

I Talked with New Jersey's "Wanted" Ivan the Troll to Find Out if 3D Printed Guns Are a True Threat

What if everything you thought about 3D-printed guns was wrong?

I know what you're thinking. How is this article different from the 50+ articles written beforehand? Well, how many of those journalists do you think consulted with someone who spends a decent amount of their time 3D-printing guns?

How many inaccuracies do you think they have written considering most of them know little to nothing about guns, never mind 3D-printing and other technologies? To avoid this dangerous journalistic trend (and to avoid looking ignorant about guns), I contacted New Jersey's "[most wanted](#)" anonymous Twitter account, [@IvanTheTroll12](#), about the nature of 3D-printed guns in the United States.

Ivan has released the [most accurate model of an AR-15](#) on his Twitter account and is releasing plans for a [Glock 17 on 3/17/2019](#). He's [released several videos of his work](#) on a peer-to-peer video hosting service called BitChute and has been 3D-printing guns for two years.

A Brief History of 3D-Printed Guns

The origin of 3D-printed guns can be traced all the way to a user from the AR-15 forum called [HaveBlue](#), who was the first to successfully manufacture and shoot a 3D-printed gun. In 2012, [Cody Wilson's](#) company, Defense Distributed (DD), made plans to design a working 3D-printed gun that could be made by

anyone willing in the privacy of their home.

The so-called [wiki-weapon](#) was [appropriately dubbed the Liberator](#), and just like the original Liberator, it was capable of firing only one bullet. DD has also designed a 3D-printable lower receiver (DD picked up where HaveBlue left off) for an AR-15 and a variety of magazines. Within a year, DD finished their design of the first fully functional blueprint of the Liberator.

DD quietly released these files to the public, and shortly after, the State Department [demanded the removal](#) of the instructions from the [DD website](#), believing them to be in violation of the [Arms Export Control Act of 1976](#). However, the “damage” was already done, and the people who were fast enough to download these files created [mirrors](#) of them across the web and helped immortalize their existence and accessibility.

In 2015, Cody Wilson sued the government for First Amendment violations, and in 2018, the Department of Justice settled, accepting his right to publish 3D-printable gun files on the internet. In the summer of 2018, Defense Distributed re-released the 2013 files to the public, and people [started panicking](#).

A Conversation with Ivan the Troll

JDaniel Richer: How easy is it to make a gun from DD’s files?

Ivan the Troll: DD’s gun files that were [sent again last summer](#) had many flaws and were not detailed at all. In fact, although they were printable, *none* of them were modeled correctly. Even if you had a printer capable of printing in metal, the DD files wouldn’t have helped you make a functional gun. They were junk files.

JDaniel Richer: Are these guns undetectable?

Ivan the Troll: Various reports on 3D-printed guns would have

you believe these guns are “undetectable,” but that simply is not the case at all. No 3D-printed gun is actually “fully” 3D-printed. 3D-printed guns are all detectable as they show up in body scanners, ammo sets off metal detectors, and the firing pin (the thing that is necessary to make the gun go “pow”) in all guns is metal. Even though the Liberator is mostly plastic, it still contains (and [legally must contain](#)) metal parts like the [firing pin](#). In other cases, it’s just certain parts of the gun that are 3D-printed, like the [magazine](#) and [lower receiver](#).

JDaniel Richer: How durable is a 3D-printed gun?

Ivan the Troll: Generally speaking, if it’s “all plastic,” it’s very weak. However, if it’s just a certain part of the gun that is 3D-printed, it’s [quite durable](#) and will last thousands of shots.

JDaniel Richer: How easy would it be to make a 3D-printed gun, assuming the files are viable?

Ivan the Troll: Fairly easy. The barrier to entry is really low, as you can buy a 3D printer for around \$200 that lets you make AR-15 lowers. While the technical knowledge in printing a gun is quite low, to make it work takes a bit of knowledge about making guns.

JDaniel Richer: Why not just buy a gun?

Ivan the Troll: Some people like the challenge. Some like avoiding the dependence on other companies. Some like the privacy/anonymity (government doesn’t know). Some like the ghost gun clout. Some still live in areas or situations where they are denied their right to have this, so they print as a means of protest.

JDaniel Richer: Is this legal?

Ivan the Troll: Only the state of [New Jersey](#) has banned 3D-

printed guns and their files. Rhode Island has [proposed legislation](#) to do the same, and Connecticut is [getting close](#). It is completely legal to 3D-print a gun and possess and distribute the files needed to do so everywhere else in the United States.

JDaniel Richer: Are 3D-printed guns a threat to the well-being of the public? What does this mean for gun control?

Ivan the Troll: A threat to the public? They've been around for 10 years, and there has not been a single use in crime, nor has anyone been harmed by them. Seems to me like they aren't a threat to the public. It is just another nail in the coffin for gun control. Gun control is a prohibition-style law, and prohibition-style laws only stop those who would abide by them.

They don't really make the action everyone is afraid of any harder. This just affirms the idea. If people want to get serious about gun violence, they must start looking at its roots. Why do people want to kill people? Why are gangs so violent (see: the War on Drugs)? Why isn't gun safety taught in school?

3D-Printed Guns Aren't Uniquely Dangerous

In conclusion, it is very clear that past journalists have gotten the state of 3D-printed guns in the US wrong. If 3D-printed guns were any kind of serious threat, something big would've happened by now. It is unfortunate and dangerous that journalists have gotten away with hundreds of articles that probably purposely painted the existence of 3D-printed guns as something it is not. As nefarious as people want 3D-printed guns to look, there is another side of the story entirely.

This article was originally published on FEE.org. Read the [original article](#).

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