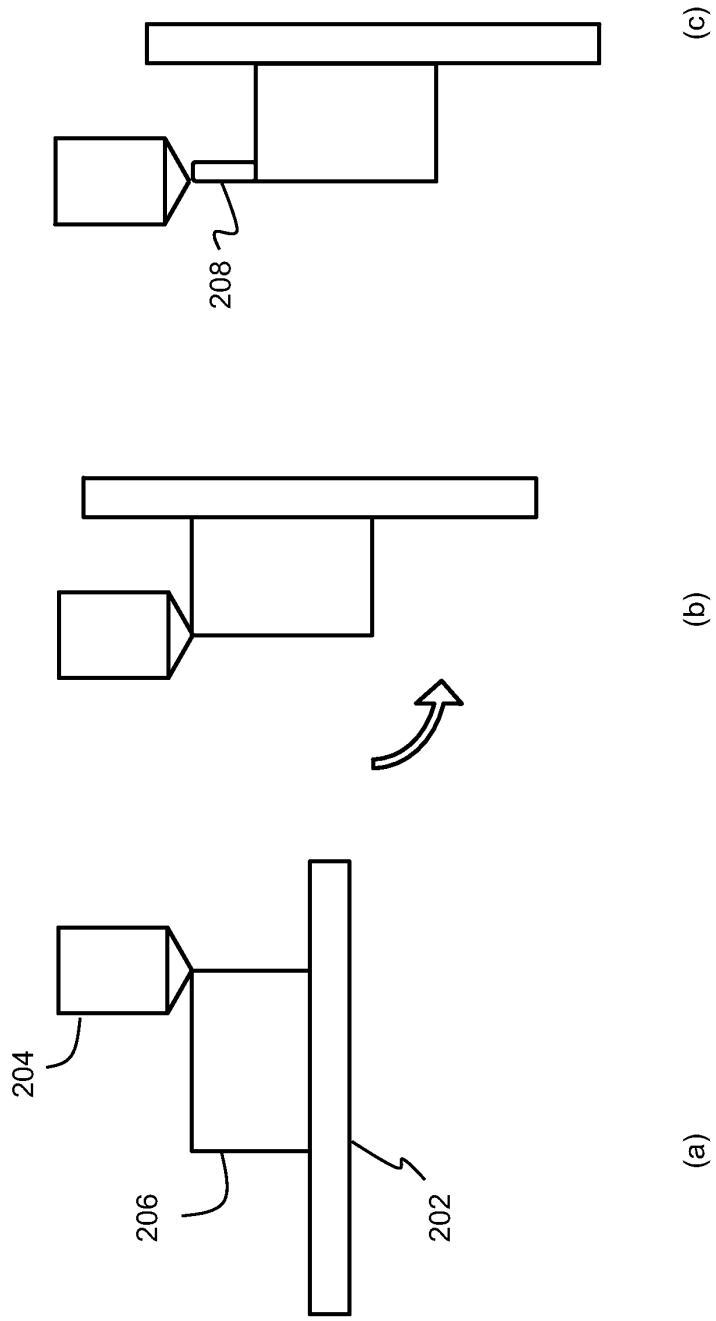


Fig. 2X

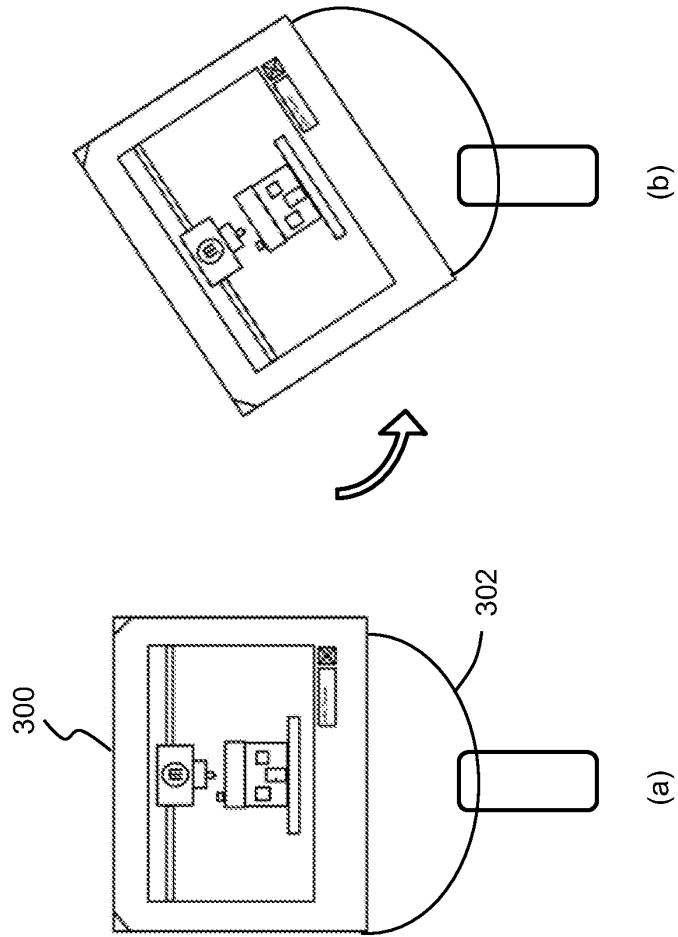


Fig. 3X

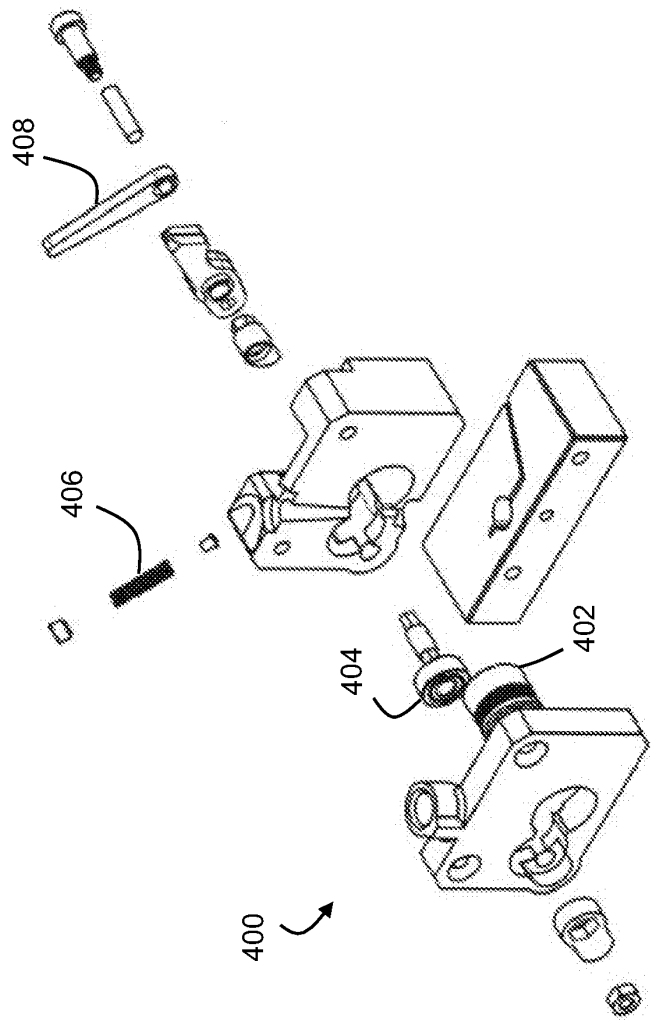


Fig. 4X

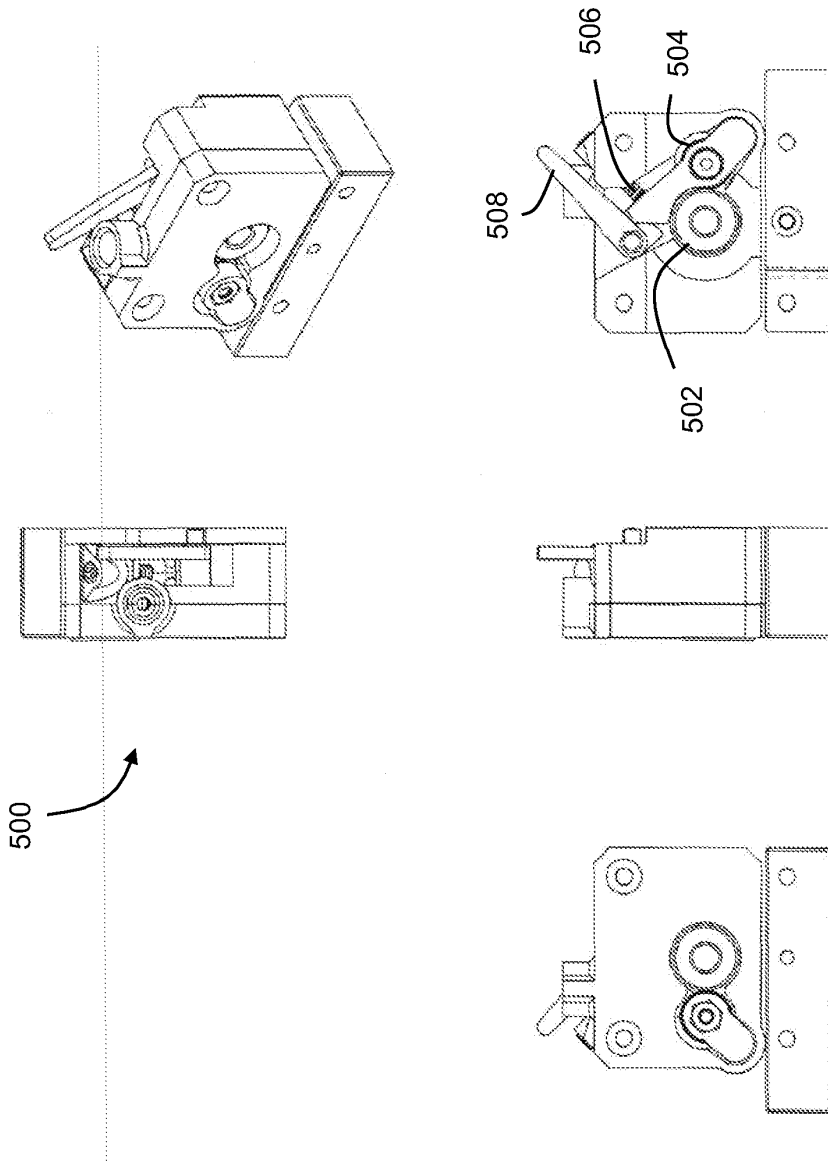


Fig. 5X

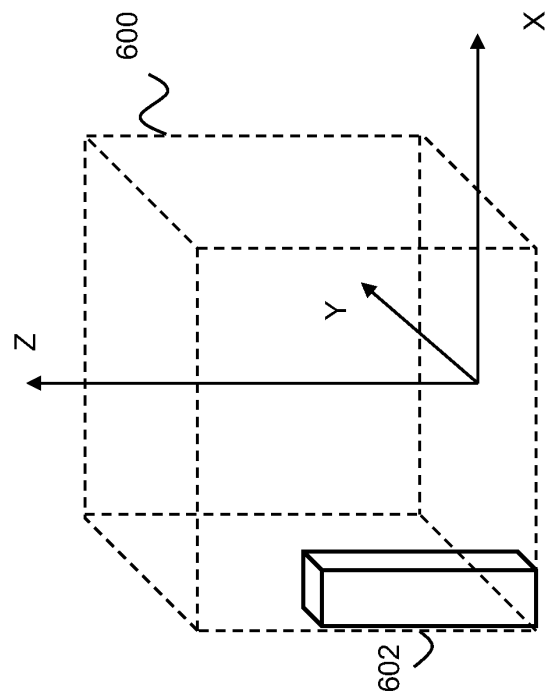


Fig. 6X

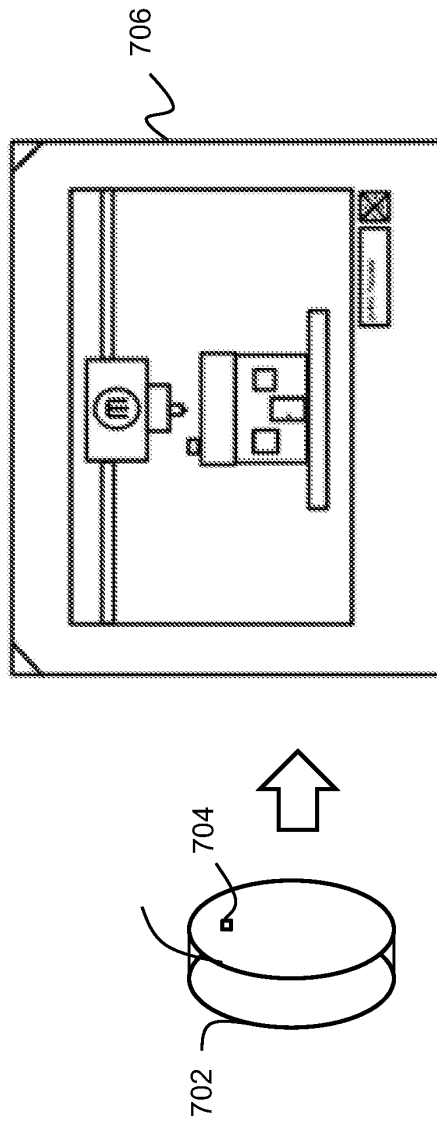


Fig. 7X

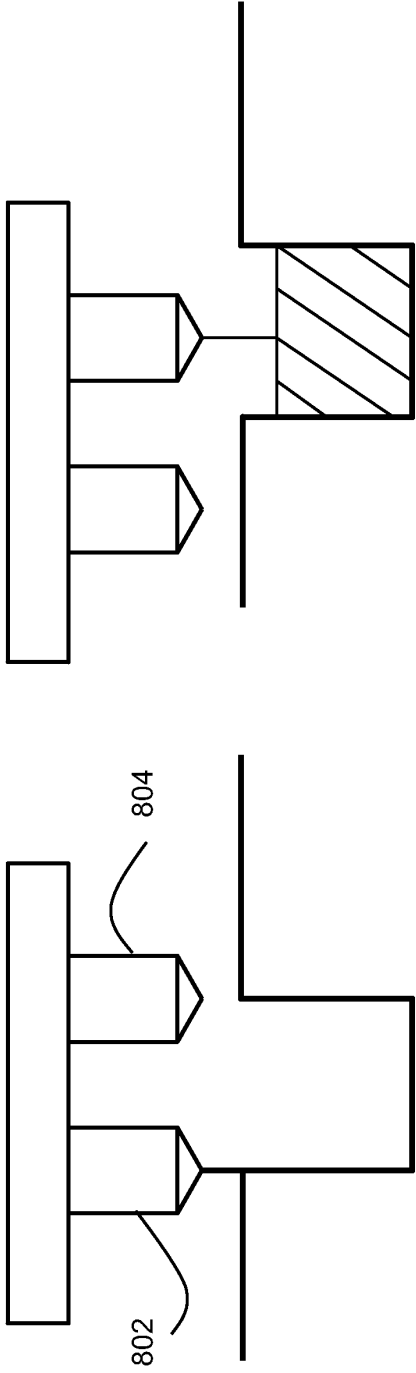


Fig. 8X

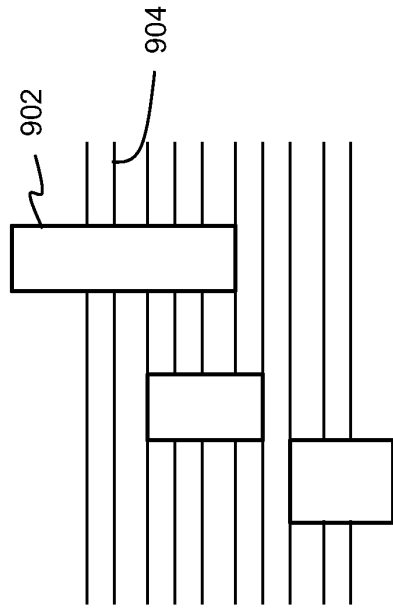
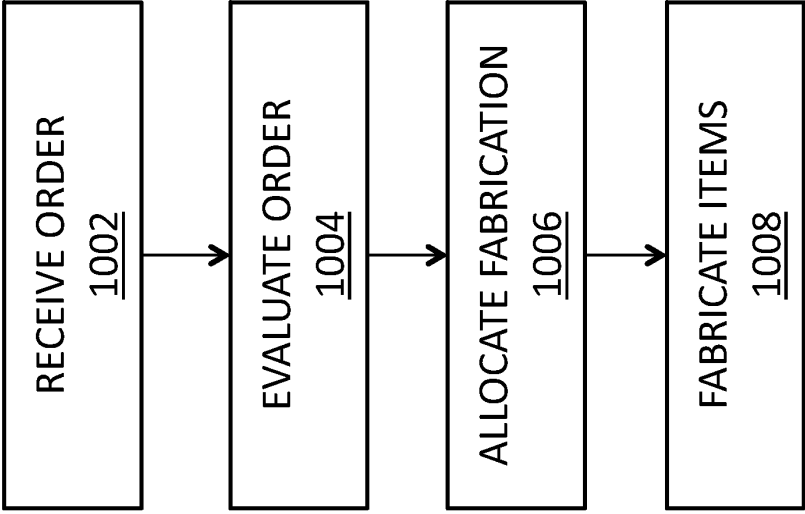


Fig. 9X



*Fig. 10X*

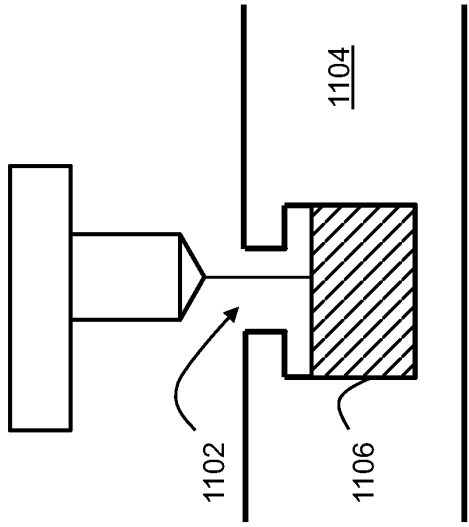


Fig. 11X

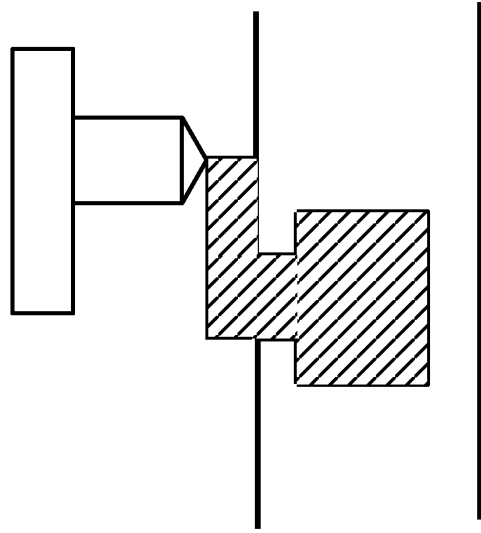


Fig. 12X

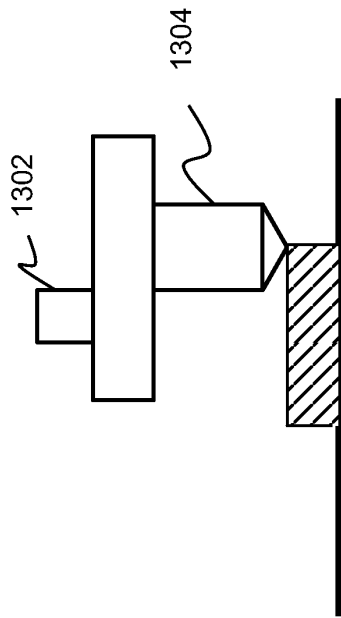


Fig. 13X

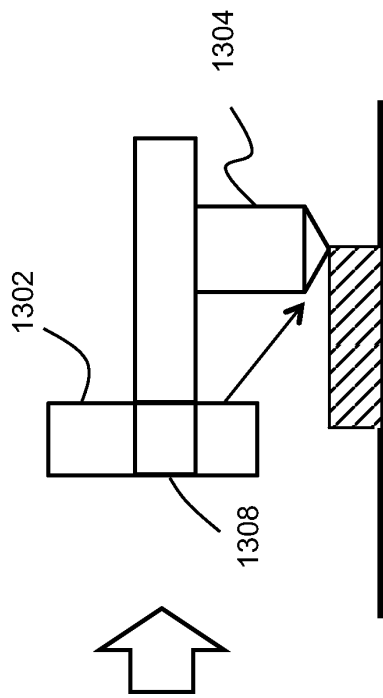


Fig. 14X

## THREE-DIMENSIONAL PRINTING IMPROVEMENTS

## BACKGROUND

[0001] The invention relates to three-dimensional fabrication, and more specifically to various systems and methods to improve three-dimensional printing and devices for same.

## SUMMARY

[0002] Techniques are disclosed for three-dimensional printing.

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0003] The foregoing and other objects, features and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the following description of particular embodiments thereof, as illustrated in the accompanying drawings. The drawings are not necessarily to scale, emphasis instead being placed upon illustrating the principles of the invention.

[0004] Fig. 1 is a block diagram of a three-dimensional printer.

[0005] Fig. 2 is an isometric view of a conveyer for an automated build process.

[0006] Fig. 3 depicts a networked three-dimensional printing environment.

[0007] Fig. 4 is a flowchart of a method for using a three-dimensional printer, such as any of the three-dimensional printers described above, when coupled to a data network.

[0008] Fig. 5 depicts a user interface for management of networked printing.

[0009] Fig. 6 is a flowchart of a method for operating a three-dimensional printer coupled to a network.

[0010] Fig. 7 is a flowchart of a method for operating a three-dimensional printer coupled to a network.

[0011] Fig. 1X shows a three-dimensional scanning accessory case for a mobile phone.

[0012] Fig. 2X shows a printer with adjustable deposition angle.

[0013] Fig. 3X shows a rotatable printer.

[0014] Fig. 4X is an exploded view of an extruder assembly.

[0015] Fig. 5X shows various views of an extruder assembly.

[0016] Fig. 6X shows a variable build volume.

[0017] Fig. 7X shows a tagged cartridge of build material.

[0018] Fig. 8X shows an extruder depositing build material.

[0019] Fig. 9X shows an extruder depositing fill material.

[0020] Fig. 10X shows a process for allocating fabrication resources.

[0021] Fig. 11X shows a build platform with an anchoring feature.

[0022] Fig. 12X shows build material deposited into an anchoring feature.

[0023] Fig. 13X shows a tool with a pressure transducer.

[0024] Fig. 14X shows a tool with cooling fans.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0025] Described herein are devices and methods for using networked three-dimensional printers. It will be understood that while the exemplary embodiments below emphasize fabrication techniques using extrusion, the principles of the invention may be adapted to a wide variety of three-dimensional fabrication processes, and in particular additive fabrication processes including without limitation selective laser sintering, fused deposition modeling, three-dimensional printing, and the like. All such variations that can be adapted to use with a networked fabrication resource as described herein are intended to fall within the scope of this disclosure. It should also be understood that any reference herein to a fabrication process such as printing or three-dimensional printing is intended to refer to any and all such additive fabrication process unless a different meaning is explicitly stated or otherwise clear from the context. Thus by way of example and not of limitation, a three-dimensional printer (or simply “printer”) is now described that may be used in a networked three-dimensional printing environment.

[0026] Fig. 1 is a block diagram of a three-dimensional printer. In general, the printer 100 may include a build platform 102, a conveyor 104, an extruder 106, an x-y-z positioning assembly 108, and a controller 110 that cooperate to fabricate an object 112 within a working volume 114 of the printer 100.

[0027] The build platform 102 may include a surface 116 that is rigid and substantially planar. The surface 116 may support the conveyor 104 in order to provide a fixed, dimensionally and positionally stable platform on which to build the object 112.

[0028] The build platform 102 may include a thermal element 130 that controls the temperature of the build platform 102 through one or more active devices 132 such as resistive elements that convert electrical current into heat, Peltier effect devices that can create a heating

or cooling effect, or any other thermoelectric heating and/or cooling devices. Thus the thermal element 130 may be a heating element that provides active heating to the build platform 102, a cooling element that provides active cooling to the build platform 102, or a combination of these. The heating element 130 may be coupled in a communicating relationship with the controller 110 in order for the controller 110 to controllably impart heat to or remove heat from the surface 116 of the build platform 102. Thus the thermal element 130 may include an active cooling element positioned within or adjacent to the build platform 102 to controllably cool the build platform 102.

**[0029]** It will be understood that a variety of other techniques may be employed to control a temperature of the build platform 102. For example, the build platform 102 may use a gas cooling or gas heating device such as a vacuum chamber or the like in an interior thereof, which may be quickly pressurized to heat the build platform 102 or vacated to cool the build platform 102 as desired. As another example, a stream of heated or cooled gas may be applied directly to the build platform 102 before, during, and/or after a build process. Any device or combination of devices suitable for controlling a temperature of the build platform 102 may be adapted to use as the thermal element 130 described herein.

**[0030]** The conveyer 104 may be formed of a sheet 118 of material that moves in a path 120 through the working volume 114. Within the working volume 114, the path 120 may pass proximal to the surface 116 of the build platform 102 – that is, resting directly on or otherwise supported by the surface 116 -- in order to provide a rigid, positionally stable working surface for a build. It will be understood that while the path 120 is depicted as a unidirectional arrow, the path 120 may be bidirectional, such that the conveyer 104 can move in either of two opposing directions through the working volume 114. It will also be understood that the path 120 may curve in any of a variety of ways, such as by looping underneath and around the build platform 102, over and/or under rollers, or around delivery and take up spools for the sheet 118 of material. Thus, while the path 120 may be generally (but not necessarily) uniform through the working volume 114, the conveyer 104 may move in any direction suitable for moving completed items from the working volume 114. The conveyer may include a motor or other similar drive mechanism (not shown) coupled to the controller 110 to control movement of the sheet 118 of material along the path 120. Various drive mechanisms are shown and described in further detail below.

**[0031]** In general, the sheet 118 may be formed of a flexible material such as a mesh material, a polyamide, a polyethylene terephthalate (commercially available in bi-axial form as MYLAR), a polyimide film (commercially available as KAPTON), or any other suitably strong polymer or other material. The sheet 118 may have a thickness of about three to seven thousandths of an inch, or any other thickness that permits the sheet 118 to follow the path 120 of the conveyer 104. For example, with sufficiently strong material, the sheet 118 may have a thickness of one to three thousandths of an inch. The sheet 118 may instead be formed of sections of rigid material joined by flexible links.

**[0032]** A working surface of the sheet 118 (e.g., an area on the top surface of the sheet 118 within the working volume 114) may be treated in a variety of manners to assist with adhesion of build material to the surface 118 and/or removal of completed objects from the surface 118. For example, the working surface may be abraded or otherwise textured (e.g., with grooves, protrusions, and the like) to improve adhesion between the working surface and the build material.

**[0033]** A variety of chemical treatments may be used on the working surface of the sheet 118 of material to further facilitate build processes as described herein. For example, the chemical treatment may include a deposition of material that can be chemically removed from the conveyer 104 by use of water, solvents, or the like. This may facilitate separation of a completed object from the conveyer by dissolving the layer of chemical treatment between the object 112 and the conveyor 104. The chemical treatments may include deposition of a material that easily separates from the conveyer such as a wax, mild adhesive, or the like. The chemical treatment may include a detachable surface such as an adhesive that is sprayed on to the conveyer 104 prior to fabrication of the object 112.

**[0034]** In one aspect, the conveyer 104 may be formed of a sheet of disposable, one-use material that is fed from a dispenser and consumed with each successive build.

**[0035]** In one aspect, the conveyer 104 may include a number of different working areas with different surface treatments adapted for different build materials or processes. For example, different areas may have different textures (smooth, abraded, grooved, etc.). Different areas may be formed of different materials. Different areas may also have or receive different chemical treatments. Thus a single conveyer 104 may be used in a variety of different build processes by selecting the various working areas as needed or desired.

**[0036]** The extruder 106 may include a chamber 122 in an interior thereof to receive a build material. The build material may, for example, include acrylonitrile butadiene styrene (“ABS”), high-density polyethylene (“HDPE”), polylactic acid, or any other suitable plastic, thermoplastic, or other material that can usefully be extruded to form a three-dimensional object. The extruder 106 may include an extrusion tip 124 or other opening that includes an exit port with a circular, oval, slotted or other cross-sectional profile that extrudes build material in a desired cross-sectional shape.

**[0037]** The extruder 106 may include a heater 126 to melt thermoplastic or other meltable build materials within the chamber 122 for extrusion through an extrusion tip 124 in liquid form. While illustrated in block form, it will be understood that the heater 124 may include, e.g., coils of resistive wire wrapped about the extruder 106, one or more heating blocks with resistive elements to heat the extruder 106 with applied current, an inductive heater, or any other arrangement of heating elements suitable for creating heat within the chamber 122 to melt the build material for extrusion. The extruder 106 may also or instead include a motor 128 or the like to push the build material into the chamber 122 and/or through the extrusion tip 126.

**[0038]** In general operation (and by way of example rather than limitation), a build material such as ABS plastic in filament form may be fed into the chamber 122 from a spool or the like by the motor 128, melted by the heater 126, and extruded from the extrusion tip 124. By controlling a rate of the motor 128, the temperature of the heater 126, and/or other process parameters, the build material may be extruded at a controlled volumetric rate. It will be understood that a variety of techniques may also or instead be employed to deliver build material at a controlled volumetric rate, which may depend upon the type of build material, the volumetric rate desired, and any other factors. All such techniques that might be suitably adapted to delivery of build material for fabrication of a three-dimensional object are intended to fall within the scope of this disclosure. As noted above, other techniques may be employed for three-dimensional printing, including extrusion-based techniques using a build material that is curable and/or a build material of sufficient viscosity to retain shape after extrusion.

**[0039]** The x-y-z positioning assembly 108 may generally be adapted to three-dimensionally position the extruder 106 and the extrusion tip 124 within the working volume 114. Thus by controlling the volumetric rate of delivery for the build material and the x, y, z position of the extrusion tip 124, the object 112 may be fabricated in three dimensions by

depositing successive layers of material in two-dimensional patterns derived, for example, from cross-sections of a computer model or other computerized representation of the object 112. A variety of arrangements and techniques are known in the art to achieve controlled linear movement along one or more axes. The x-y-z positioning assembly 108 may, for example, include a number of stepper motors 109 to independently control a position of the extruder within the working volume along each of an x-axis, a y-axis, and a z-axis. More generally, the x-y-z positioning assembly 108 may include without limitation various combinations of stepper motors, encoded DC motors, gears, belts, pulleys, worm gears, threads, and so forth. Any such arrangement suitable for controllably positioning the extruder 106 within the working volume 114 may be adapted to use with the printer 100 described herein.

**[0040]** By way of example and not limitation, the conveyor 104 may be affixed to a bed that provides x-y positioning within the plane of the conveyor 104, while the extruder 106 can be independently moved along a z-axis. As another example, the extruder 106 may be stationary while the conveyor 104 is x, y, and z positionable. As another example, the extruder 106 may be x, y, and z positionable while the conveyor 104 remains fixed (relative to the working volume 114). In yet another example, the conveyor 104 may, by movement of the sheet 118 of material, control movement in one axis (e.g., the y-axis), while the extruder 106 moves in the z-axis as well as one axis in the plane of the sheet 118. Thus in one aspect, the conveyor 104 may be attached to and move with at least one of an x-axis stage (that controls movement along the x-axis), a y-axis stage (that controls movement along a y-axis), and a z-axis stage (that controls movement along a z-axis) of the x-y-z positioning assembly 108. More generally, any arrangement of motors and other hardware controllable by the controller 110 may serve as the x-y-z positioning assembly 108 in the printer 100 described herein. Still more generally, while an x, y, z coordinate system serves as a convenient basis for positioning within three dimensions, any other coordinate system or combination of coordinate systems may also or instead be employed, such as a positional controller and assembly that operates according to cylindrical or spherical coordinates.

**[0041]** The controller 110 may be electrically coupled in a communicating relationship with the build platform 102, the conveyor 104, the x-y-z positioning assembly 108, and the other various components of the printer 100. In general, the controller 110 is operable to control the components of the printer 100, such as the build platform 102, the conveyor 104, the x-y-z

positioning assembly 108, and any other components of the printer 100 described herein to fabricate the object 112 from the build material. The controller 110 may include any combination of software and/or processing circuitry suitable for controlling the various components of the printer 100 described herein including without limitation microprocessors, microcontrollers, application-specific integrated circuits, programmable gate arrays, and any other digital and/or analog components, as well as combinations of the foregoing, along with inputs and outputs for transceiving control signals, drive signals, power signals, sensor signals, and so forth. In one aspect, the controller 110 may include a microprocessor or other processing circuitry with sufficient computational power to provide related functions such as executing an operating system, providing a graphical user interface (e.g., to a display coupled to the controller 110 or printer 100), convert three-dimensional models into tool instructions, and operate a web server or otherwise host remote users and/or activity through the network interface 136 described below.

**[0042]** A variety of additional sensors may be usefully incorporated into the printer 100 described above. These are generically depicted as sensor 134 in Fig. 1, for which the positioning and mechanical/electrical interconnections with other elements of the printer 100 will depend upon the type and purpose of the sensor 134 and will be readily understood and appreciated by one of ordinary skill in the art. The sensor 134 may include a temperature sensor positioned to sense a temperature of the surface of the build platform 102. This may, for example, include a thermistor or the like embedded within or attached below the surface of the build platform 102. This may also or instead include an infrared detector or the like directed at the surface 116 of the build platform 102 or the sheet 118 of material of the conveyer 104. Other sensors that may be usefully incorporated into the printer 100 as the sensor 134 include a heat sensor, a volume flow rate sensor, a weight sensor, a sound sensor, and a light sensor. Certain more specific examples are provided below by way of example and not of limitation.

**[0043]** The sensor 134 may include a sensor to detect a presence (or absence) of the object 112 at a predetermined location on the conveyer 104. This may include an optical detector arranged in a beam-breaking configuration to sense the presence of the object 112 at a location such as an end of the conveyer 104. This may also or instead include an imaging device and image processing circuitry to capture an image of the working volume 114 and analyze the image to evaluate a position of the object 112. This sensor 134 may be used for example to ensure that the object 112 is removed from the conveyer 104 prior to beginning a new build at

that location on the working surface such as the surface 116 of the build platform 102. Thus the sensor 134 may be used to determine whether an object is present that should not be, or to detect when an object is absent. The feedback from this sensor 134 may be used by the controller 110 to issue processing interrupts or otherwise control operation of the printer 100.

**[0044]** The sensor 134 may include a sensor that detects a position of the conveyer 104 along the path. This information may be obtained from an encoder in a motor that drives the conveyer 104, or using any other suitable technique such as a visual sensor and corresponding fiducials (e.g., visible patterns, holes, or areas with opaque, specular, transparent, or otherwise detectable marking) on the sheet 118.

**[0045]** The sensor 134 may include a heater (instead of or in addition to the thermal element 130) to heat the working volume 114 such as a radiant heater or forced hot air to maintain the object 112 at a fixed, elevated temperature throughout a build. The sensor 134 may also or instead include a cooling element to maintain the object 112 at a predetermined sub-ambient temperature throughout a build.

**[0046]** The sensor 134 may also or instead include at least one video camera. The video camera may generally capture images of the working volume 114, the object 112, or any other hardware associated with the printer 100. The video camera may provide a remote video feed through the network interface 136, which feed may be available to remote users through a user interface maintained by, e.g., remote hardware such as the print servers described below with reference to Fig. 3, or within a web page provided by a web server hosted by the three-dimensional printer 100. Thus in one aspect there is disclosed herein a user interface adapted to present a video feed from at least one video camera of a three-dimensional printer to a remote user through a user interface.

**[0047]** The sensor 134 may include may also include more complex sensing and processing systems or subsystems, such as a three-dimensional scanner using optical techniques (e.g., stereoscopic imaging, or shape from motion imaging), structured light techniques, or any other suitable sensing and processing hardware that might extract three-dimensional information from the working volume 114. In another aspect, the sensor 134 may include a machine vision system that captures images and analyzes image content to obtain information about the status of a job, working volume 114, or an object 112 therein. The machine vision system may support a variety of imaging-based automatic inspection, process control, and/or robotic guidance

functions for the three-dimensional printer 100 including without limitation pass/fail decisions, error detection (and corresponding audible or visual alerts), shape detection, position detection, orientation detection, collision avoidance, and so forth.

**[0048]** Other components, generically depicted as other hardware 135, may also be included, such as input devices including a keyboard, touchpad, mouse, switches, dials, buttons, motion sensors, and the like, as well as output devices such as a display, a speaker or other audio transducer, light emitting diodes, and so forth. Other hardware 135 may also or instead include a variety of cable connections and/or hardware adapters for connecting to, e.g., external computers, external hardware, external instrumentation or data acquisition systems, and so forth.

**[0049]** The printer 100 may include, or be connected in a communicating relationship with, a network interface 136. The network interface 136 may include any combination of hardware and software suitable for coupling the controller 110 and other components of the printer 100 to a remote computer in a communicating relationship through a data network. By way of example and not limitation, this may include electronics for a wired or wireless Ethernet connection operating according to the IEEE 802.11 standard (or any variation thereof), or any other short or long range wireless networking components or the like. This may include hardware for short range data communications such as BlueTooth or an infrared transceiver, which may be used to couple into a local area network or the like that is in turn coupled to a data network such as the Internet. This may also or instead include hardware/software for a WiMax connection or a cellular network connection (using, e.g., CDMA, GSM, LTE, or any other suitable protocol or combination of protocols). Consistently, the controller 110 may be configured to control participation by the printer 100 in any network to which the network interface 136 is connected, such as by autonomously connecting to the network to retrieve printable content, or responding to a remote request for status or availability. Networked uses of the printer 100 are discussed in greater detail below.

**[0050]** Fig. 2 is an isometric view of a conveyer for an automated build process. The conveyer 200 may include a sheet 202 of material that provides a working surface 204 for three-dimensional fabrication. As depicted, the conveyer may form a continuous path 206 about a build platform 208 by arranging the sheet 202 as a belt or the like. Thus for example, the path 206 may move parallel to the surface of the build platform 208 along the top of the build platform 208 (from left to right in Fig. 2). The sheet 202 may then curve downward and around a

roller 210 and reverse direction underneath the build platform 208, returning again at an opposing roller 212 to form a loop about the build platform 208.

[0051] The roller 210 may be coupled by gears 214 or the like to a motor (not shown) to move the sheet 202 of material. The motor may be controlled by a controller (such as the controller 110 described above) to control movement of the sheet 202 of material in a build process.

[0052] The conveyer 200 may include a scraper 216 to physically separate a completed object from the conveyer 200 based upon a relative movement of the sheet 202 of material of the conveyor 200 to the scraper 216. In general, adhesion of an object to a working surface maintains the object within the coordinate system of the printer during a build in order to facilitate the build process. Where good adhesion is achieved during a build, dislodging the completed object from the working surface may require significant force. Thus in order to ensure the availability of a continuous working surface, the conveyer 200 may enforce physical separation of the object from the working surface by passing the sheet 202 of material by the scraper 216 to dislodge the object. While the scraper 216 is depicted below the working surface of the sheet 202, it will be readily understood that a variety of positions and orientations of the scraper 216 may achieve similar results. Thus for example, the scraper 216 may extend vertically above or below the sheet 202, horizontally from the sheet 202, or in any other suitable orientation. It will also be appreciated that while the scraper 216 is depicted in an orientation perpendicular to the path 206, the scraper 216 may be angled in order to also urge a completed object off the sheet 202 in any desired direction, such as to a side of the working surface where a chute or receptacle may be provided to catch and store the completed object. In some embodiments, the conveyor 200 may transport the object to a side of the printer 100, or alternatively the entire conveyor 200 assembly may be moved outside the printer, so that urging the completed object off the sheet 202 also causes the completed object to depart the printer 100. The term 'scraper' should be understood as referring in a non-limiting sense to any physical fixture that might be employed to remove an object from the sheet 202, and that many other shapes, sizes, orientations, and the like may also or instead be employed as the scraper 216 described herein without departing from the scope of this disclosure.

[0053] In one aspect, the conveyer 200 may support networked use of the printer 100 by permitting fabrication of multiple, consecutive parts under control by a remote computer without user intervention.

[0054] Fig. 3 depicts a networked three-dimensional printing environment. In general, the environment 300 may include a data network 302 interconnecting a plurality of participating devices in a communicating relationship. The participating devices may, for example, include any number of three-dimensional printers 304 (also referred to interchangeably herein as “printers”), client devices 306, print servers 308, content sources 310, mobile devices 314, and other resources 316.

[0055] The data network 302 may be any network(s) or internetwork(s) suitable for communicating data and control information among participants in the environment 300. This may include public networks such as the Internet, private networks, telecommunications networks such as the Public Switched Telephone Network or cellular networks using third generation (e.g., 3G or IMT-2000), fourth generation (e.g., LTE (E-UTRA) or WiMax-Advanced (IEEE 802.16m), as well as any of a variety of corporate area or local area networks and other switches, routers, hubs, gateways, and the like that might be used to carry data among participants in the environment 300.

[0056] The three-dimensional printers 304 may be any computer-controlled devices for three-dimensional fabrication, including without limitation any of the three-dimensional printers or other fabrication or prototyping devices described above. In general, each such device may include a network interface comprising, e.g., a network interface card, which term is used broadly herein to include any hardware (along with software, firmware, or the like to control operation of same) suitable for establishing and maintaining wired and/or wireless communications. The network interface card may include without limitation wired Ethernet network interface cards (“NICs”), wireless 802.11 networking cards, wireless 802.11 USB devices, or other hardware for wireless local area networking. The network interface may also or instead include cellular network hardware, wide area wireless network hardware or any other hardware for centralized, ad hoc, peer-to-peer, or other radio communications that might be used to carry data. In another aspect, the network interface may include a serial or USB port used to directly connect to a computing device such as a desktop computer that, in turn, provides more general network connectivity to the data network 302.

**[0057]** Client devices 306 may in general be devices within the environment 300 operated by users to initiate and monitor print jobs at the three-dimensional printers 304. This may include desktop computers, laptop computers, network computers, tablets, or any other computing device that can participate in the environment 300 as contemplated herein. Each client device 306 generally provides a user interface, which may include a graphical user interface and/or text or command line interface to control operation of remote three-dimensional printers 304. The user interface may be maintained by a locally executing application on one of the client devices 306 that receives data and status information from, e.g., the printers 304 and print servers 308 concerning pending or executing print jobs, and creates a suitable display on the client device 306 for user interaction. In other embodiments, the user interface may be remotely served and presented on one of the client devices 306, such as where a print server 308 or one of the three-dimensional printers 304 includes a web server that provides information through one or more web pages or the like that can be displayed within a web browser or similar client executing on one of the client devices 306.

**[0058]** The print servers 308 may include data storage, a network interface, and a processor or other processing circuitry. In the following description, where the functions or configuration of a print server 308 are described, this is intended to include corresponding functions or configuration (e.g., by programming) of a processor of the print server 308. In general, the print servers 308 (or processors thereof) may perform a variety of processing tasks related to management of networked printing. For example, the print servers 308 may manage print jobs received from one or more of the client devices 306, and provide related supporting functions such as content search and management. A print server 308 may also include a web server that provides web-based access by the client devices 306 to the capabilities of the print server 308. A print server 308 may also communicate periodically with three-dimensional printers 304 in order to obtain status information concerning, e.g., availability of printers and/or the status of particular print jobs, any of which may be subsequently presented to a user through the web server. A print server 308 may also maintain a list of available three-dimensional printers 304, and may automatically select one of the three-dimensional printers 304 for a user-submitted print job, or may permit a user to specify a single printer, or a group of preferred printers, for fabricating an object. Where the print server 308 selects the printer automatically, any number of criteria may be used such as geographical proximity, printing capabilities, current

print queue, fees (if any) for use of a particular three-dimensional printer 304, and so forth.

Where the user specifies criteria, this may similarly include any relevant aspects of three-dimensional printers 304, and may permit use of absolute criteria (e.g., filters) or preferences, which may be weighted preferences or unweighted preferences, any of which may be used by a print server 308 to allocate a print job to a suitable resource.

[0059] Other user preferences may be usefully stored at the print server 308 to facilitate autonomous, unsupervised fabrication of content from content sources 310. For example, a print server 308 may store a user's preference on handling objects greater than a build volume of a printer. These preferences may control whether to resize the object, whether to break the object into multiple sub-objects for fabrication, and whether to transmit multiple sub-objects to a single printer or multiple printers. In addition, user preferences or requirements may be stored, such as multi-color printing capability, build material options and capabilities, and so forth. More generally, the print queue may be managed by a print server 308 according to one or more criteria from a remote user requesting a print job. The print server 308 may also store user preferences or criteria for filtering content, e.g., for automatic printing or other handling. While this is described below as a feature for autonomous operation of a printer (such as a printer that locally subscribes to a syndicated model source), any criteria that can be used to identify models of potential interest by explicit type (e.g., labeled in model metadata), implicit type (e.g., determined based on analysis of the model), source, and so forth, may be provided to the print server 308 and used to automatically direct new content to one or more user-specified ones of the three-dimensional printers 304.

[0060] In one aspect, the processor of the print server may be configured to store a plurality of print jobs submitted to the web server in a log and to provide an analysis of print activity based on the log. This may include any type of analysis that might be useful to participants in the environment 300. For example, the analysis may include tracking of the popularity of particular objects, or of particular content sources. The analysis may include tracking of which three-dimensional printers 304 are most popular or least popular, or related statistics such as the average backlog of pending print jobs at a number of the three-dimensional printers 304. More generally, any statistics or data may be obtained, and any analysis may be performed, that might be useful to users (e.g., when requesting prints), content sources (e.g.,

when choosing new printable objects for publication), providers of fabrication resources (e.g., when setting fees), or network facilitators such as the print servers 308.

**[0061]** A print server 308 may also maintain a database 309 of content, along with an interface for users at client devices 306 to search the database 309 and request fabrication of objects in the database 309 using any of the three-dimensional printers 304. Thus in one aspect, a print server 308 (or any system including the print server 308) may include a database 309 of three-dimensional models, and the print server 308 may act as a server that provides a search engine for locating a particular three-dimensional model in the database 309. The search engine may be a text-based search engine using keyword text queries, plain language queries, and so forth. The search engine may also or instead include an image-based search engine configured to identify three-dimensional models similar to a two-dimensional or three-dimensional image provide by a user.

**[0062]** In another aspect, the printer server 308 may periodically search for suitable content at remote locations on the data network, which content may be retrieved to the database 309, or have its remote location (e.g., a URL or other network location identifier) stored in the database 309. In another aspect, the print server 308 may provide an interface for submission of objects from remote users, along with any suitable metadata such as a title, tags, creator information, descriptive narrative, pictures, recommended printer settings, and so forth. In one aspect, the database 309 may be manually curated according to any desired standards. In another aspect, printable objects in the database 309 may be manually or automatically annotated according to content type, popularity, editorial commentary, and so forth.

**[0063]** The print server 308 may more generally provide a variety of management functions. For example, the print server 304 may store a predetermined alternative three-dimensional printer to execute a print job from a remote user in the event of a failure by the one of the plurality of three-dimensional printers 304. In another aspect, the print server 308 may maintain exclusive control over at least one of the plurality of three-dimensional printers 304, such that other users and/or print servers cannot control the printer. In another aspect, the print server 308 may submit a print job to a first available one of the plurality of three-dimensional printers 304.

**[0064]** In another aspect, a print server 308 may provide an interface for managing subscriptions to sources of content. This may include tools for searching existing subscriptions,

locating or specifying new sources, subscribing to sources of content, and so forth. In one aspect, a print server 308 may manage subscriptions and automatically direct new content from these subscriptions to a three-dimensional printer 304 according to any user-specified criteria. Thus while it is contemplated that a three-dimensional printer 304 may autonomously subscribe to sources of content through a network interface and receive new content directly from such sources, it is also contemplated that this feature may be maintained through a remote resource such as a print server 308.

**[0065]** A print server 308 may maintain print queues for participating three-dimensional printers 304. This approach may advantageously alleviate backlogs at individual printers 304, which may have limited memory capacity for pending print jobs. More generally, a print server 308 may, by communicating with multiple three-dimensional printers 304, obtain a view of utilization of multiple networked resources that permits a more efficient allocation of print jobs than would be possible through simple point-to-point communications among users and printers. Print queues may also be published by a print server 308 so that users can view pending queues for a variety of different three-dimensional printers 304 prior to selecting a resource for a print job. In one aspect, the print queue may be published as a number of print jobs and size of print jobs so that a requester can evaluate likely delays. In another aspect, the print queue may be published as an estimated time until a newly submitted print job can be initiated.

**[0066]** In one aspect, the print queue of one of the print servers 308 may include one or more print jobs for one of the plurality of three-dimensional printers 304. The print queue may be stored locally at the one of the plurality of three-dimensional printers. In another aspect, the print queue may be allocated between the database 309 and a local memory of the three-dimensional printer 304. In another aspect, the print queue may be stored, for example, in the database 309 of the print server 308. As used here, the term 'print queue' is intended to include print data (e.g., the three-dimensional model or tool instructions to fabricate an object) for a number of print job (which may be arranged for presentation in order of expected execution), as well as any metadata concerning print jobs. Thus, a portion of the print queue such as the metadata (e.g., size, status, time to completion) may be usefully communicated to a print server 308 for sharing among users while another portion of the print queue such as the model data may be stored at a printer in preparation for execution of a print job.

**[0067]** Print queues may implement various user preferences on prioritization. For example, for a commercial enterprise, longer print jobs may be deferred for after normal hours of operation (e.g., after 5:00 p.m.), while shorter print jobs may be executed first if they can be completed before the end of a business day. In this manner, objects can be identified and fabricated from within the print queue in a manner that permits as many objects as possible to be fabricated before a predetermined closing time. Similarly, commercial providers of fabrication services may charge explicitly for prioritized fabrication, and implement this prioritization by prioritizing print queues in a corresponding fashion.

**[0068]** In another aspect, a print server 308 may provide a virtual workspace for a user. In this virtual workspace, a user may search local or remote databases of printable objects, save objects of interest (or links thereto), manage pending prints, specify preferences for receiving status updates (e.g., by electronic mail or SMS text), manage subscriptions to content, search for new subscription sources, and so forth. In one aspect, the virtual workspace may be, or may include, web-based design tools or a web-based design interface that permits a user to create and modify models. In one aspect, the virtual workspace may be deployed on the web, while permitting direct fabrication of a model developed within that environment on a user-specified one of the three-dimensional printers 304, thus enabling a web-based design environment that is directly coupled to one or more fabrication resources.

**[0069]** The content sources 310 may include any sources of content for fabrication with a three-dimensional printer 304. This may, for example, include databases of objects accessible through a web interface or application programming interface. This may also or instead include individual desktop computers or the like configured as a server for hosted access, or configured to operate as a peer in a peer-to-peer network. This may also or instead include content subscription services, which may be made available in an unrestricted fashion, or may be made available on a paid subscription basis, or on an authenticated basis based upon some other relationship (e.g., purchase of a related product or a ticket to an event). It will be readily appreciated that any number of content providers may serve as content sources 310 as contemplated herein. By way of non-limiting example, the content sources 310 may include destinations such as amusement parks, museums, theaters, performance venues, or the like, any of which may provide content related to users who purchase tickets. The content sources 310 may include manufacturers such as automobile, computer, consumer electronics, or home

appliance manufacturers, any of which may provide content related to upgrades, maintenance, repair, or other support of existing products that have been purchased. The content sources 310 may include artists or other creative enterprises that sell various works of interest. The content sources 310 may include engineering or architectural firms that provide marketing or advertising pieces to existing or prospective customers. The content sources 310 may include marketing or advertising firms that provide promotional items for clients. More generally, the content sources 310 may be any individual or enterprise that provides single or serial objects for fabrication by the three-dimensional printers 304 described herein.

**[0070]** One or more web servers 311 may provide web-based access to and from any of the other participants in the environment 300. While depicted as a separate network entity, it will be readily appreciated that a web server 311 may be logically or physically associated with one of the other devices described herein, and may, for example, provide a user interface for web access to one of the three-dimensional printers 304, one of the print servers 308 (or databases 309 coupled thereto), one of the content sources 310, or any of the other resources 316 described below in a manner that permits user interaction through the data network 302, e.g., from a client device 306 or mobile device 312.

**[0071]** The mobile devices 312 may be any form of mobile device, such as any wireless, battery-powered device, that might be used to interact with the networked printing environment 300. The mobile devices 312 may, for example, include laptop computers, tablets, thin client network computers, portable digital assistants, messaging devices, cellular phones, smart phones, portable media or entertainment devices, and so forth. In general, mobile devices 312 may be operated by users for a variety of user-oriented functions such as to locate printable objects, to submit objects for printing, to monitor a personally owned printer, and/or to monitor a pending print job. A mobile device 312 may include location awareness technology such as Global Positioning System (“GPS”), which may obtain information that can be usefully integrated into a printing operation in a variety of ways. For example, a user may select an object for printing and submit a model of the object to a print server, such as any of the print servers described above. The print server may determine a location of the mobile device 312 initiating the print job and locate a closest printer for fabrication of the object.

**[0072]** In another aspect, a printing function may be location-based, using the GPS input (or cellular network triangulation, proximity detection, or any other suitable location detection

techniques). For example, a user may be authorized to print a model only when the user is near a location (e.g., within a geo-fenced area or otherwise proximal to a location), or only after a user has visited a location. Thus a user may be provided with printable content based upon locations that the user has visited, or while within a certain venue such as an amusement park, museum, theater, sports arena, hotel, or the like.

[0073] The other resources 316 may include any other software or hardware resources that may be usefully employed in networked printing applications as contemplated herein. For example, the other resources 316 may include payment processing servers or platforms used to authorize payment for content subscriptions, content purchases, or printing resources. As another example, the other resources 316 may include social networking platforms that may be used, e.g., to share three-dimensional models and/or fabrication results according to a user's social graph. In another aspect, the other resources 316 may include certificate servers or other security resources for third party verification of identity, encryption or decryption of three-dimensional models, and so forth. In another aspect, the other resources 316 may include online tools for three-dimensional design or modeling, as well as databases of objects, surface textures, build supplies, and so forth. In another aspect, the other resources 316 may include a desktop computer or the like co-located (e.g., on the same local area network with, or directly coupled to through a serial or USB cable) with one of the three-dimensional printers 304. In this case, the other resource 316 may provide supplemental functions for the three-dimensional printer 304 in a networked printing context such as maintaining a print queue or operating a web server for remote interaction with the three-dimensional printer 304. More generally, any resource that might be usefully integrated into a networked printing environment may be one of the resources 316 as contemplated herein.

[0074] It will be readily appreciated that the various components of the networked printing environment 300 described above may be arranged and configured to support networked printing in a variety of ways. For example, in one aspect there is disclosed herein a networked computer with a print server and a web interface to support networked three-dimensional printing. This device may include a print server, a database, and a web server as discussed above. The print server may be coupled through a data network to a plurality of three-dimensional printers and configured to receive status information from one or more sensors for each one of the plurality of three-dimensional printers. The print server may be further configured to manage

a print queue for each one of the plurality of three-dimensional printers. The database may be coupled in a communicating relationship with the print server and configured to store print queue data and status information for each one of the plurality of three-dimensional printers. The web server may be configured to provide a user interface over the data network to a remote user, the user interface adapted to present the status information and the print queue data for one or more of the plurality of three-dimensional printers to the user and the user interface adapted to receive a print job from the remote user for one of the plurality of three-dimensional printers.

**[0075]** The three-dimensional printer 304 described above may be configured to autonomously subscribe to syndicated content sources and periodically receive and print objects from those sources. Thus in one aspect there is disclosed herein a device including any of the three-dimensional printers described above; a network interface; and a processor (which may without limitation include the controller for the printer). The processor may be configured to subscribe to a plurality of sources of content (such as the content sources 310 described above) selected by a user for fabrication by the three-dimensional printer through the network interface. The processor may be further configured to receive one or more three-dimensional models from the plurality of content sources 310 and to select one of the one or more three-dimensional models for fabrication by the three-dimensional printer 304 according to a user preference for prioritization. The user preference may, for example, preferentially prioritize particular content sources 310, or particular types of content (e.g., tools, games, artwork, upgrade parts, or content related to a particular interest of the user).

**[0076]** The memory of a three-dimensional printer 304 may be configured to store a queue of one or more additional three-dimensional models not selected for immediate fabrication. The processor may be programmed to periodically re-order or otherwise alter the queue according to pre-determined criteria or manual user input. For example, the processor may be configured to evaluate a new three-dimensional model based upon a user preference for prioritization, and to place the new three-dimensional model at a corresponding position in the queue. The processor may also or instead be configured to retrieve content from one of the content sources 310 by providing authorization credentials for the user, which may be stored at the three-dimensional printer or otherwise accessible for presentation to the content source 310. The processor may be configured to retrieve content from at least one of the plurality of content sources 310 by authorizing a payment from the user to a content provider. The processor may be

configured to search a second group of sources of content (such as any of the content sources 310 described above) according to one or more search criteria provide by a user. This may also or instead include demographic information for the user, contextual information for the user, or any other implicit or explicit user information.

[0077] In another aspect, there is disclosed herein a system for managing subscriptions to three-dimensional content sources such as any of the content sources 310 described above. The system may include a web server configured to provide a user interface over a data network, which user interface is adapted to receive user preferences from a user including a subscription to a plurality of sources of a plurality of three-dimensional models, a prioritization of content from the plurality of sources, and an identification of one or more fabrication resources coupled to the data network and suitable for fabricating objects from the plurality of three-dimensional models. The system may also include a database to store the user preferences, and to receive and store the plurality of three-dimensional models as they are issued by the plurality of sources. The system may include a processor (e.g., of a print server 308, or alternatively of a client device 306 interacting with the print server 308) configured select a selected one of the plurality of three-dimensional models for fabrication based upon the prioritization. The system may include a print server configured to communicate with the one or more fabrication resources through the data network, to determine an availability of the one or more fabrication resources, and to transmit the selected one of the plurality of three-dimensional models to one of the one or more fabrication resources.

[0078] In another aspect, there is disclosed herein a network of three-dimensional printing resources comprising: a plurality of three-dimensional printers, each one of the plurality of three-dimensional printers including a network interface; a server configured to manage execution of a plurality of print jobs by the plurality of three-dimensional printers; and a data network that couples the server and the plurality of three-dimensional printers in a communicating relationship.

[0079] In general as described above, the server may include a web-based user interface configured for a user to submit a new print job to the server and to monitor progress of the new print job. The web-based user interface may permit video monitoring of each one of the plurality of three-dimensional printers, or otherwise provide information useful to a remote user including

image-based, simulation-based, textual-based or other information concerning status of a current print. Details of a suitable user interface are discussed in further detail with reference to Fig. 5.

**[0080]** The fabrication resources may, for example, include any of the three-dimensional printers 304 described above. One or more of the fabrication resources may be a private fabrication resource secured with a credential-based access system. The user may provide, as a user preference and prior to use of the private fabrication resource, credentials for accessing the private fabrication resource. In another aspect, the one or more fabrication resources may include a commercial fabrication resource. In this case the user may provide an authorization to pay for use of the commercial fabrication resource in the form of a user preference prior to use of the commercial fabrication resource.

**[0081]** Many current three-dimensional printers require significant manufacturing time to fabricate an object. At the same time, certain printers may include a tool or system to enable multiple, sequential object prints without human supervision or intervention, such as the conveyor belt described above. In this context, prioritizing content may be particularly important to prevent crowding out of limited fabrication resources with low priority content that arrives periodically for autonomous fabrication. As a significant advantage, the systems and methods described herein permit prioritization using a variety of user-specified criteria, and permit use of multiple fabrication resources in appropriate circumstances. Thus prioritizing content as contemplated herein may include any useful form of prioritization. For example, this may include prioritizing the content according to source. The content sources 310 may have an explicit type that specifies the nature of the source (e.g., commercial or paid content, promotional content, product support content, non-commercial) or the type of content provided (e.g., automotive, consumer electronics, radio control hobbyist, contest prizes, and so forth). Prioritizing content may include prioritizing the content according to this type. The three-dimensional models themselves may also or instead include a type (e.g., tool, game, home, art, jewelry, replacement part, upgrade part, etc.), and prioritizing the content may include prioritizing the content according to this type.

**[0082]** In one aspect, the processor may be configured to select two or more of the plurality of three-dimensional models for concurrent fabrication by two or more of the plurality of fabrication resources based upon the prioritization when a priority of the two or more of the plurality of three-dimensional models exceeds a predetermined threshold. That is, where

particular models individually have a priority above the predetermined threshold, multiple fabrication resources may be located and employed to fabricate these models concurrently. The predetermined threshold may be evaluated for each model individually, or for all of the models collectively such as on an aggregate or average basis.

**[0083]** In one aspect, the processor may be configured to adjust prioritization based upon a history of fabrication when a number of objects fabricated from one of the plurality of sources exceeds a predetermined threshold. Thus, for example, a user may limit the number of objects fabricated from a particular source, giving subsequent priority to content from other sources regardless of an objectively determined priority for a new object from the particular source. This prevents a single source from overwhelming a single fabrication resource, such as a personal three-dimensional printer operated by the user, in a manner that crowds out other content from other sources of possible interest. At the same time, this may enable content sources 310 to publish on any convenient schedule, without regard to whether and how subscribers will be able to fabricate objects.

**[0084]** In another aspect, the processor may be configured to identify one or more additional sources of content based upon a similarity to one of the plurality of sources of content. For example, where a content source 310 is an automotive manufacturer, the processor may perform a search for other automotive manufactures, related parts suppliers, mechanics, and so forth. The processor may also or instead be configured to identify one or more additional sources of content based upon a social graph of the user. This may, for example, include analyzing a social graph of relationships from the user to identify groups with common interests, shared professions, a shared history of schools or places of employment, or a common current or previous residence location, any of which may be used to locate other sources of content that may be of interest to the user.

**[0085]** Fig. 4 depicts a method for operating a three-dimensional printer, such as any of the three-dimensional printers described above, when coupled to a data network. As contemplated above, the three-dimensional printer may include a network interface for coupling to the data network, as well as any number of sensors that provide status information for various aspects of the three-dimensional printer, which status information may be communicated over the data network to a remote user or other automated or manual resource in order to monitor submission, progress, and completion of a print job. In general, the printer may operate as an

autonomous network device coupled directly to the Internet through a cable mode, router, hub, or the like. In another aspect, the printer may use a computer or other computing resource coupled to the printer through a local area network or the like for steps requiring intensive computation (e.g., converting from a stereolithography or other computer automated design format into tool instructions), substantial storage (e.g., print queue management), or other hardware (e.g., cameras, environmental sensors, and so forth).

**[0086]** As shown in step 402, the method 400 may begin with receiving a print job over the data network, which may include any of the data networks described above. The print job may be received from a requester, which may for example include a remote device (or user of the remote device) such as a laptop or other computer. The requester may be coupled in a communicating relationship to the three-dimensional printer through the data network in a host-client relationship, a peer-to-peer relationship, a mutually hosted relationship (e.g., with both devices hosted by a third networked device) or any other relationship capable of supporting communications and data transfer between the requester and the three-dimensional printer. In another aspect, a user may communicate indirectly with the three-dimensional printer, such as by interacting over the data network with a print server, subscription content source, or any other resource or service that facilitates managed access to the three-dimensional printer over the data network, and acts as the requester to submit the print job.

**[0087]** As shown in step 404, the method 400 may include evaluating an availability of the three-dimensional printer for the print job. This may be based upon a signal from any of the sensors associated with the three-dimensional printer. It will be understood that this evaluation may be performed locally at the three-dimensional printer, with an availability indicator transmitted back to the requester, or this evaluation may be performed remotely by a device that receives sensor data in raw or processed form from the sensor(s) of the three-dimensional printer.

**[0088]** A wide variety of evaluations may be performed. For example, the evaluation may relate to the status of a current job executing on the three-dimensional printer, or an analysis of one or more other jobs in a local queue of the three-dimensional printer, any of which might result in the three-dimensional printer being unavailable. For example, where the printer has a substantial number of queued jobs that will require several hours to fabricate, or that uses all available local memory of the printer, then the printer may be identified as unavailable for additional print jobs. As another example, the evaluation may be based upon other sensors such

as thermostats, motion or position error detectors, or optical sensors, any of which might permit inferences concerning the ability of the three-dimensional printer to execute a print job. For example, if an optical sensor detects an object within a working volume of the three-dimensional printer, or if a thermal sensor detects that a print head is not at a suitable temperature (or is not responding correctly to a heating command), the printer may not be ready and a corresponding evaluation may be provided. As another example, a sensor may detect a quantity of build material available to the printer, and a processor on the printer may determine if the supply is inadequate for the requested print job. Thus evaluating the availability of the three-dimensional printer may include accepting the print job only if a supply of build material available for the three-dimensional printer exceeds an amount of build material required for the print job and one or more additional jobs ahead of the requested print job in the queue.

**[0089]** Similarly, any of a variety of status checks for normal, error-free functioning of the three-dimensional printer may be undertaken prior to accepting (or transmitting from a requester) a new print job. More generally, a variety of sensors and other inputs (including, e.g., data that may be stored locally in a memory of the three-dimensional printer) may provide useful information for assessing the availability of the device, and may be used as the sensor(s) contemplated herein to evaluate availability of the three-dimensional printer for a print job.

**[0090]** In one aspect, the evaluation may be based on a receiving state of the three-dimensional printer. The receiving state may be inferred based on various sensor signals and/or data indicative of whether the three-dimensional printer is currently engaged in a print. In another aspect, the receiving state may be explicitly provided by an owner or administrator of the three-dimensional printer, thus providing an opportunity for the administrator to control what level of access to the printing resource will be provided to external users who might connect to the printer over the data network. Thus the receiving state may be selected from a group including, e.g., open, closed, or authenticated. In general, the open receiving state may permit access to any remote user, while the closed receiving state does not permit access to any remote users (such as where the owner wishes to connect to the data network to retrieve remote content, but does not wish to make the three-dimensional printer publicly available). The authenticated receiving state may permit remote access conditioned upon receipt of appropriate credentials. Thus in one aspect, availability may be based upon an identity of a user – the requester -- associated with the print job. In this case, evaluating availability of the three-dimensional printer

may include assessing an identity of the user, which may be determined, e.g., using access credentials such as a user name and password, a digital certificate, or any other techniques for securely identifying the user, either locally or with reference to a trusted external resource such as a certificate server or the like.

**[0091]** In another aspect, the print job itself may be secured for communication to the three-dimensional printer using, e.g., encryption of print or model data. The printer may in turn conditionally authorize printing according to any related access credentials. Thus in one aspect the method may include securing the print job using a digital rights management technique that restricts execution of the print job to one or more predetermined three-dimensional printers or to a printer having suitable credentials. In this context, evaluating the availability of the three-dimensional printer may include determining whether the three-dimensional printer is one of the one or more predetermined three-dimensional printers, or whether the three-dimensional printer has appropriate credentials. This technique may be particularly useful, for example, where the print job includes purchased content or the like for which the content creator (or distributor) wishes to retain control of fabrication, e.g., by limiting who, where, when, or how many times the print job can be fabricated.

**[0092]** The evaluation may also or instead be based on a variety of sensor measurements and/or other data or information about the processing status of the three-dimensional printer. By way of example and not of limitation, evaluating the availability of the three-dimensional printer may include determining a percentage completion of a current print job at the three-dimensional printer. Evaluating the availability of the three-dimensional printer may include estimating a wait time until the three-dimensional printer will be available and transmitting the wait time to the requester. Evaluating the availability of the three-dimensional printer may include determining whether the three-dimensional printer is immediately available.

**[0093]** It will also be appreciated that a wide variety of sensors may usefully be employed in this evaluation. By way of non-limiting example, the plurality of sensors may include a video camera directed toward a working volume of the three-dimensional printer. The plurality of sensors may include an optical sensor that detects obstructions within a working volume of the three-dimensional printer. The plurality of sensors may include a sensor that detects a quantity of build material available. The plurality of sensors may include a sensor that detects a presence of build material in a material supply feed.

**[0094]** As shown in step 406, when the three-dimensional printer is not available for a print job, the method 400 may include electronically notifying the requester that the print job has been rejected. This may, for example, include a notification such as a textual message or graphic displayed within a user interface used by the requester to submit the print job, or this may include a notification using any suitable communication medium such as an SMS text message or electronic mail communication to the requester.

**[0095]** When the three-dimensional printer is not available for the print job, additional processing may be performed prior to notifying the requester, such as a search for additional, suitable printing resources and/or redirection of the print job. Thus in one aspect, the method may include identifying one or more alternative three-dimensional printers coupled to the data network as resources available for the print job when the three-dimensional printer is not available. In another aspect, when the three-dimensional printer is not available, the method may include identifying an alternative three-dimensional printer coupled to the data network and redirecting the requester to the alternative three-dimensional printer. The redirecting may include automatically redirecting the print job without user intervention, or the redirecting may include transmitting a suggestion to the requester to use the alternative three-dimensional printer. More generally, any suitable information about other available resources and/or redirection of the request may be transmitted to the requester when the three-dimensional printer that received the print job is determined to be unavailable. This may also include information about an expected wait time until the printer will be available, when such information is provided by the printer or can be reasonably inferred from other information.

**[0096]** As shown in step 407, a manual verification may be optionally requested, even where the three-dimensional printer is otherwise determined to be available, before adding the print job to the print queue. The request for manual verification by the requester may be provided, for example, along with contextual information such as an expected time before the print job can begin fabrication, or a current image of the three-dimensional printer (e.g., of the working volume or supply of build material). Thus in one aspect, evaluating the availability of the three-dimensional printer may include transmitting an image of the three-dimensional printer to the requester, and receiving a manual confirmation to proceed with the print job from the requester.

[0097] As shown in step 408, when the three-dimensional printer is available, the method 400 may include adding the print job to a queue for the three-dimensional printer and initiating fabrication of an object according to the queue. It will be understood that the three-dimensional printer may only have storage for a current print job, in which case the print queue, or more specifically, the local print queue, may consist of a currently active print job containing zero or one print jobs at all times. In another aspect, the three-dimensional printer may have adequate storage and processing capabilities to locally manage a substantial queue of print jobs, or alternatively, may be coupled to a local resource such as a co-located desktop or laptop computer or networked-attached storage that can operate as a local print queue resource for the three-dimensional printer. When the print job is accepted, a notification may be sent to the requester using, e.g., any of the notification techniques described above.

[0098] It will be appreciated that certain print jobs may include multiple, separate physical objects. These objects may be generally unrelated, e.g., where a requester simply decides to build multiple objects at one time, or these objects may be related. Related objects may include structurally related objects, such as where an object larger than a build volume is constructed from several smaller pieces, where the object has several independent moving parts. Related objects may also or instead be contextually related, as with a collection of game pieces such as pieces for a chess board. When a request includes multiple objects, adding these objects to the print queue may include additional processing to allocate the objects among a number of suitable fabrication resources. Thus in one aspect where the print job includes a plurality of objects, the method may include identifying a plurality of printers in proximity to the three-dimensional printer and allocating the plurality of objects for concurrent fabrication among the plurality of printers. This allocation may be managed by the three-dimensional printer that received the request (e.g., by having the printer act as a requester for several other proximate resources), or this allocation may be managed by a remote print server that identifies and coordinates operation of a number of physically proximate or otherwise suitable resources.

[0099] As shown in step 410, the method 400 may include providing information about a queue for the three-dimensional printer to the requester. This may include transmitting a print queue status to the requester for display in a user interface or within the body of an electronic mail message or text message, or more generally using any suitable communication medium. Although depicted in Fig. 4 as occurring after a print job is added to the print queue, it will be

understood that the print queue status may be usefully shared with the requester at any time before or during processing of the print job, and/or periodically while the print job is pending or executing.

**[00100]** As shown in step 412, the method 400 may include completing fabrication, after which the requester may be notified and the object retrieved using any suitable online and/or offline techniques.

**[00101]** Print queue status information as contemplated above may also include information relating to operation of the three-dimensional printer. For example, the method may include transmitting status information from one or more of the plurality of sensors to the requester during an execution of the print job. The method may include notifying the requester of a successful completion of the print job, or the method may include notifying the requester if the print job fails to complete. In this communication of status information, the three-dimensional printer may also request further user input, such as by inquiring whether to try printing the object again, or whether to forward an unsuccessful print job to another resource. In one aspect, the status information may include at least one photograph captured, e.g., from a video camera or digital still camera associated with the printer, which may be transmitted directly to the requester, or to some other location such as a social networking platform. In one aspect, the social networking platform may include one or more of Flickr, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, and Facebook, or any other website or the like where the requester can share the at least one photograph with others using tools available within the social networking platform.

**[00102]** It will be readily appreciated that the above steps are provided by way of example and not limitation, and that numerous variations are possible including additions, omissions, and or variations of the steps recited above. All such variations as would be appreciated by one of ordinary skill in the art are intended to fall within the scope of this disclosure. In particular, the various step described above may be performed by a networked printer that directly hosts a connection with a remote user, or by a print server or the like that mediates print job administration between users and fabrication resources. Thus the various steps may be performed in a distributed manner among two or more of a user, by a print server, and/or by a three-dimensional printer depending upon the specific network of devices performing the method. By way of example, a three-dimensional model may be transmitted directly from a three-dimensional scanner to a three-dimensional printer for fabrication. The scanner and the

printer may be locally coupled to one another, or remotely coupled through a print server or the like, or connected through a network using a peer-to-peer or similar relationship.

**[00103]** It will also be understood that this disclosure includes apparatus for performing the methods described above. Thus in one aspect there is disclosed a three-dimensional printer including a network interface configured to receive a print job from a requester over a data network, a plurality of sensors that provide status information for a plurality of aspects of the three-dimensional printer; and a processor configured to evaluate an availability of the three-dimensional printer for the print job based upon a signal from at least one of the plurality of sensors. The processor may include any suitable processing circuitry such as any controller, microcontroller, microprocessor and/or other circuitry used to control the three-dimensional printer, and/or any similar processing circuitry in a co-located computer or the like. Where processing is distributed, e.g., among multiple printers, a print server, a requester device, and so forth, the various steps may be distributed in any suitable fashion consistent with networked printing as contemplated herein.

**[00104]** In another aspect, the method steps may be embodied in computer executable code stored in a non-transitory computer readable medium such as a computer memory. Thus there is disclosed herein a computer program product embodied in a non-transitory computer readable medium that, when executing on one or more computing devices, performs any of the steps described above. In one aspect, this may include the steps of: receiving a print job from a requester over a data network at a three-dimensional printer, the three-dimensional printer including a plurality of sensors that provide status information for a plurality of aspects of the three-dimensional printer; and evaluating an availability of the three-dimensional printer for the print job based upon a signal from at least one of the plurality of sensors.

**[00105]** Fig. 5 depicts a user interface for networked three-dimensional printing. The user interface 500 may be a web page or other remotely created and executed interface supported, e.g., by one of the print servers or web servers described above. In another embodiment, the user interface 500 may be served by one of the three-dimensional printers described above, which may execute a web server for remote access to administrative or fabrication functions of the three-dimensional printer. In another embodiment, the user interface 500 may be created by a local application that retrieves data, images, print queue information,

models, and so forth from a variety of remote applications and other resources, while also formatting outbound commands from the client device to the various resources so that the remote resources can be integrated within a single workspace on a client device. The user interface 500 may in general be rendered on a display or similar hardware on a client device or mobile device, and may permit user interaction through any suitable controls to permit local control and administration of remote fabrication resources. In general, the user interface 500 may be an interface for management of a variety of remote fabrication resources as generally described above.

**[00106]** For example, the user interface 500 may include a first display area 502 that shows a list of available online three-dimensional printers or other fabrication resources. This display area may be interactive, and may permit, e.g., sorting of fabrication resources, searching for new fabrication resources, and the like. The first display area 502 may also or instead provide status information for each listed fabrication resource, such as information about availability, recent print activity, a current queue of objects for printing at that resource, and so forth. In one aspect where the user interface 500 is a web page for remote users to manage fabrication, the first display area 502 may be adapted to receive a manual selection of one of the plurality of three-dimensional printers from the remote user to execute a print job.

**[00107]** The user interface 500 may also or instead include a second display area 504 that shows a list of available models for fabrication by the fabrication resources. This may include any of a variety of interactive features such as search capabilities for models, and links to information about models such as cost, user reviews, complexity and print time, model renderings, descriptions, notes from a content provider, and so forth. This may also include an interface tool to permit a user to fabricate a model. The second display area 504 may be adapted to receive a batch print job from a remote user, the batch print job including a plurality of related print jobs. For example, a user may select an object displayed in the second display area 504 that includes multiple parts, or the user may select multiple items listed in the second display area 504 (using, e.g., a conventional control key and mouse click, or any other suitable user interface controls/techniques) for batch processing. This may also permit the remote user to provide additional, related information, such as a permissible allocation of the plurality of related print jobs among the plurality of three-dimensional printers, which permissible allocation may include general preferences (e.g., high-speed printers or local printers), specific preferences (e.g., use

printer xyz), or firm requirements (e.g., use only printer xyz, or only printers selected from a specific group).

**[00108]** The user interface 500 may also or instead include a third display area 506 that shows a print queue. This may include a local print queue for a specific fabrication resource, or this may include a print queue stored at a print server for a user, along with information about where and when each object is scheduled for fabrication. The user interface 500 may permit one-click drag-and-drop print queue management of three-dimensional printing jobs. For example, a user may simply drag an object from the second display area 504 (objects) into the third display area 506 (print queue) where the object may be automatically or manually prioritized for execution. Alternatively, the user may drag an object from the second display area 504 into the first display area 502 (printers) to request (with a single operation) fabrication of the object by a specific printer. More generally, the user interface 500 may facilitate control over fabrication of models from a variety of content sources using a variety of fabrication resources, some or all of which may be remote from a current user manipulating the user interface 500.

**[00109]** The user interface 500 may include a fourth display area 508 that displays information for a currently active print job. This area may usefully include any information related to the print job such as status, time to completion, source, current time, etc. Additionally, this area may include a control or group of controls for manual operation of the three-dimensional printer by a remote user. Thus for example a user may remotely stop fabrication, restart fabrication, cancel fabrication, change fabrication settings, perform a test extrusion, and so forth, as though the user were locally controlling the printer.

**[00110]** The fourth display area 506 may include a visualization area 510 that displays a visual representation of the print job. For example, the visualization area 510 may display a current tool path of the printer that is executing the print job, such as a two-dimensional layer of the object showing a path of a print head as it traverses that layer. The visualization area 510 may also or instead show a simulated print object, such as a rendering of a three-dimensional model depicting a current state of the completion of an object being fabricated according to a print job. The visualization area 510 may also or instead show an image of a working volume of a three-dimensional printer or other fabrication resource captured during execution of the print job. This may, for example, include a digital still image (which may be updated periodically) or a video image captured from a video camera at the three-dimensional printer. Thus a user may

visually monitor progress or status of a remote print job through the user interface 500. A status area 512 may also be provided that shows current status information (e.g., percentage completion, time until start, time until completion, and so forth) for the active resource.

**[00111]** The user interface 500 may also include a menu bar 516 or the like for other functions not otherwise accounted for within the other active areas. This may include file information, search tools, help menus, user or account information, and so forth. This may include controls to share information about print activity. For example, the user interface may include at least one control to capture a frame of data from the video camera as a video image and to transmit the video image to a remote location through the data network. The remote location may, for example, be a social networking site such as any of the social network platforms described above. In another aspect, the device may be configured to transmit the video image in an electronic mail communication to, e.g., the user or one or more recipients identified by the user. In another aspect, the user interface may include a control to capture a stop-motion animation of a fabrication of an object using the video camera. This may include user controls for a frame rate, duration, or other parameters of the stop-motion animation so that an animation of desired length and detail can be created for sharing or other use.

**[00112]** Fig. 6 is a flowchart of a method for operating a three-dimensional printer on a network. In particular, the method 600 of Fig. 6 emphasizes autonomous operation of the three-dimensional printer using content available through the data network.

**[00113]** The method 600 may begin with coupling a three-dimensional printer to a data network, as shown in step 602.

**[00114]** As shown in step 604, the method 600 may include locating one or more sources of content for fabrication by the three-dimensional printer on the data network according to one or more user-provided criteria. The sources of content may, for example, include any of the content sources described above, which may provide content on a syndicated basis using any suitable protocol (such as RSS or the like) so that the three-dimensional printer can identify new content from the content sources as the new content becomes available.

**[00115]** As shown in step 606, the method 600 may include subscribing to new content from the one or more sources of content.

**[00116]** As shown in step 608, the method may include receiving at least one three-dimensional model of new content from one of the one or more sources of content. This may

occur in a variety of ways. For example, where the three-dimensional printer has subscribed to an RSS feed provided by the content source, a new item in the RSS feed (or media enclosure or similar content embedded in the feed) may provide a URL or the like that identifies a network location for a three-dimensional model, along with any metadata that the three-dimensional printer might use (or present to a user for evaluation) to determine whether to retrieve the three-dimensional model. It will be understood that while RSS (“RDF Site Summary,” a.k.a., “Really Simple Syndication”) provides one useful platform for syndicating content including three-dimensional models, any suitable technology or combination of technologies may also or instead be employed, including ‘push’ technologies that forward notifications to clients and/or ‘pull’ technologies that explicitly request updates on any suitable regular or ad hoc basis.

**[00117]** It will be understood that fabrication of a single model using certain techniques may take a substantial amount of time, regardless of the rate at which individual models or groups of models are published from different sources. As such, a method as contemplated herein may advantageously apply local prioritization to ensure that more desirable content is not crowded out of limited fabrication resources by less desirable content. Receiving content as shown in step 608 may also include receiving a plurality of three-dimensional models and prioritizing fabrication of the plurality of three-dimensional models into an order of fabrication.

**[00118]** As shown in step 610, the method may include fabricating an object from the at least one three-dimensional model. As noted above, this may include fabricating a plurality of three-dimensional models in an order determined by a local prioritization scheme. Additional features may be usefully provided. For example, the model may be locally analyzed by a printer and automatically scaled according to the printer’s build volume, or the model may alternatively be divided into multiple, separate objects, each fitting within the build volume, and all capable of being assembled into the original object. This approach may be particularly advantageous where a printer is autonomously receiving and fabricating multiple objects in succession without user supervision.

**[00119]** Thus, in one aspect there is disclosed a three-dimensional printer configured for autonomous operation to retrieve and fabricate content published to a network. While the method 600 described above is generally local in nature, it will be appreciated that other collocated resources may be used, such as a desktop computer or the like coupled to a three-dimensional printer, which desktop computer may subscribe to content, prioritize new content,

and then direct the content to the local three-dimensional printer. In another aspect, the various steps may be performed by a print server or the like which couples remote content sources to remote three-dimensional printers according to any user criteria. More generally, a variety of additions, omissions, rearrangements and modifications to the steps described above may be employed without departing from the scope of this disclosure.

**[00120]** Fig. 7 is a flowchart of a method for operating a three-dimensional printer with a video camera and a network interface. In particular, the method 700 of Fig. 7 emphasizes incorporation of data from the video camera into operation and management of the three-dimensional printer.

**[00121]** As shown in step 702, the method 700 may begin with providing a three-dimensional printer including a build volume, a network interface coupled to a data network, and a video camera positioned to capture video of the build volume from a point of view, such as from above or in front a side of the build volume. This may, for example, include any of the three-dimensional printers described above.

**[00122]** As shown in step 704, the method 700 may include receiving a three-dimensional model through the network interface using, e.g., any of the techniques for locating and retrieving models as described above. By way of example, this may include direct access to a content source, syndicated access to a feed of content, and/or use of a print server or other remote print management tool.

**[00123]** As shown in step 706, the method 700 may include fabricating the three-dimensional model as an object within the build volume of the three-dimensional printer, all as generally contemplated above.

**[00124]** As shown in step 708, the method 700 may include providing a user interface to a remote user accessing the device through the network interface, wherein the user interface presents an image of the build volume from the camera and a two-dimensional projection of the three-dimensional model from the point of view of the video camera. This may be any of the user interfaces described above, or any other suitable interface for conveying visual information such as a video image and/or model projection. It will be understood that a variety of user interface technologies and techniques are well known in the art, any of which may be suitably adapted to providing the user interface as contemplated herein. The two-dimensional projection may be any suitable rendering, simulation, or other visualization of the model and its current state of

completion. Thus for example the two-dimensional projection may be obtained from a three-dimensional scanner or other data acquisition device coupled to a processor of the three-dimensional printer. The two-dimensional projection may be an image of the object as simulated based upon operation of the three-dimensional printer, using, e.g., a tool path history or a current state of completion. The two-dimensional projection may be dynamically updated to correspond to a state of physical completion of the object in order to provide real time, or quasi-real time visual status information. In one aspect, the two-dimensional projection may simply be a video image from the video camera.

**[00125]** As shown in step 710, the method 700 may include transmitting status information over the data network upon completion of the object. This may, for example, include data presented through the user interface, or any other status information or summary thereof. For example, the status information may include a digital image from the video camera, which may be transmitted with an electronic mail communication confirming completion of the object. More generally, status information may include any of the status information described above, and may be transmitted to a user through an electronic mail communication, instant messaging text message, or any other suitable communication medium.

**[00126]** It will be readily appreciated that a device such as a three-dimensional printer may be configured to perform the steps described above. Thus in one aspect there is disclosed herein a device including: a three-dimensional printer having a build volume; a network interface coupled to a data network; a video camera positioned to capture video of the build volume from a point of view; and a processor configured to receive a three-dimensional model through the network interface, and to control operation of the three-dimensional printer to fabricate the three-dimensional model as an object within the build volume of the three-dimensional printer, the processor further configured to provide a user interface to a remote user accessing the device through the network interface, and to present in the user interface an image of the build volume from the camera and a two-dimensional projection of the three-dimensional model from the point of view of the video camera.

**[00127]** The processor may be configured to monitor operation of the three-dimensional printer based upon a comparison of the two-dimensional projection with the image of the build volume. Using this type of image analysis, it may be possible to track actual progress against predicted progress to identify equipment malfunctions or other interference that might

cause the physical object to deviate from the model used to fabricate the physical object. For example, a temperature change in an extruder, an air bubble in a path of melted supply material, or a tool misstep might cause an unrecoverable error in a fabrication process. By comparing actual to expected two-dimensional or three-dimensional results, a fabrication process can be expeditiously aborted and restarted or otherwise addressed without waiting for completion and physical inspection of the constructed object. In addition, more subtle fabrication errors such as misalignment of layers, surface holes, inaccurate material build-ups or deposits, rotational distortion, and so forth may also be detected and address prior to completion of a build. More generally, a variety of machine vision functions may be implemented locally, or with cooperation between a local printer and a remote print server, using a video camera or digital still camera as a source of visual input.

**[00128]** As generally described above, the three-dimensional printer may be configured with a variety of tools and functions to facilitate networked use. For example, the processor may be configured to provide credential-based access to a user interface of the three-dimensional printer. As another example, the user interface may provide status information for the three-dimensional printer. This may include status information for a build process executing on the three-dimensional printer currently, or an anticipated build. The user interface may usefully display a two-dimensional tool path for the three-dimensional printer, the two-dimensional tool path corresponding to a current layer of the object during a fabrication of the object by the three-dimensional printer, or any other useful two-dimensional information. In one aspect, the processor may be configured to couple the three-dimensional printer in a communicating relationship with a remote print server through the data network, such as to facilitate networked use or management of the three-dimensional printer through the remote print server.

**[00129]** The three-dimensional printer may also be configured for a variety of diagnostic and technical support functions. For example, the user interface may support remote access for technical support during local operation of the three-dimensional printer. Thus for example, technical support personnel may connect to the three-dimensional printer and employ the user interface to configure, troubleshoot, reprogram or update the three-dimensional printer from a remote location. The process may be programmed for supporting functions. For example, the processor may be configured to fabricate a test object, capture an image of the test object, and compare the image to the test object to validate operation of the three-dimensional printer.

**[00130]** Many of the above systems, devices, methods, processes, and the like may be realized in hardware, software, or any combination of these suitable for the control, data acquisition, and data processing described herein. This includes realization in one or more microprocessors, microcontrollers, embedded microcontrollers, programmable digital signal processors or other programmable devices or processing circuitry, along with internal and/or external memory, any of which may serve as the controller described above or supplement processing of the controller with additional circuitry. This may also, or instead, include one or more application specific integrated circuits, programmable gate arrays, programmable array logic components, or any other device(s) that may be configured to process electronic signals. It will further be appreciated that a realization of the processes or devices described above may include computer-executable code created using a structured programming language such as C, an object oriented programming language such as C++, or any other high-level or low-level programming language (including assembly languages, hardware description languages, and database programming languages and technologies) that may be stored, compiled or interpreted to run on one of the above devices, as well as heterogeneous combinations of processors, processor architectures, or combinations of different hardware and software. At the same time, processing may be distributed across devices such as the various systems described above, or all of the functionality may be integrated into a dedicated, standalone device. All such permutations and combinations are intended to fall within the scope of the present disclosure.

**[00131]** In other embodiments, disclosed herein are computer program products comprising computer-executable code or computer-usable code that, when executing on one or more computing devices (such as the devices/systems described above), performs any and/or all of the steps described above. The code may be stored in a computer memory, which may be a memory from which the program executes (such as random access memory associated with a processor), or a storage device such as a disk drive, flash memory or any other optical, electromagnetic, magnetic, infrared or other device or combination of devices. In another aspect, any of the processes described above may be embodied in any suitable transmission or propagation medium carrying the computer-executable code described above and/or any inputs or outputs from same.

**[00132]** It will be appreciated that the methods and systems described above are set forth by way of example and not of limitation. Numerous variations, additions, omissions, and other

modifications will be apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art. Thus, the order or presentation of method steps in the description and drawings above is not intended to require this order of performing the recited steps unless a particular order is expressly required or otherwise clear from the context.

**[00133]** While particular embodiments of the present invention have been shown and described, it will be apparent to those skilled in the art that various changes and modifications in form and details may be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. The features of the invention as described herein should be interpreted in the broadest sense allowable by law.

**[00134]** Improvements to three-dimensional printers, and systems and/or methods of using such three-dimensional printers, and/or structures fabricated using such three-dimensional printers are described below in various non-limiting examples. These exemplary embodiments may generally be deployed in combination with any of the systems and methods disclosed above, or any similar suitably similar fabrication platforms, or in any other context that would be apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art, and all such uses and variations are intended to fall within the scope of this disclosure.

**Mobile phone with three-dimensional scanning**

[0001] As shown in Fig. 1X, a mobile phone 102 or similar handheld device may be configured to obtain three-dimensional data. This may include a variety of accessories and/or attachments generally depicted as an accessory 104, or the various components may be integrated into the mobile phone.

[0002] Numerous techniques may be adapted to mobile-phone based three-dimensional scanning. For example, techniques such as shape-from-motion or stereoscopic imaging can recover three-dimensional data from a group of digital images. Other optical techniques such as laser line scanning and structured light imaging, may be employed with some modest supplemental lighting hardware. Other techniques such as ultrasonic imaging, time-of-flight laser range finding, and so forth may also or instead be used with appropriate transducers and corresponding processing.

[0003] In one aspect, an accessory case may be provided with various sensors and/or measurement devices for three-dimensional imaging. The accessory case may be a substantially rigid structure fitted to the mobile device, and may include a mechanical coupling to removably and replaceably fix the accessory case to the mobile phone. The accessory case may also or instead include a pliable container for the mobile device such as a leather folio, plastic enclosure, or the like. The accessory case may include an electrical coupling to support data communications between the mobile phone and the accessory case (or more specifically, functional components within the accessory case), and/or to provide power to the accessory case. The accessory case may also or instead include a separate power source to power electrical components within the accessory case.

[0004] For example, the accessory case may include a light source such a laser line source, a structured light source, or colored LEDs that provide an illumination source that is, when mechanically coupled to the mobile phone, in a fixed spatial relationship to a camera of the mobile phone. In one aspect, a three-dimensional data acquisition system using the foregoing may also include three-dimensional reconstruction software for execution on the mobile phone to support reconstruction using the laser line and a camera of the mobile phone. In another aspect, the accessory case may provide a second camera to supplement a camera of the mobile phone for stereoscopic imaging, or a number of cameras the work independently from the camera of the mobile phone or in combination with the camera of the mobile phone to obtain images for three-

dimensional reconstruction. The accessory case may also include various lenses for either the camera(s) of the accessory case, the camera(s) of the mobile phone, or some combination of these. Similarly, the accessory case may include one or more mirrors to reorient a viewpoint of a camera of the mobile phone. Thus for example, one or more mirrors or other optical components may be provided to capture images with two different cameras of the mobile phone, such as a front-facing camera and a back-facing camera. Where both cameras use a shared CCD array or other imaging device, control software may be provided for the mobile phone to capture two images in rapid succession from the respective optical channels, so as to approximate as much as temporally possible concurrent images for stereoscopic processing.

**[0005]** In another aspect, vibration may be used to achieve imaging from multiple viewpoints to support three-dimensional reconstruction. Thus for example, the accessory case may include a piezoelectric device, eccentric motor, or any other vibration source to achieve vibration of a camera (or lens therefore). Where a light source is also used in the imaging technique, localization or isolation of the vibration source in order to decouple vibration from the emitting light source, or alternatively, to ensure that the light source moves synchronously with the vibration source, or to create a counter-movement for the light source. This may include a variety of passive and/or active devices/systems.

**[0006]** It will be appreciated that any of the foregoing techniques may also or instead be implemented in whole or in part within a mobile device, and/or may use various components of a mobile device in combination with components of the accessory case.

**[0007]** Auditory/visual feedback may be provided, e.g., to let a user know when scanning is completed, or to update the user on scanning progress, or to provide instructions to the user such as to scan from a different pose.

**[0008]** It will also be appreciated that three-dimensional processing may be computationally expensive. As such, some or all of the processing may be performed using cloud computing resources or other dedicated remote processing resource. A number of such tools are commercially available for shape-from-motion type reconstruction using a series of photographs. Other three-dimensional reconstruction techniques may similarly benefit by offloading various processing tasks from the mobile phone (or accessory case). In other embodiments, the accessory case may include a general processing unit, graphics processor, or other processing circuitry or

combinations of processing circuitry to perform computing tasks relating to a three-dimensional reconstruction.

[0009] The mobile phone 102 and the accessory 104 may more generally be configured in a variety of ways to support three-dimensional imaging, as noted in a number of exemplary embodiments as follows:

1. A system for three-dimensional imaging with a mobile device, the system comprising:
  - a housing with a mechanical interface configured to removably and replaceably attach to a predetermined mobile computing device in a predetermined orientation; and
  - an optical train in the housing that optically couples a camera of the predetermined mobile computing device to a field of view from a predetermined pose.
2. The system of claim 1 further comprising a communication interface in the housing configured for data communications between the housing and the predetermined mobile computing device.
3. The system of claim 2 wherein the communication interface includes a wired communication interface that couples to a data port of the predetermined mobile computing device when the housing is attached to the predetermined mobile computing device.
4. The system of claim 2 wherein the communication interface includes a wireless communication interface.
5. The system of claim 2 wherein the communication interface includes a sensor to detect an action of the predetermined mobile computing device.
6. The system of claim 5 wherein the action includes one or more of a sound, a vibration, and an illumination by the predetermined mobile computing device.
7. The system of claim 1 further comprising processing circuitry to obtain three-dimensional data from one or more images acquired by the camera.

8. The system of claim 7 wherein the processing circuitry is within the housing.
9. The system of claim 7 wherein the processing circuitry is within the predetermined mobile computing device.
10. The system of claim 1 wherein the housing includes a power source independent from the predetermined mobile computing device.
11. The system of claim 1 wherein the optical train includes a first optical path for the camera and a second optical path that optically couples a second camera of the predetermined mobile computing device to a second field of view from a different pose than the field of view.
12. The system of claim 11 further comprising processing circuitry on the predetermined mobile computing device configured to obtain substantially concurrent images from the camera and the second camera.
13. The system of claim 12 further comprising processing circuitry on the predetermined mobile computing device configured to process the substantially concurrent images to obtain three-dimensional data from an overlapping region of the field of view and the second field of view.
14. The system of claim 1 wherein the optical train includes a first optical path for the camera and a second optical path that optically couples the camera to a second field of view, the optical train further including an optical switch that selectively couples the camera to the first optical path and the second optical path.
15. The system of claim 14 further comprising processing circuitry on the predetermined mobile computing device configured to control the camera and the optical switch to capture temporally adjacent images from the field of view and the second field of view with the camera.

16. The system of claim 15 further comprising processing circuitry on the predetermined mobile computing device configured to process the temporally adjacent images to obtain three-dimensional data from an overlapping region of the field of view and the second field of view.
17. The system of claim 1 further comprising a supplemental light source in the housing positioned to illuminate the field of view.
18. The system of claim 17 wherein the supplemental light source is a structured light source.
19. The system of claim 1 further comprising a second camera within the housing.
20. The system of claim 19 wherein the housing includes processing circuitry to control the second camera in response to a control signal received through a communication interface to the predetermined mobile computing device.
21. The system of claim 20 wherein the predetermined mobile computing device includes processing circuitry configured to receive a first image from the camera and a second image through the communication interface from the second camera, and further configured to process the first image and the second image to obtain three-dimensional data from an overlapping field of view of the camera and the second camera.
22. A method comprising:
- attaching an accessory to a mobile device, the accessory removably and replaceably attachable to the mobile device, and the accessory including a camera and a communication interface for communications with the mobile device;
  - capturing a first image with the camera;
  - capturing a second image substantially concurrently with the first image using a second camera of the mobile device, wherein the second camera has an overlapping field of view with the camera;

transmitting the first image to the mobile device through the communication interface;  
and  
processing the first image and the second image on the mobile device to obtain three-dimensional data from the overlapping field of view.

23. A method comprising:

attaching an accessory to a mobile device having a camera, the accessory removably and replaceably attachable to the mobile device, and the accessory including an optical train with a first optical path for the camera to a first field of view and a second optical path for the camera to a second field of view having an overlapping field of view with the first field of view, wherein the accessory further includes an optical switch for selectively switching between the respective optical paths;  
selecting the first optical path;  
capturing a first image with the camera;  
selecting the second optical path;  
capturing a second image with the camera; and  
processing the first image and the second image on the mobile device to obtain three-dimensional data from the overlapping field of view.

24. A method comprising:

attaching an accessory to a mobile device, the accessory removably and replaceably attachable to the mobile device, and the accessory including an optical train with a first optical path from a first camera of the mobile device to a first field of view and a second optical path from a second camera of the mobile device to a second field of view having an overlapping field of view with the first field of view;  
capturing a first image with the first camera;  
capturing a second image with the second camera substantially concurrently with the first image; and  
processing the first image and the second image on the mobile device to obtain three-dimensional data from the overlapping field of view.

25. A system for three-dimensional imaging with a mobile device, the system comprising:  
a housing with a mechanical interface configured to removably and replaceably attach to a predetermined mobile computing device in a predetermined orientation; and  
an illumination source coupled to the housing that illuminates a field of view of a camera of the predetermined mobile computing device from a predetermined pose.
26. The system of claim 25 wherein the illumination source is a structured light source that projects a predetermined pattern of light from the predetermined pose.
27. The system of claim 26 wherein the predetermined pattern of light includes one or more lines.
28. The system of claim 26 wherein the predetermined pattern of light includes one or more shapes.
29. The system of claim 25 further comprising a fixture on the housing to move the illumination source in a predetermined pattern.
30. The system of claim 25 wherein the illumination source includes a laser light source.
31. The system of claim 25 wherein the illumination source includes a light emitting diode.
32. The system of claim 25 wherein the structured light source projects one or more lines from the predetermined pose.
33. The system of claim 25 further comprising a plurality of illumination sources coupled to the housing, each one of the plurality of illumination sources having a different pose relative to the predetermined mobile computing device.

34. The system of claim 25 further comprising a communication interface in the housing configured for data communications between the housing and the predetermined mobile computing device.
35. The system of claim 34 wherein the communication interface includes a wired communication interface that couples to a data port of the predetermined mobile computing device when the housing is attached to the predetermined mobile computing device.
36. The system of claim 34 wherein the communication interface includes a wireless communication interface.
37. The system of claim 34 wherein the communication interface includes a sensor to detect an action of the predetermined mobile computing device.
38. The system of claim 34 further comprising processing circuitry to obtain three-dimensional data from one or more images acquired by the camera of the predetermined mobile computing device.
39. The system of claim 38 wherein the processing circuitry is within the housing.
40. The system of claim 38 wherein the processing circuitry is within the predetermined mobile computing device.
41. The system of claim 25 wherein the housing includes a power source independent from the predetermined mobile computing device.
42. The system of claim 25 further comprising an optical train in the housing, wherein the optical train includes a first optical path that optically couples the camera to the field of view and a second optical path that optically couples a second camera of the predetermined mobile computing device to a second field of view from a different pose than the field of view.

43. The system of claim 25 further comprising an optical train in the housing, wherein the optical train includes a first optical path that optically couples the camera to the field of view and a second optical path that optically couples the camera to a second field of view from a different pose than the field of view, the optical train further including an optical switch that selectively couples the camera to the first optical path and the second optical path.

44. The system of claim 25 further comprising a second camera in the housing wherein the housing includes processing circuitry to control the second camera in response to a control signal received through a communication interface to the predetermined mobile computing device.

45. The system of claim 44 wherein the predetermined mobile computing device includes processing circuitry configured to receive a first image from the camera and a second image through the communication interface from the second camera, and further configured to process the first image and the second image to obtain three-dimensional data from an overlapping field of view of the camera and the second camera.

### **Scented filament**

[0010] In many fabrication processes plastics or other build materials are heated to a transition temperature suitable for extrusion or other deposition. This process may produce an unpleasant odor of burning plastic or the like. While certain materials may have subjectively better or worse odor characteristics than others, the discharge of such odors may render a device unsuitable or undesirable for indoor use. In one aspect, a spool of filament or other feedstock or build material may be scented to mask otherwise undesirable odors. In another aspect, the olfactory agent providing the scent may be heat-released so that it is provided only while the build material is in use during fabrication, e.g., released at a temperature of 100° C for ABS or PLA. In another aspect, the olfactory agent may provide a more durable scent with a time-released formulation that provides a desired aroma to a fabricated object.

**Adjustable print angle**

[0011] One of the enduring challenges of three-dimensional printing such as fused deposition modeling is the creation of overhangs such as steep, overhanging angles and unsupported horizontal edges. Existing techniques for fabricating these structures typically employ support structures that present additional equipment requirements and fabrication challenges. For example, a different build material is frequently used, such as a dissolvable build material, which requires additional materials, additional equipment, additional fabrication time, and additional finishing steps. While it is not generally convenient to alter the gravitational fields that create these challenges, it is possible to re-orient a build environment to temporarily change the gravitational field within a build volume. Several specific techniques are described below, but it will be readily appreciated that any suitable technique for re-orienting the gravitational field in a build volume may also or instead be employed.

[0012] In one aspect, a rotating build platform is provided. As shown in Fig. 2X, the build platform 202 may be rotated relative to a toolhead 204 and a build volume (2X(b)) to permit vertical construction (relative to gravity) of a horizontal shelf. It will be appreciated that numerous tool instructions may be executed to accomplish this rotation. For example, the toolhead 204 may be moved away from the object 206 or the build platform 202 during the rotation, and then repositioned to continue fabrication. In another aspect, an x-y-z positioning assembly of the printer may be coordinated to maintain the toolhead 204 at a predetermined location relative to the object 206, e.g. at the location where fabrication stopped before the rotation. By moving in this manner, the x-y-z coordinates of the toolhead 204 do not change relative to the model 206 and a continuous tool path can be maintained. After rotation, a vertical structure 208 may be fabricated as shown in Fig. 2X(c), with a resulting horizontal shelf once the model is returned to its original orientation. It will be appreciated that a system implementing this technique would include a processor programmed to control rotation of the build platform 202 in cooperation with other aspects of a three-dimensional printer to achieve suitable rotation(s) and fabrication, all of which programming is within the ordinary skill in the art.

[0013] As shown in Fig. 3X, an entire three-dimensional printer 300 may be affixed to a rotating structure 302, or otherwise provided with capability to rotate off a z-axis to similar affect. The coincident rotation of the toolhead in such a configuration may limit the ability to effectively fabricate completely horizontal shelves where fabrication is predicated on the

presence of an underlying layer of build material, but this technique may nonetheless provide significant advantages when fabricating steep overhanging angles at the limits of the printer's capabilities.

[0014] In one aspect, the three-dimensional printer may also include a rotating build platform, or alternatively, a rotating structure 302 around a three-dimensional printer may provide for independent control of rotation about a z-axis, in order to provide greater flexibility with respect to how the working volume is oriented relative to an ambient gravitational field.

### **Quick-release extruder**

[0015] A filament is supporting in contact with a drive gear by a spring-loaded bearing. The bearing provides a substantially constant contact force against the filament and toward the drive gear, and includes a quick-release lever to move the bearing away from the drive gear for access to and maintenance of an extruder assembly. This arrangement also permits quick loading, unloading, and replacement of filament for a three-dimensional printer.

[0016] Fig. 4X is an exploded view of an extruder assembly. In general, the assembly 400 may include a drive gear 402 with an arrangement of teeth or other protrusions to grip and advance a filament through the assembly 400. The drive gear 402 may be powered by any suitable electromechanical device such as a stepper motor. A bearing 404, which may have a smooth, cylindrical exterior, is typically positioned on an axis parallel to the drive gear 402 and at a distance that applies a force against the drive gear 402 to a filament of suitable diameter passing between the drive gear 402 and the bearing 404. The bearing 404 may generally include any suitable mechanical components for relatively low-friction rotation about its axis. In the arrangement for 4X, a spring 406 is positioned to apply a substantially constant force by the bearing 404 against or toward the drive gear 402 so that the drive gear 402 can engage the filament. A coil spring may conveniently be employed as the spring 406, however a variety of springs are known in the art that may be adapted to provide a spring force to maintain a position of the bearing 404 and/or the drive gear 402 relative to one another. A lever 408 provides a mechanism to position the bearing 404 relative to the drive gear 402. By operating the lever 408, the bearing 404 can be moved closer to the drive gear 402 in order to engage a filament or farther from the drive gear 402 in order to disengage the filament for removal or other maintenance.

[0017] It will be understood that a variety of mechanical arrangements may be used to similar affect. For example, the spring 406 may drive the bearing 404 away from the drive gear 402, and the lever 408 may urge the bearing 404 against the spring 406 and into engagement with a filament. The level 408 may also or instead include a button, a knob, a slider, or any other mechanical arrangement suitable for moving the axis of the bearing 404 farther from or closer to the drive gear 402, preferably while maintaining a generally parallel orientation of an axis of the drive gear 402 with an axis of the bearing 404. It will be appreciated that the two axes need not be perfectly parallel at all times and that, by way of example, the axes may move out of parallel when the axis of the bearing 404 is moved away from the axis of the drive gear 402 for loading and unloading of a filament. All such arrangements suitable for tension control and quick release may be used with the extruder assembly 400 described herein, and are intended to fall within the scope of this disclosure.

[0018] Fig 5X shows a number of views of an extruder assembly 500 such as any of the assemblies described above. More specifically, Fig. 5X shows a top view, perspective view, left side view, front view, and right side view of the assembly 500. A drive gear 502, bearing 504, spring 506, and lever 508 are visible in the various views as assembled for use as an extruder in a three-dimensional printer.

[0019] Thus in one aspect there is disclosed herein an extruder assembly comprising a drive gear shaped and sized to drive a filament; a bearing having a freely rotating contact surface, the bearing positioned to support the filament against the drive gear with the freely rotating contact surface, wherein an axis of the bearing is substantially parallel to an axis of the drive gear and wherein the axis of the bearing is movable toward and away from the axis of the drive gear; a spring configured to bias a position of the axis of the bearing relative to the axis of the drive gear; and a lever positioned to apply a counterforce to the bias of the spring, thereby securing the bearing in a position to apply a constant contact force to the filament by the bearing and the drive gear.

### **Configurable build volume**

[0020] Fig. 6X shows a three-dimensional printer with variable build volume 600. A three-dimensional printer includes a variable build volume for improved control over ambient printing conditions. In one aspect, the build volume 600 may be bounded by movable surfaces

such as a movable floor, wall, ceiling, or the like. In another aspect, the build volume 600 may include a thermal mass 602 which may be inflated with air, water, or the like to occupy space within the build volume 600. The thermal mass 602 may be an inflatable thermal mass coupled to an external fluid source. The thermal mass 602 may also or instead be moved into and out of the build volume 600 to control an amount of volume within the build volume 600 occupied by the thermal mass 602. In one aspect, a temperature of a fluid used to inflated the thermal mass 602 may be externally controlled, such as by heating or cooling water, air, or any other gas or fluid that is pumped into or circulated through the thermal mass 602. In another aspect, a number of thermal masses 602 may be used, such as inflatable or insertable/removable thermal mass structures within the corners or on the sides of the build volume 600.

**[0021]** In one aspect, the thermal mass 602 may be controlled (e.g., with respect to size and position) with motors or other actuators by a controller for the three-dimensional printer. In another aspect, user-readable instructions may be provided directing a user in how to manually size and/or position the thermal mass 600. The size and position of the thermal mass(es) 602 may be determined according to a variety of parameters including without limitation the shape and size of an object to be fabricated, the thermal mass of the object to be fabricated, air circulation patterns within the build volume 600, and so forth. In general, an automated thermal mass 602 positioning/sizing algorithm may analyze an object to be fabricated, along with the shape and size of an unmodified build volume 600, and create suitable instructions for human or machine execution. This may include moving any movable surfaces, inflating/deflating thermal masses, controlling a temperature of thermal masses, moving thermal masses into and/or out of the build volume, positioning thermal masses, and combinations of the foregoing as well as providing human-readable instructions for any of the foregoing.

**[0022]** The thermal mass 602 may have a predetermined shape and size, and may be positioned in predetermined locations (e.g., using registration features within the walls of the build volume such as slotted retainers) in order to facilitate suitable navigation by toolheads or the like within the build volume 600. Sensors or the like may be used to detect the thermal mass 602, and/or to determine characteristics such a shape, thermal characteristics, etc.

**[0023]** In another aspect, a plurality of thermal masses 602 may be provided with modular registration and coupling features to permit assembly into various shapes and sizes within the build volume 600.

[0024] Using the foregoing principles, a build volume may be adjusted according to, e.g., thermal requirements or other volume-related requirements such as minimization of volume for improved control of humidity, temperature, sterility, or use of deposition/vapor materials (e.g., in a vapor deposition process).

**Tagged build material**

[0025] As shown in Fig. 7X, a supply 702 of build material, such as a cartridge or spool of filament or similar feedstock, may include a tag 704 that can be automatically identified by a three-dimensional printer 706.

[0026] The supply 702 may be any suitable supply, such as a spool of build material, a cartridge of filament, a container of bulk material such as pellets, or a container of liquid such as a photocurable polymer. More generally, any build material suitable for a corresponding three-dimensional printer in any suitable container may be used as the supply 702.

The tag 704 may be any device or combination of devices suitable for automated identification of the supply 702. This may, for example, include a radio frequency identification (RFID) tag such as an active or passive RFID tag, an optically-identifiable tag such as a bar code, QR code, or the like, a magnetically-identifiable tag such as a magnetic swipe strip, or any other tag that can be automatically detected and correlated by a computer to identifying information for the build material in the supply 702.

[0027] The printer 706 may be adapted for use with the supply 702 in a number of ways. In one aspect, the printer 706 may include one or more readers, scanners, sensors or the like to detect the tag 704 and obtain data therefrom. In another aspect, the tag 704 may include a number of mechanical features that can be detected by corresponding sensors (e.g., contact switches or the like) when the supply 702 is coupled to the printer 706. The tag 704 may encode data such as an identification number that can be used to retrieve relevant information from a remote source, or the tag 704 may directly encode relevant information. This may include data describing the build material such as the type, color, diameter, and so forth of the build material in the supply 702. This may also or instead include tracking information such as a lot number for the build material, billing information (e.g., so that build material can be metered by the printer 706 and charged to an appropriate party), descriptive material such as density, tensile strength, melting temperature, and so forth.

[0028] In another aspect, the printer 706 may be programmed to employ information obtained using the tag 704, which may as noted above include data stored directly on the tag 704 or data that can be retrieved for the build material and/or supply 702 from a remote source based upon the data from the tag 704. In one aspect, this may include preliminary diagnostic tests such as whether the diameter of the build material is appropriate for the three-dimensional printer 706. In another aspect, this may include selection of defaults for tool instructions such as a build platform temperature, extrusion temperature, and so forth, any of which may be selected according to the properties of the build material and/or the characteristics of the three-dimensional printer. In another aspect, the tag 704 may identify a recycling code or the like for the build material, which information may be incorporated into an object fabricated from the build material, such as by creating a corresponding symbol in an object to be fabricated, or by automatically or manually fixing a corresponding symbol in a build platform onto which the object is fabricated so that the symbol is imparted onto the object during fabrication. Recycling codes may, for example include Society of the Plastics Industry (SPI) resin identification codes (currently 1-7 and 9 or ABS) or any other suitable notations. Where multiple build materials are used in a single model, the multiple types, or a general indication (e.g., “mixed plastics”) may also or instead be used.

[0029] In one aspect, the three-dimensional printer may be configured to accept user instructions concerning whether and how to deploy recycling labeling.

### **3D printer with cavity filling**

[0030] A toolhead for three-dimensional printing may be configured to fill voids within a fabricated object with any suitable build or fill material.

[0031] As shown in Fig. 8X, a first tool 802 such as an extrusion head may be used to deposit layers of material to fabricate an object. This may include any suitable tool and/or additive fabrication process. As further illustrated in Fig. 8X, a second tool 804 may then be used to fill voids within the fabricated object. This may include any suitable structural or aesthetic filler including, without limitation, a foam, a resin, an adhesive, an epoxy, a glue, and so forth. While the first tool 802 may optionally be used to distribute such fillers, a different tool such as the second tool 804 may advantageously be optimized for high volume dispensation (e.g., with a larger extrusion orifice) or otherwise adapted for use with various fill materials.

[0032] The first tool 802 and the second tool 804 may be joined together into a shared tool as depicted in order to simplify positioning control hardware, or the first tool 802 and the second tool 804 may be separate tools with independent x-y-z control and other hardware.

[0033] In another aspect, the fill material may include silicone or any other gel or the like, which may instead be deposited around an object during fabrication as a support material.

[0034] In another aspect, a number of cavities 902 may be created, such as cylinders parallel with the z-axis, rectangles or other prismatic shapes, or any other shape or combination of shapes suitable for interstitial fabrication within an object and filling with a build material. These cavities may be filled with a structural filler in order to improve strength across lamination boundaries 904, i.e., between adjacent layers of a layered fabrication. As shown in Fig. 9X, these may be staggered, overlapped, or otherwise positioned at predetermined locations relative to layer boundaries, object boundaries, and one another to achieve improved strength in a fabricated object. In one aspect, the edges of layers may be offset from each other to provide a rough surface to improve bonding with the filler material. As another example, the void may be roughly circular, with the circle in each layer offset relative to adjacent layers with some regular or irregular vertical pattern such as a vertical V, a sine wave, or any other arrangement that shifts in the x-y plane from layer to layer, or after some number of layers (i.e., vertically aligned for some number of layers, and then shifting for some number of layers, and so forth).

#### **Manufacturing resource allocation**

[0035] Fig. 10X shows a process for allocating fabrication resources.

[0036] As shown in step 1002, the process 1000 may begin with receiving an order. The order may be any request for fabrication of one or more items. The order may, for example include quantity, buyer information, delivery time(s), material specifications/requirements, and so forth.

[0037] As shown in step 1004, the process 1000 may include evaluating the various aspects of the order to determine how best to meet one or more of the requirements with a predetermined pool of available fabrication resources. This may, for example, include optimizing the order for one or more of cost, delivery time, etc.

[0038] As shown in step 1006, the process 1000 may include allocating fabrication of the items to the pool of available fabrication resources according to the determination.

[0039] As shown in step 1008, the process 1000 may include fabricating the items with the fabrication resources according to the allocation. For example, one resource may be chosen for high-accuracy requirements, while another resource may be chosen for high speed or low cost.

### **Healable Build Platform**

[0040] A build platform for three-dimensional printing can often become gouged during printing or other handling and use. Build material may be extruded into such surface defects in order to restore a level surface.

[0041] In one aspect, a material different from usual build materials may be employed, and where appropriate, a separate toolhead such as the second tool head described above, may be used to address the different handling requirements if any for such materials. For example, a material with a higher melting point or a material that resists bonding to other build materials might suitably be employed to repair surface defects.

[0042] In one aspect, a tool head may remain stationary while flowing material into a surface void. In one aspect, a build platform may be three-dimensionally scanned to identify surface irregularities, and tool instructions may be automatically generated to fill such irregularities. In another aspect, a tool may be manually positioned over a surface void and material may be extruded at the manually selected position.

[0043] In another aspect, finishing tools may be provided. For example, a rigid or flexible straight edge or similar tool may be employed to level bulk material that has been deposited into a surface void. Similarly, a sanding tool or grinding tool may be provided to reduce convex features resulting from deposited material.

### **Build platform with object anchors**

[0044] A build platform may be provided with one or more anchoring features to assist in retaining an object at a predetermined location on the build fabrication during a print. As shown in Fig. 11X, the anchoring feature 1102 may form a generally concave opening within a build platform 1104, with one or more lips, flanges, overhangs, or the like to resist separation of material deposited therein. In a first fabricating step, the anchoring feature may be filled with a build material 1106.

[0045] As shown in Fig. 12X, once the anchoring feature has been filled with the build material, an extruder or other tool head may begin depositing material along a tool path to fabricate an object. By anchoring an object at a number of locations using this technique, the object may be more securely affixed to the platform in a manner that inhibits separation due to physical jarring, warping, or other mechanically or thermally induced stresses during fabrication.

[0046] The build platform may be a disposable build platform in order to avoid difficulties associated with clearing the anchoring features of build material after use. In another aspect, a cleaning protocol may be automatically or manually implemented, such as an application of high heat, solvents, or mechanical force (e.g., with pistons, a vacuum, a drill, or the like) in order to clear build material from the anchoring feature. Exit channels or other controllable openings or the like may be provided to facilitate removal of melted or dissolved build material from the interior of each anchoring feature. While the anchoring features 1102 of Figs. 11X and 12X are depicted as using overhangs to retain material within the anchoring feature, it will be understood that other shapes without such retaining features may also or instead be employed, such as to facilitated direct removal of build material from above the build platform.

### **3D tool calibration using interferometry**

[0047] Interferometry may be used to determine the x-y-z position of a toolhead relative to some absolute coordinate in a 3D printer. Where the printer is an SLS printer, the SLS laser may be dual-purposed as a calibration aid. The build platform may serve as a reference point or plane, with calibration performed with respect to the build platform, and or one or more extruder positions.

[0048] There are interferometer configurations where multiple path lengths may be adjusted until a proper distance is achieved, such a Sagnac common path interferometer. This technique may be leveraged to locate a toolhead in 3D space, such as by choosing a position where the 3 interferometer stages (x, y, z) are chosen to have 3 different path lengths. Even so, many combinations of path lengths will lead to a positive confirmation of distance from the interferometer, however using coarse positioning via xyz positional motors, a system can be placed into a state where convergence on desired position can be detected.

[0049] Mirrors traveling on a toolhead may be placed behind a transparent window, in a sealed chamber, in order to prevent foreign interference. A path length may be within fiber optics or the like rather than through free-air, where one end of the fiber optic travels with the toolhead, the fiber optics being routed with the other toolhead cables, and with a small air gap in some protected area of the printer to facilitate a path length adjustment need for interferometric measurements/adjustments.

### **Stepper-motor control system**

[0050] A stepper motor is a brushless DC electric motor that divides a full rotation into a number of equal steps that can be sequentially accessed with an open-loop controller (i.e., without feedback). Motor controllers for stepper motors typically drive the motor deterministically, thus requiring additional inputs to detect bind states, excessive loading, and the like. For example, the controller may use limit switches or the like to detect boundaries on an anticipated or useful range of motion. So, where a build platform of a three-dimensional printer has a controllable z-stage powered by a stepper motor, a limit switch may detect when the build platform has reached a top or a bottom of an intended range within a working volume. This prevents damage or malfunction that might result from moving beyond an intended range.

[0051] A controller for a stepper motor as disclosed herein can be instrumented to detect motor loading, thus eliminating the need for end stop switches or the like. This permits sensorless detection of bind states where further movement is mechanically impossible, as well as incremental loads that might result from misalignment of parts, inadequate lubrication, foreign objects within a machine path, and so forth.

[0052] A driver circuit for a stepper motor typically includes an H-bridge configuration that supplies current pulses to drive the motor. During operation of the stepper motor, a cycle of positive and negative pulses is provided. The positive current pulses establish a peak waveform desired on the motor, while the negative current pulses are provided to overcome impedance characteristics of the stepper motor coils and draw the waveform to zero.

[0053] By measuring current (through a sense resistor, e.g., from a bottom of the H-bridge to ground) across the stepper motor coils during positive current pulses, various inferences can be made about motor loading. For example, expected values for current discharge from motor windings between powered states, and corresponding voltages across a sense

resistor, can be predicted for various operating conditions, and any mismatch to an expected value may provide information concerning motor loading. This may, for example, include a number of measurements over a number of positive cycles to ensure that voltage decay during an off or negative cycle remains within the envelope of the positive current pulses, or that a change in current remains within a predetermined range, which may be relative to an absolute value (e.g., zero) or relative to a current during the positive current pulse. In one aspect, measurements may be obtained over a number of positive cycles of a PWM drive signal to determine whether the voltage is decaying at an expected rate and/or whether the decay is changing over time (e.g., due to variations in load). After a predetermined number of unexpected results, an inference may be made about load on a motor. By making a comparison over a number of cycles, a control algorithm can advantageously avoid control decisions based upon single, instantaneous outliers in measured current that might arise from a variety of operating conditions and/or electromechanical failures.

[0054] This information may be used in a variety of ways to detect unexpected loads, such as when a physical end stop has been reached or when a malfunction, e.g., due to mechanical failure, has occurred. In practice high sensitivity to load measurements has been demonstrated. Thus physically limiting end stops can be replaced with soft stops, rubber frictional elements, or the like that can provide moderate loading that can be detected by a motor control and used to trigger various control actions. All such variations are intended to fall within the scope of this disclosure.

### **Pressure-sensitive extruder**

[0055] As shown in Fig. 13X, an extruder or other three-dimensional fabrication tool may be instrumented with a pressure transducer 1302 such as a capacitive pressure sensor, an electromagnetic pressure sensor (using, e.g., inductance, Hall effect, eddy current, a linear variable differential transformer, or any suitable techniques/circuits), an optical pressure sensor, a potentiometric pressure sensor, a piezoelectric strain gauge or other piezoelectric device/system, or any other suitable techniques.

[0056] In particular, piezoelectric techniques permit sensing of pressure/movement, as well as complementary control of applied pressure and/or position, thus enabling various techniques to control the pressure of a tool 1304 against deposited build material or an object

being fabricated. Where non-piezoelectric techniques are used to measure pressure, other linear actuators or the like may also or instead be employed to control applied pressure.

[0057] In one aspect, a pressure against the tool may be measured during deposition of an initial layer of build material. This information may be used to measure skew in a build platform 1306, as well as more complex irregularities in the build platform surface due to warping, denting, or other physical damage or deformation. This information may be used dynamically to adjust applied pressure (or, as a proxy for pressure, the z-position of the tool 1304) in subsequent layers to compensate for the deformation.

[0058] It has also been observed that certain three-dimensional printers exhibit mechanical resonance resulting from, e.g., vibrations in cantilevered arms, support rods, and so forth. Pressure and/or position control of the tool 1304 may be used to measure and compensate for such phenomena to reduce related artifacts in fabricated objects such as z-axis waves in horizontal surfaces. This may include estimated and countering such vibrations, or measuring applied pressure across one layer and producing complementary physical output (e.g., increasing pressure on higher surfaces, or increasing volumetric output rate of build material on lower surfaces) to mitigate such artifacts in subsequent layers.

[0059] In another aspect, a pressure transducer such as a piezoelectric device may be used to impress aesthetic patterns into horizontal surfaces by deterministically varying applied pressure over one or more layers.

### **Extruder cooling**

[0060] As shown in Fig. 14X, a tool 1304 may include a fan 1302, or multiple fans 1302 for controlled cooling of the tool 1304. For example, in techniques such as fused deposition modeling, a thermal element is used to heat and melt build material for deposition. Active cooling with a fan may 1302 be used to cool a top of a tool 1304 where drive gears are employed to mechanically propel filament or the like toward the melt zone proximal to the thermal element. In this manner, the solid form of the build material may be maintained where it is desired for the drive mechanism, while the liquid form may be maintained in an actively heated melt zone for deposition.

[0061] A baffle 1308 may be provided to selectively and controllably redirect air from the fan toward an exit path for build material from the tool 1304. In one aspect, the baffle 1308

may direct air toward deposited material to accelerate cooling of deposited material and more closely localize heating of material around the deposition point. This technique may be employed to reduce large scale mechanical stresses within an object that might otherwise result from prolonged cooling and thermal contraction cycles during fabrication.

**[0062]** In another aspect, the baffle 1308 may selectively and controllably direct air toward the exit port of the tool 1304 itself. This cooling source may be useful to prevent dripping and overflow of build material after terminating deposition. For example, materials such as polylactic acid remain substantially liquid at temperatures between an ambient temperature (e.g., about 20-25 degrees Centigrade) and a deposition temperature (e.g., about 200-220 degrees Centigrade). When a deposition is terminated, the build material can ooze or drip from a tool causing unintended deposition as well as undesired vacating of build material within the interior volume of the tool 1304. By immediately cooling the exit port of the tool 1304, these effects can be substantially mitigated.

**[0063]** Thus in one aspect there is a deposition control method that includes heating a build material to a deposition temperature, depositing build material, terminating deposition at a predetermined location, and then cooling an exit port of a tool to prevent discharge of build material. The cooling may be performed with a fan that includes a baffle to selectively direct air toward the exit port, and may be performed in combination with other thermal control steps such as deactivating a heating element used within the tool. In another aspect, other techniques may be employed to quickly cool the exit port of the tool 1304, such as liquid cooling, a jet of gas from a CO<sub>2</sub> cartridge or other compressed gas source, or thermally coupling the exit port or adjacent surfaces of the tool to a cooling source. In general, for a material such as polylactic acid, any technique for quickly reducing a temperature at the exit port to about 170-180 degrees Centigrade, or about 50-60 degrees Centigrade below a build temperature, may be suitably employed to control termination of deposition as contemplated herein.

**[0064]** In other embodiments, a variety of fans and thermal controls may be more generally used to provide improved control of the thermal environment in which deposition occurs. For example, a leading hot air source (e.g., heated air exiting the thermal element) may be directed ahead of a deposition path to heat and/or partially melt a surface that is about to receive build material. A trailing cool air source may also or instead be used to cool material immediately after it has been deposited. One or more side sources may also or instead be used to

prevent undesired heating of adjacent regions and surfaces of the object, or alternatively to warm adjacent regions to relieve thermally-induced stresses within in object. This in one aspect there is disclosed herein techniques for localized control of temperature of deposited build material.

## Electronic Patent Application Fee Transmittal

<b>Application Number:</b>					
<b>Filing Date:</b>					
<b>Title of Invention:</b>	THREE-DIMENSIONAL PRINTING IMPROVEMENTS				
<b>First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:</b>	Gregory Alan Borenstein				
<b>Filer:</b>	John H. Nortrop				
<b>Attorney Docket Number:</b>	MBOT-0030-P60				
Filed as Large Entity					
<b>Provisional Filing Fees</b>					
<b>Description</b>	<b>Fee Code</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Sub-Total in USD(\$)</b>	
<b>Basic Filing:</b>					
Provisional application filing	1005	1	250	250	
<b>Pages:</b>					
<b>Claims:</b>					
<b>Miscellaneous-Filing:</b>					
<b>Petition:</b>					
<b>Patent-Appeals-and-Interference:</b>					
<b>Post-Allowance-and-Post-Issuance:</b>					
<b>Extension-of-Time:</b>					

Description	Fee Code	Quantity	Amount	Sub-Total in USD(\$)
<b>Miscellaneous:</b>				
<b>Total in USD (\$)</b>				<b>250</b>

## Electronic Acknowledgement Receipt

<b>EFS ID:</b>	14100445
<b>Application Number:</b>	61719874
<b>International Application Number:</b>	
<b>Confirmation Number:</b>	1039
<b>Title of Invention:</b>	THREE-DIMENSIONAL PRINTING IMPROVEMENTS
<b>First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:</b>	Gregory Alan Borenstein
<b>Customer Number:</b>	43520
<b>Filer:</b>	John H. Nortrop
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Payment was successfully received in RAM	\$250
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<b>File Listing:</b>					
<b>Document Number</b>	<b>Document Description</b>	<b>File Name</b>	<b>File Size(Bytes)/ Message Digest</b>	<b>Multi Part /.zip</b>	<b>Pages (if appl.)</b>
1	Application Data Sheet	MBOT-0030-P60_102912_ADS.pdf	1882292 c6f8411253cdacbeb13033017700855477c07922	no	8
<b>Warnings:</b>					
<b>Information:</b>					
2	Drawings-only black and white line drawings	MBOT-0030-P60_102912_Drawings.pdf	319141 5887bb6051ac1724d1222879cec2905b29f920b	no	18
<b>Warnings:</b>					
<b>Information:</b>					
3	Specification	MBOT-0030-P60_102912_Specification.pdf	233961 177eb4692bf9b042862553ac8b05182e277d9ffc	no	61
<b>Warnings:</b>					
<b>Information:</b>					
4	Fee Worksheet (SB06)	fee-info.pdf	29407 833a5237fb73773f8610a76ddce5cdfa47c4762	no	2
<b>Warnings:</b>					
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<b>Total Files Size (in bytes):</b>			2464801		
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FILING RECEIPT



Date Mailed: 11/23/2012

Receipt is acknowledged of this provisional patent application. It will not be examined for patentability and will become abandoned not later than twelve months after its filing date. Any correspondence concerning the application must include the following identification information: the U.S. APPLICATION NUMBER, FILING DATE, NAME OF APPLICANT, and TITLE OF INVENTION. Fees transmitted by check or draft are subject to collection. Please verify the accuracy of the data presented on this receipt. If an error is noted on this Filing Receipt, please submit a written request for a Filing Receipt Correction. Please provide a copy of this Filing Receipt with the changes noted thereon. If you received a "Notice to File Missing Parts" for this application, please submit any corrections to this Filing Receipt with your reply to the Notice. When the USPTO processes the reply to the Notice, the USPTO will generate another Filing Receipt incorporating the requested corrections

Inventor(s)

Gregory Alan Borenstein, Brooklyn, NY;
John Michael Briscella, Brooklyn, NY;
Anthony James Buser, Reading, PA;
John S. Dimatos, Brooklyn, NY;
Ariel Douglas, Brooklyn, NY;
Harry Elliot Mulliken, Hamilton, NJ;
Charles E. Pax, Brooklyn, NY;
Matthew W. Samsonoff, Brooklyn, NY;
Peter Joseph Schmehl, New York, NY;

Applicant(s)

Gregory Alan Borenstein, Brooklyn, NY;
John Michael Briscella, Brooklyn, NY;
Anthony James Buser, Reading, PA;
John S. Dimatos, Brooklyn, NY;
Ariel Douglas, Brooklyn, NY;
Harry Elliot Mulliken, Hamilton, NJ;
Charles E. Pax, Brooklyn, NY;
Matthew W. Samsonoff, Brooklyn, NY;
Peter Joseph Schmehl, New York, NY;

Power of Attorney:

John Nortrup--59063

If Required, Foreign Filing License Granted: 11/19/2012

The country code and number of your priority application, to be used for filing abroad under the Paris Convention, is **US 61/719,874**

**Projected Publication Date:** None, application is not eligible for pre-grant publication

**Non-Publication Request:** No

**Early Publication Request:** No  
**Title**

THREE-DIMENSIONAL PRINTING IMPROVEMENTS

## **PROTECTING YOUR INVENTION OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES**

Since the rights granted by a U.S. patent extend only throughout the territory of the United States and have no effect in a foreign country, an inventor who wishes patent protection in another country must apply for a patent in a specific country or in regional patent offices. Applicants may wish to consider the filing of an international application under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT). An international (PCT) application generally has the same effect as a regular national patent application in each PCT-member country. The PCT process **simplifies** the filing of patent applications on the same invention in member countries, but **does not result** in a grant of "an international patent" and does not eliminate the need of applicants to file additional documents and fees in countries where patent protection is desired.

Almost every country has its own patent law, and a person desiring a patent in a particular country must make an application for patent in that country in accordance with its particular laws. Since the laws of many countries differ in various respects from the patent law of the United States, applicants are advised to seek guidance from specific foreign countries to ensure that patent rights are not lost prematurely.

Applicants also are advised that in the case of inventions made in the United States, the Director of the USPTO must issue a license before applicants can apply for a patent in a foreign country. The filing of a U.S. patent application serves as a request for a foreign filing license. The application's filing receipt contains further information and guidance as to the status of applicant's license for foreign filing.

Applicants may wish to consult the USPTO booklet, "General Information Concerning Patents" (specifically, the section entitled "Treaties and Foreign Patents") for more information on timeframes and deadlines for filing foreign patent applications. The guide is available either by contacting the USPTO Contact Center at 800-786-9199, or it can be viewed on the USPTO website at <http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/pac/doc/general/index.html>.

For information on preventing theft of your intellectual property (patents, trademarks and copyrights), you may wish to consult the U.S. Government website, <http://www.stopfakes.gov>. Part of a Department of Commerce initiative, this website includes self-help "toolkits" giving innovators guidance on how to protect intellectual property in specific countries such as China, Korea and Mexico. For questions regarding patent enforcement issues, applicants may call the U.S. Government hotline at 1-866-999-HALT (1-866-999-4158).

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**Title 35, United States Code, Section 184**  
**Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, 5.11 & 5.15**

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The applicant has been granted a license under 35 U.S.C. 184, if the phrase "IF REQUIRED, FOREIGN FILING LICENSE GRANTED" followed by a date appears on this form. Such licenses are issued in all applications where the conditions for issuance of a license have been met, regardless of whether or not a license may be required as set forth in 37 CFR 5.15. The scope and limitations of this license are set forth in 37 CFR 5.15(a) unless an earlier license has been issued under 37 CFR 5.15(b). The license is subject to revocation upon written notification. The date indicated is the effective date of the license, unless an earlier license of similar scope has been granted under 37 CFR 5.13 or 5.14.

This license is to be retained by the licensee and may be used at any time on or after the effective date thereof unless it is revoked. This license is automatically transferred to any related applications(s) filed under 37 CFR 1.53(d). This license is not retroactive.

The grant of a license does not in any way lessen the responsibility of a licensee for the security of the subject matter as imposed by any Government contract or the provisions of existing laws relating to espionage and the national security or the export of technical data. Licensees should apprise themselves of current regulations especially with respect to certain countries, of other agencies, particularly the Office of Defense Trade Controls, Department of State (with respect to Arms, Munitions and Implements of War (22 CFR 121-128)); the Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce (15 CFR parts 730-774); the Office of Foreign Assets Control, Department of Treasury (31 CFR Parts 500+) and the Department of Energy.

**NOT GRANTED**

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In re application of Gregory Alan Borenstein *et al.* : Group Art Unit: N/A

Serial No. 61/719,874 : Confirmation No. 1039

Filed: October 29, 2012 : Examiner: N/A

**REQUEST FOR FILING RECEIPT CORRECTION**

Commissioner for Patents  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

For the above identified application, a Supplemental Application Data Sheet is submitted herewith. Pursuant to 37 CFR § 1.46(c), the Supplemental Application Data Sheet includes updated applicant information.

Applicant requests an updated Filing Receipt that reflects the applicant information provided in the Supplemental Application Data Sheet. More specifically, the applicant should be listed on the Filing Receipt as MakerBot Industries, LLC.

The applicant hereby authorizes the Patent Office to charge any deficiencies or credit any overpayments associated with this filing to Deposit Account No. 50-4262.

Please direct any inquiry regarding this matter to the below signed agent.

Respectfully Submitted,

STRATEGIC PATENTS, P.C.

/John H. Nortrup/

John H. Nortrup  
Reg. No. 59,063  
(207) 590-0723  
Customer Number 43520

April 3, 2013

Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it contains a valid OMB control number.

<b>Application Data Sheet 37 CFR 1.76</b>		Attorney Docket Number	MBOT-0030-P60
		Application Number	
Title of Invention	THREE-DIMENSIONAL PRINTING IMPROVEMENTS		
The application data sheet is part of the provisional or nonprovisional application for which it is being submitted. The following form contains the bibliographic data arranged in a format specified by the United States Patent and Trademark Office as outlined in 37 CFR 1.76. This document may be completed electronically and submitted to the Office in electronic format using the Electronic Filing System (EFS) or the document may be printed and included in a paper filed application.			

## Secrecy Order 37 CFR 5.2

<input type="checkbox"/> Portions or all of the application associated with this Application Data Sheet may fall under a Secrecy Order pursuant to 37 CFR 5.2. (Paper filers only. Applications that fall under Secrecy Order may not be filed electronically.)
---

## Inventor Information:

<b>Inventor 1</b>					<input type="button" value="Remove"/>
<b>Legal Name</b>					
<b>Prefix</b>	<b>Given Name</b>	<b>Middle Name</b>	<b>Family Name</b>	<b>Suffix</b>	
	Gregory	Alan	Borenstein		
<b>Residence Information (Select One)</b> <input checked="" type="radio"/> US Residency <input type="radio"/> Non US Residency <input type="radio"/> Active US Military Service					
<b>City</b>	Brooklyn	<b>State/Province</b>	NY	<b>Country of Residence</b>	US
<b>Mailing Address of Inventor:</b>					
<b>Address 1</b>	MakerBot Industries, LLC				
<b>Address 2</b>	87 3rd Avenue				
<b>City</b>	Brooklyn	<b>State/Province</b>	NY		
<b>Postal Code</b>	11217	<b>Country</b>	US		
<b>Inventor 2</b>					<input type="button" value="Remove"/>
<b>Legal Name</b>					
<b>Prefix</b>	<b>Given Name</b>	<b>Middle Name</b>	<b>Family Name</b>	<b>Suffix</b>	
	John	Michael	Briscella		
<b>Residence Information (Select One)</b> <input checked="" type="radio"/> US Residency <input type="radio"/> Non US Residency <input type="radio"/> Active US Military Service					
<b>City</b>	Brooklyn	<b>State/Province</b>	NY	<b>Country of Residence</b>	US
<b>Mailing Address of Inventor:</b>					
<b>Address 1</b>	MakerBot Industries, LLC				
<b>Address 2</b>	87 3rd Avenue				
<b>City</b>	Brooklyn	<b>State/Province</b>	NY		
<b>Postal Code</b>	11217	<b>Country</b>	US		
<b>Inventor 3</b>					<input type="button" value="Remove"/>
<b>Legal Name</b>					
<b>Prefix</b>	<b>Given Name</b>	<b>Middle Name</b>	<b>Family Name</b>	<b>Suffix</b>	
	Anthony	James	Buser		
<b>Residence Information (Select One)</b> <input checked="" type="radio"/> US Residency <input type="radio"/> Non US Residency <input type="radio"/> Active US Military Service					

<b>Application Data Sheet 37 CFR 1.76</b>		Attorney Docket Number		MBOT-0030-P60	
		Application Number			
Title of Invention	THREE-DIMENSIONAL PRINTING IMPROVEMENTS				
City	Reading	State/Province	PA	Country of Residence i	US
<b>Mailing Address of Inventor:</b>					
Address 1	MakerBot Industries, LLC				
Address 2	87 3rd Avenue				
City	Brooklyn		State/Province	NY	
Postal Code	11217		Country i	US	
Inventor 4					Remove
Legal Name					
Prefix	Given Name	Middle Name	Family Name	Suffix	
	John	S.	Dimatos		
Residence Information (Select One) <input checked="" type="radio"/> US Residency <input type="radio"/> Non US Residency <input type="radio"/> Active US Military Service					
City	Brooklyn	State/Province	NY	Country of Residence i	US
<b>Mailing Address of Inventor:</b>					
Address 1	MakerBot Industries, LLC				
Address 2	87 3rd Avenue				
City	Brooklyn		State/Province	NY	
Postal Code	11217		Country i	US	
Inventor 5					Remove
Legal Name					
Prefix	Given Name	Middle Name	Family Name	Suffix	
	Ariel		Douglas		
Residence Information (Select One) <input checked="" type="radio"/> US Residency <input type="radio"/> Non US Residency <input type="radio"/> Active US Military Service					
City	Brooklyn	State/Province	NY	Country of Residence i	US
<b>Mailing Address of Inventor:</b>					
Address 1	MakerBot Industries, LLC				
Address 2	87 3rd Avenue				
City	Brooklyn		State/Province	NY	
Postal Code	11217		Country i	US	
Inventor 6					Remove
Legal Name					
Prefix	Given Name	Middle Name	Family Name	Suffix	
	Harry	Elliot	Mulliken		
Residence Information (Select One) <input checked="" type="radio"/> US Residency <input type="radio"/> Non US Residency <input type="radio"/> Active US Military Service					
City	Hamilton	State/Province	NJ	Country of Residence i	US

<b>Application Data Sheet 37 CFR 1.76</b>		Attorney Docket Number	MBOT-0030-P60	
		Application Number		
Title of Invention	THREE-DIMENSIONAL PRINTING IMPROVEMENTS			
<b>Mailing Address of Inventor:</b>				
Address 1	MakerBot Industries, LLC			
Address 2	87 3rd Avenue			
City	Brooklyn	State/Province	NY	
Postal Code	11217	Country <sup>1</sup>	US	
Inventor 7				<input type="button" value="Remove"/>
<b>Legal Name</b>				
Prefix	Given Name	Middle Name	Family Name	Suffix
	Charles	E.	Pax	
<b>Residence Information (Select One)</b> <input checked="" type="radio"/> US Residency <input type="radio"/> Non US Residency <input type="radio"/> Active US Military Service				
City	Brooklyn	State/Province	NY	Country of Residence <sup>i</sup>
				US
<b>Mailing Address of Inventor:</b>				
Address 1	MakerBot Industries, LLC			
Address 2	87 3rd Avenue			
City	Brooklyn	State/Province	NY	
Postal Code	11217	Country <sup>1</sup>	US	
Inventor 8				<input type="button" value="Remove"/>
<b>Legal Name</b>				
Prefix	Given Name	Middle Name	Family Name	Suffix
	Matthew	W.	Samsonoff	
<b>Residence Information (Select One)</b> <input checked="" type="radio"/> US Residency <input type="radio"/> Non US Residency <input type="radio"/> Active US Military Service				
City	Brooklyn	State/Province	NY	Country of Residence <sup>i</sup>
				US
<b>Mailing Address of Inventor:</b>				
Address 1	MakerBot Industries, LLC			
Address 2	87 3rd Avenue			
City	Brooklyn	State/Province	NY	
Postal Code	11217	Country <sup>1</sup>	US	
Inventor 9				<input type="button" value="Remove"/>
<b>Legal Name</b>				
Prefix	Given Name	Middle Name	Family Name	Suffix
	Peter	Joseph	Schmehl	
<b>Residence Information (Select One)</b> <input checked="" type="radio"/> US Residency <input type="radio"/> Non US Residency <input type="radio"/> Active US Military Service				
City	New York	State/Province	NY	Country of Residence <sup>i</sup>
				US

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<b>Application Data Sheet 37 CFR 1.76</b>		Attorney Docket Number	MBOT-0030-P60	
		Application Number		
Title of Invention	THREE-DIMENSIONAL PRINTING IMPROVEMENTS			

**Mailing Address of Inventor:**

Address 1	MakerBot Industries, LLC			
Address 2	87 3rd Avenue			
City	Brooklyn	State/Province	NY	
Postal Code	11217	Country	US	
All Inventors Must Be Listed - Additional Inventor Information blocks may be generated within this form by selecting the <b>Add</b> button.				<input type="button" value="Add"/>

**Correspondence Information:**

Enter either Customer Number or complete the Correspondence Information section below. For further information see 37 CFR 1.33(a).			
<input type="checkbox"/> An Address is being provided for the correspondence information of this application.			
Customer Number	43520		
Email Address	patents@stratpat.com	<input type="button" value="Add Email"/>	<input type="button" value="Remove Email"/>

**Application Information:**

Title of the Invention	THREE-DIMENSIONAL PRINTING IMPROVEMENTS		
Attorney Docket Number	MBOT-0030-P60	Small Entity Status Claimed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Application Type	Provisional		
Subject Matter	Utility		
Suggested Class (if any)		Sub Class (if any)	
Suggested Technology Center (if any)			
Total Number of Drawing Sheets (if any)	18	Suggested Figure for Publication (if any)	

**Publication Information:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Request Early Publication (Fee required at time of Request 37 CFR 1.219)
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Request Not to Publish.</b> I hereby request that the attached application not be published under 35 U.S.C. 122(b) and certify that the invention disclosed in the attached application <b>has not and will not</b> be the subject of an application filed in another country, or under a multilateral international agreement, that requires publication at eighteen months after filing.

**Representative Information:**

Representative information should be provided for all practitioners having a power of attorney in the application. Providing this information in the Application Data Sheet does not constitute a power of attorney in the application (see 37 CFR 1.32). Either enter Customer Number or complete the Representative Name section below. If both sections are completed the customer Number will be used for the Representative Information during processing.			
Please Select One:	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Customer Number	<input type="radio"/> US Patent Practitioner	<input type="radio"/> Limited Recognition (37 CFR 11.9)

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<b>Application Data Sheet 37 CFR 1.76</b>		Attorney Docket Number	MBOT-0030-P60
		Application Number	
Title of Invention	THREE-DIMENSIONAL PRINTING IMPROVEMENTS		
Customer Number	43520		

### Domestic Benefit/National Stage Information:

This section allows for the applicant to either claim benefit under 35 U.S.C. 119(e), 120, 121, or 365(c) or indicate National Stage entry from a PCT application. Providing this information in the application data sheet constitutes the specific reference required by 35 U.S.C. 119(e) or 120, and 37 CFR 1.78.

Prior Application Status			<input type="button" value="Remove"/>
Application Number	Continuity Type	Prior Application Number	Filing Date (YYYY-MM-DD)
Additional Domestic Benefit/National Stage Data may be generated within this form by selecting the <b>Add</b> button.			<input type="button" value="Add"/>

### Foreign Priority Information:

This section allows for the applicant to claim benefit of foreign priority and to identify any prior foreign application for which priority is not claimed. Providing this information in the application data sheet constitutes the claim for priority as required by 35 U.S.C. 119(b) and 37 CFR 1.55(a).

			<input type="button" value="Remove"/>
Application Number	Country <sup>i</sup>	Filing Date (YYYY-MM-DD)	Priority Claimed
			<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
Additional Foreign Priority Data may be generated within this form by selecting the <b>Add</b> button.			<input type="button" value="Add"/>

### Authorization to Permit Access:

<input type="checkbox"/> Authorization to Permit Access to the Instant Application by the Participating Offices
<p>If checked, the undersigned hereby grants the USPTO authority to provide the European Patent Office (EPO), the Japan Patent Office (JPO), the Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO), the World Intellectual Property Office (WIPO), and any other intellectual property offices in which a foreign application claiming priority to the instant patent application is filed access to the instant patent application. See 37 CFR 1.14(c) and (h). This box should not be checked if the applicant does not wish the EPO, JPO, KIPO, WIPO, or other intellectual property office in which a foreign application claiming priority to the instant patent application is filed to have access to the instant patent application.</p> <p>In accordance with 37 CFR 1.14(h)(3), access will be provided to a copy of the instant patent application with respect to: 1) the instant patent application-as-filed; 2) any foreign application to which the instant patent application claims priority under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d) if a copy of the foreign application that satisfies the certified copy requirement of 37 CFR 1.55 has been filed in the instant patent application; and 3) any U.S. application-as-filed from which benefit is sought in the instant patent application.</p> <p>In accordance with 37 CFR 1.14(c), access may be provided to information concerning the date of filing this Authorization.</p>

<b>Application Data Sheet 37 CFR 1.76</b>		Attorney Docket Number	MBOT-0030-P60
		Application Number	
Title of Invention	THREE-DIMENSIONAL PRINTING IMPROVEMENTS		

**Applicant Information:**

Providing assignment information in this section does not substitute for compliance with any requirement of part 3 of Title 37 of CFR to have an assignment recorded by the Office.

**Applicant 1**

If the applicant is the inventor (or the remaining joint inventor or inventors under 37 CFR 1.45), this section should not be completed. The information to be provided in this section is the name and address of the legal representative who is the applicant under 37 CFR 1.43; or the name and address of the assignee, person to whom the inventor is under an obligation to assign the invention, or person who otherwise shows sufficient proprietary interest in the matter who is the applicant under 37 CFR 1.46. If the applicant is an applicant under 37 CFR 1.46 (assignee, person to whom the inventor is obligated to assign, or person who otherwise shows sufficient proprietary interest) together with one or more joint inventors, then the joint inventor or inventors who are also the applicant should be identified in this section.

[Remove](#)

Assignee  Legal Representative under 35 U.S.C. 117

Person to whom the inventor is obligated to assign.  Person who shows sufficient proprietary interest

If applicant is the legal representative, indicate the authority to file the patent application, the inventor is:

Name of the Deceased or Legally Incapacitated Inventor :

If the Assignee is an Organization check here.

Organization Name

**Mailing Address Information:**

Address 1	1 Metrotech Center		
Address 2	21st Floor		
City	Brooklyn	State/Province	NY
Country <sup>i</sup>	US	Postal Code	11201
Phone Number		Fax Number	
Email Address			

Additional Applicant Data may be generated within this form by selecting the Add button. [Add](#)

**Signature:**

[Remove](#)

NOTE: This form must be signed in accordance with 37 CFR 1.33. See 37 CFR 1.4 for signature requirements and certifications

Signature	/John Nortrup/		Date (YYYY-MM-DD)	2013-04-03	
First Name	John	Last Name	Nortrup	Registration Number	59063

Additional Signature may be generated within this form by selecting the Add button. [Add](#)

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<b>Application Data Sheet 37 CFR 1.76</b>		Attorney Docket Number	MBOT-0030-P60
		Application Number	
Title of Invention	THREE-DIMENSIONAL PRINTING IMPROVEMENTS		

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.76. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 23 minutes to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the completed application data sheet form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. **SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.**

## Privacy Act Statement

The Privacy Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-579) requires that you be given certain information in connection with your submission of the attached form related to a patent application or patent. Accordingly, pursuant to the requirements of the Act, please be advised that: (1) the general authority for the collection of this information is 35 U.S.C. 2(b)(2); (2) furnishing of the information solicited is voluntary; and (3) the principal purpose for which the information is used by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office is to process and/or examine your submission related to a patent application or patent. If you do not furnish the requested information, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office may not be able to process and/or examine your submission, which may result in termination of proceedings or abandonment of the application or expiration of the patent.

The information provided by you in this form will be subject to the following routine uses:

1. The information on this form will be treated confidentially to the extent allowed under the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552) and the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a). Records from this system of records may be disclosed to the Department of Justice to determine whether the Freedom of Information Act requires disclosure of these records.
2. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, in the course of presenting evidence to a court, magistrate, or administrative tribunal, including disclosures to opposing counsel in the course of settlement negotiations.
3. A record in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to a Member of Congress submitting a request involving an individual, to whom the record pertains, when the individual has requested assistance from the Member with respect to the subject matter of the record.
4. A record in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to a contractor of the Agency having need for the information in order to perform a contract. Recipients of information shall be required to comply with the requirements of the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552a(m).
5. A record related to an International Application filed under the Patent Cooperation Treaty in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the International Bureau of the World Intellectual Property Organization, pursuant to the Patent Cooperation Treaty.
6. A record in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to another federal agency for purposes of National Security review (35 U.S.C. 181) and for review pursuant to the Atomic Energy Act (42 U.S.C. 218(c)).
7. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the Administrator, General Services, or his/her designee, during an inspection of records conducted by GSA as part of that agency's responsibility to recommend improvements in records management practices and programs, under authority of 44 U.S.C. 2904 and 2906. Such disclosure shall be made in accordance with the GSA regulations governing inspection of records for this purpose, and any other relevant (i.e., GSA or Commerce) directive. Such disclosure shall not be used to make determinations about individuals.
8. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the public after either publication of the application pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 122(b) or issuance of a patent pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 151. Further, a record may be disclosed, subject to the limitations of 37 CFR 1.14, as a routine use, to the public if the record was filed in an application which became abandoned or in which the proceedings were terminated and which application is referenced by either a published application, an application open to public inspections or an issued patent.
9. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to a Federal, State, or local law enforcement agency, if the USPTO becomes aware of a violation or potential violation of law or regulation.

## Electronic Acknowledgement Receipt

<b>EFS ID:</b>	15423531
<b>Application Number:</b>	61719874
<b>International Application Number:</b>	
<b>Confirmation Number:</b>	1039
<b>Title of Invention:</b>	THREE-DIMENSIONAL PRINTING IMPROVEMENTS
<b>First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:</b>	Gregory Alan Borenstein
<b>Customer Number:</b>	43520
<b>Filer:</b>	John H. Nortrop
<b>Filer Authorized By:</b>	
<b>Attorney Docket Number:</b>	MBOT-0030-P60
<b>Receipt Date:</b>	03-APR-2013
<b>Filing Date:</b>	29-OCT-2012
<b>Time Stamp:</b>	15:32:20
<b>Application Type:</b>	Provisional

### Payment information:

Submitted with Payment	no
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### File Listing:

Document Number	Document Description	File Name	File Size(Bytes)/ Message Digest	Multi Part /.zip	Pages (if appl.)
1	Request for Corrected Filing Receipt	MBOT-0030-P60_040313_FRCorrectionRequest.pdf	66431 <small>68bacb393c147736f1fbd76361d0622142bc45</small>	no	1

### Warnings:

### Information:

2	Application Data Sheet	MBOT-0030- P60_040313_SupplementalAD S.pdf	1882398  19d8f2a54c6dc6e89b7402d16ef71ea7853 d9813	no	8
<b>Warnings:</b>					
<b>Information:</b>					
<b>Total Files Size (in bytes):</b>			1948829		
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CONFIRMATION NO. 1039

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/tran/

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