



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on May 10, 2013

Feds Demand Wiki-Weapon Maker Pull 3D Gun Blueprints

When Defense Distributed founder Cody Wilson (shown) [received a letter](#) from the U.S. State Department telling him to remove from his website free blueprints to build a gun using 3D printing technology, he complied immediately. The letter, which was personally signed by Glenn E. Smith, Chief, Enforcement Division, arrived on Wednesday. It read in part:



Pursuant to Section 127.1 of the ITAR [[International Traffic in Arms Regulations](#)], it is unlawful to export any defense article or technical data for which a license or written approval is required without first obtaining the required authorization from the DDTC [Directorate of Defense Trade Controls].

Please note that disclosing (including oral or visual disclosure) or transferring data to a foreign person, whether in the United States or abroad, is considered an export....

Until the Department provides Defense Distributed with final ... determinations, Defense Distributed should treat the above technical data as ITAR-controlled. This means that all such data should be removed from public access immediately.

Wilson explained, "I immediately complied and have taken down the files. But this is a much bigger deal than guns. It has implications for the freedom of the web." And then, noting that in just two days users around the world had already downloaded those files more than 100,000 times, he added: "I still think we win in the end. Because the files are all over the internet — The Pirate Bay has it — to think this can be stopped in any meaningful way is to misunderstand what the future of distributive technologies is all about."

Wilson has no interest in manufacturing guns. His interest is in promoting freedom. His company, which is operating as a non-profit, is, according to its [website](#), organized "to defend the civil liberty of popular access to arms as guaranteed by the United States Constitution and affirmed by the Supreme Court, through facilitating global access to, and the collaborative production of, information and knowledge related to the 3D printing of arms; and to publish and distribute ... such information and knowledge in promotion of the public interest."

Critics and anti-gun politicians have seen immediately the threat to their ideology. *Wired* magazine [named Wilson one of the "15 most dangerous people in the world,"](#) while Josh Horwitz of the *Coalition to Stop Gun Violence* wrote:

The Wiki Weapon project is not the work of a dispassionate techie seeking to push the outer limits of modern technology. Instead it is a blatant, undisguised attempt to radically alter our system of government.



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On Friday anti-gun Representative Steve Israel (D-N.Y.) [issued a press release](#):

Security checkpoints, background checks and gun regulations will do little good if criminals can print plastic firearms at home and bring those firearms through metal detectors with no one the wiser.

When I started talking about this issue of plastic firearms months ago, I was told the idea of a plastic gun is science-fiction. Now that this technology is proven, we need to act now to extend the ban [on plastic firearms].

For anti-gun Senator Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.), [his reaction to the news was visceral](#): “We’re facing a situation where anyone — a felon, a terrorist — can open a gun factory in their garage and the weapons they make will be undetectable. It’s stomach-churning.”

And so, naturally, something must be done. Schumer has agreed to offer a bill similar to Israel’s in the Senate to eliminate the manufacture of plastic guns. Schumer explained:

Guns are made out of plastic, so they would not be detectable by a metal detector at any airport or sporting event.

[The] only metal part of the gun is the little firing pin and that is too small to be detected by metal detectors, for instance, when you go through an airport.

A terrorist, someone who’s mentally ill, a spousal abuser, a felon can essentially open a gun factory in their garage.

People have made silencers, stocks, triggers and lots of other gun parts. They can then upload these digital blueprints to the web and then anyone with one of these printers — and the printers cost about \$1,000 — can make one.

At present the technology is crude. The weapon that Wilson used to demonstrate his company’s ability to print a gun from its software fired a relatively mild .380 caliber round. When a larger round was fired, [the gun was destroyed](#).

Called the “Liberator,” [it is comprised of 16 separate parts](#) made of a tough, heat-resistant plastic similar to that used in kitchen appliances and automobile bumpers. The only metal component is the firing pin, and that can be obtained at any hardware store.

Wilson’s company has already successfully made high-capacity magazines for AR-15s and AK-47s, as well as an AR lower receiver, thus challenging the powers that be who want to remove these so-called “assault weapons” and their accessories from the general public. These are made without serial numbers, background checks, or other regulatory hurdles. In other words, private citizens exercising their Second Amendment rights are now close to being free to arm themselves without federal or state intrusions.

The larger issue, of course, isn’t the Second Amendment, or plastic guns, or 3D printing, or blueprints, or offshore websites or even the internet itself. The real issue that Wilson is forcing to the surface is citizen sovereignty — the limit of government control over its citizens. As Wilson noted on his company’s website:

How do governments behave if they must one day operate on the assumption that any and every citizen has near instant access to a firearm through the internet?

Photo shows Cody Wilson firing “Liberator” gun produced by 3D printer



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