

# INTRODUCTION TO ADDITIVE MANUFACTURING OF THERMOPLASTIC COMPOSITES

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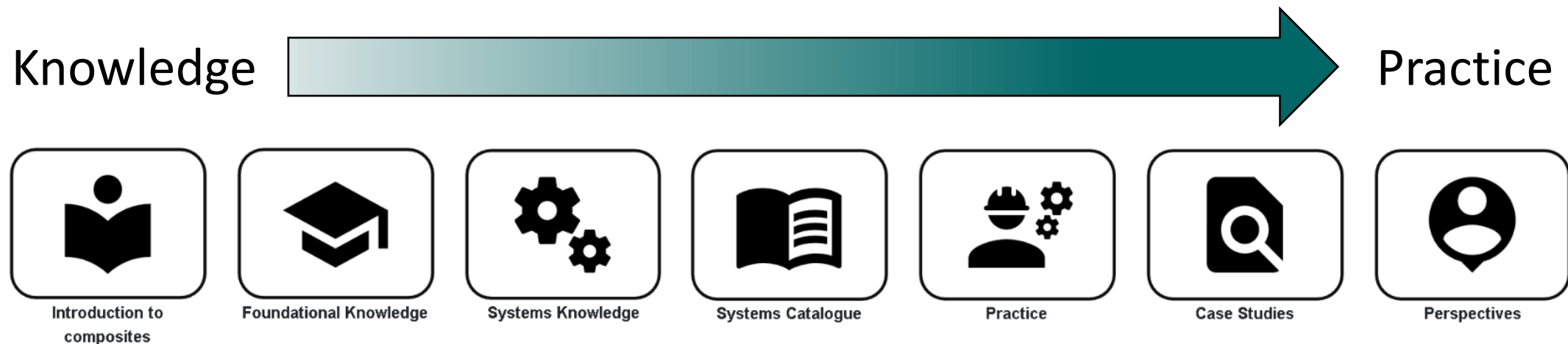
## YOUR HOST: DANIEL THERRIAULT

- Grew up in Rimouski, Quebec, Canada
- Bachelor in Mech. Eng. at Polytechnique Montreal
  - Space technologies orientation
  - Exchange at U of Texas at Austin and internship at MDA (formerly EMS)
- M.Eng in Aerospace Eng. at Polytechnique Montreal
  - Structures and materials
  - Internship at Canadian Space Agency
- PhD in Aerospace Eng. at UIUC
  - Supervisor: Prof. S. White (formerly at AAE)
  - Co-supervisor: Prof. J. Lewis (MATSE, now at Harvard)
- 2004 – Prof. at Polytechnique Montreal
  - Co-director of Laboratory of Multiscale Mechanics (LM2)
- 2009 – 2019: Canada Research Chair holder (advanced materials)
- 2012 – 2013: Sabbatical at Bombardier and MDA
- 2018 – 2028: Safran/Polytechnique Chair (FACMO)
- 2022 – 2023: Sabbatical at NCSU & CAMAL



## KNOWLEDGE IN PRACTICE CENTRE (KPC)

- A freely available online resource for composite materials engineering:  
[compositeskn.org/KPC](https://compositeskn.org/KPC)
- Focus on practice, guided by foundational knowledge and a systems-based approach to thinking about composites manufacturing



# PAST WEBINAR RECORDINGS AVAILABLE



• Home

Expand all + Collapse all

- Home
- Introduction to Composites
- Foundational Knowledge
- Systems Knowledge
- Systems Catalogue
- Practice
- Case Studies
- Perspectives
- Presentations
- Interviews
- AIM Events - Webinars
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CKN Knowledge in Practice Centre

Perspectives - A8

Welcome to the Perspectives volume. This volume is primarily based on multimedia content and serves as a bridge for linking what you have learned in the other volumes of the Knowledge in Practice Centre out to what other practitioners are doing in their projects and research. The three types of content linked below include presentations, interviews, and *Application and Impact Mobilization* (AIM) event recordings/webinars. Presentations and interviews are the primary sections linking out to external perspectives on composites, while the AIM event recording section contains CKN's perspective on how to apply composites knowledge.

Refer to the [Level I](#) view to navigate to the perspectives content quickly, or refer to the [Level II](#) view to navigate to the perspectives content with additional context. [Level II](#) provides more information on the relationship between know-how & know-why, and why it is important to protect the fundamentals of any processes or conventions already in place.

Level I Level II

Presentations

Interviews  
[Read more](#)

AIM Event Recordings - Webinars

Welcome

Welcome to the CKN Knowledge in Practice Centre (KPC). The KPC is a resource for learning and applying scientific knowledge to the practice of composites manufacturing. As you navigate around the KPC, refer back to the information on this right-hand pane as a resource for understanding the intricacies of composites processing and why the KPC is laid out in the way that it is. The following video explains the KPC approach:

Understanding Composites Processing

The Knowledge in Practice Centre (KPC) is centered around a structured method of thinking about composite material manufacturing. From the top down, the hierarchy consists of:

Today's Webinar will be posted at:

<https://compositeskn.org/KPC/A395>

Past Webinar Recordings: <https://compositeskn.org/KPC/A115>

**TODAY'S TOPIC:**

*INTRODUCTION TO ADDITIVE  
MANUFACTURING OF THERMOPLASTIC  
COMPOSITES*

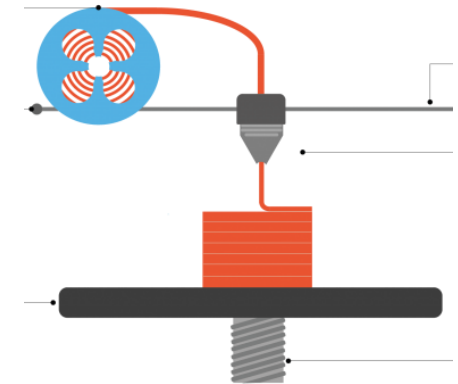
## OUTLINE

- Introduction to additive manufacturing (AM)
- Introduction to Fused Filament Fabrication (FFF)
  - Case study
- Introduction to Fused Granulate Fabrication (FGF)
  - Case study
- Introduction to Continuous Fiber Fabrication (CFF)
  - Case study
- Circular economy in AM of composites
- Industry questions... and some answers
- Future perspectives

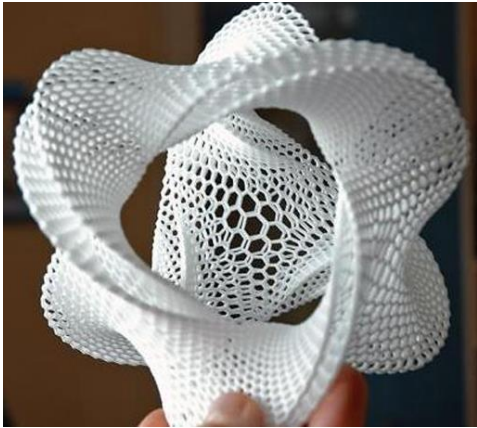


# INTRODUCTION TO ADDITIVE MANUFACTURING (AM)

- What is 3D printing?
  - Process of joining materials to fabricate objects layer-by-layer from a 3D model
    - “Fast” manufacturing of pieces, using minimal material and energy
    - Regroups several types of processes (e.g., extrusion, granular sintering or melting, light polymerized)
  - First commercial stereolithography (SLA) printer in 1987
  - Fused Deposition Modeling (FDM) commercialized by Stratasys in 1991



(druckwege.de)



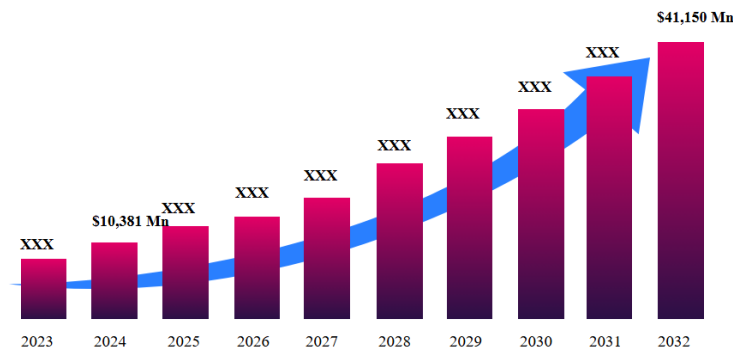
Printing of polymer prototype



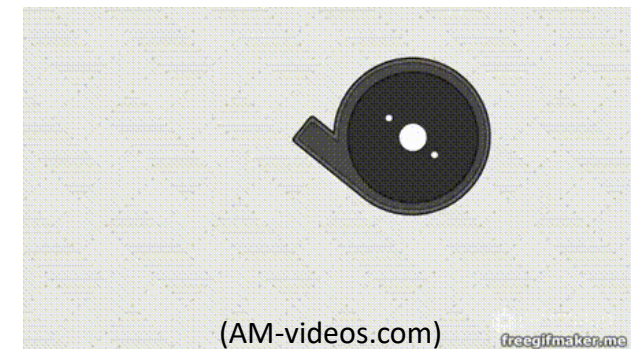
Picture of SuperDraco

## Additive Manufacturing Market

Size by Type, Application 2024-2032 (USD Billion)



Growing market<sup>1</sup>



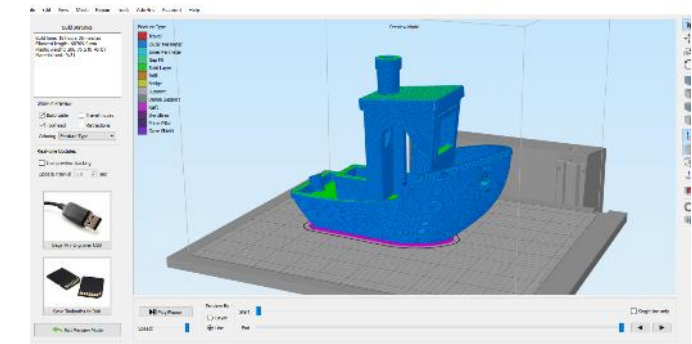
(AM-videos.com)

freecgimaker.me

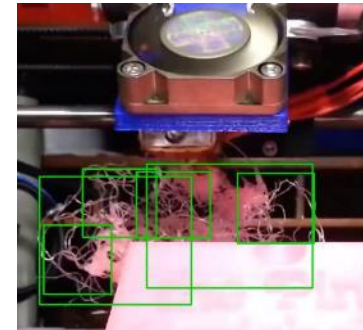
# INTRODUCTION TO ADDITIVE MANUFACTURING (AM)

## Main components of the AM workflow

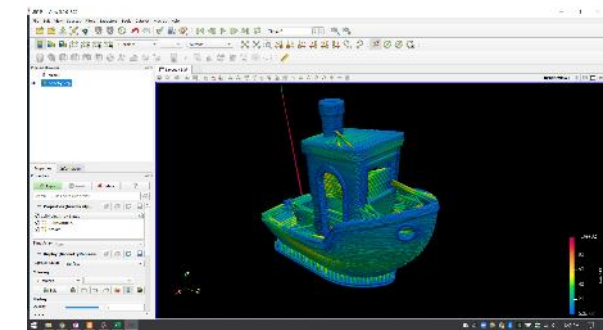
- Computer
  - Draw object in 3D (computer aided drawing - CAD)
  - Define layer-by-layer trajectory (toolpath - using Slicer software)
  - Define printing parameters (head trajectory, temperature, etc.)
  - Manage and monitor the print (*e.g.*, Octoprint, Spaghetti Detective)
  - Post-analyzing (*e.g.*, Paraview)
- Printer
  - Moving stage
  - Printing head or system
  - Control board + firmware (*e.g.*, Reprap)
  - Sensors
  - Solidification system (heat, laser, UV, solvent evaporation, chemical)
- Materials
  - Metals, ceramics, polymers, **composites**
    - Filaments, particles, liquids



Slicing (Simplify3D)



Monitoring quality (Spaghetti Detective)



Analyzing the printing speed (Paraview)



Stratasys Fortus 900mc



Polymer spools for 3D printing



Metallic particles ~20 μm



# INTRODUCTION TO ADDITIVE MANUFACTURING (AM)

- Metals
  - Now moving into industrial production of aerospace parts
  - Full scale machine technologies are commercially available
- Composites
  - Still at an early stage
  - Limited materials and material properties
  - More R & D is essential before reaching production



Industrial-scale AM for metals  
(Renishaw 500M)



Example of 3D printed  
metallic bracket (Airbus)



## Disadvantages

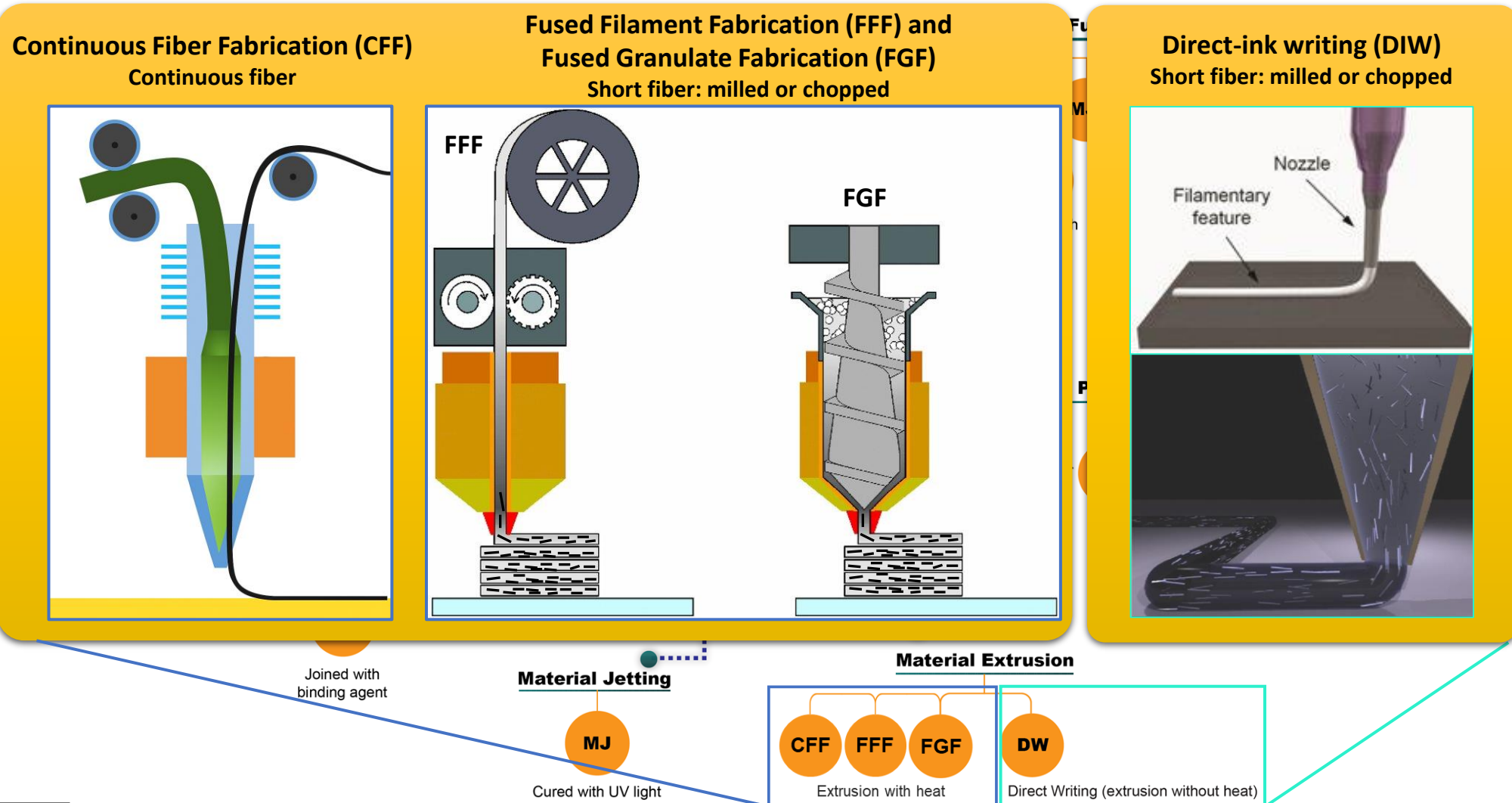
- Equipment cost: **~400,000 USD**
- Material cost: **~ 500 \$USD/kg**
- Single source supplier



## Advantages

- Equipment cost: **~120,000 USD**
- Material cost: **~ 90 \$USD/kg**
- Potential multiple suppliers

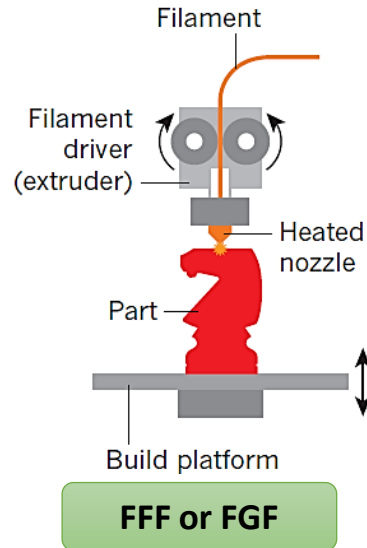
# INTRODUCTION TO ADDITIVE MANUFACTURING (AM)



Rafiee et al., Science Advances, 2020.  
Gupta et al., Journal of Process Mechanical Engineering, 2025.  
Li et al., Journal of Materials Processing Technology, 2016.  
Compton et al., Advanced Materials, 2014.

# Material extrusion 3D printing of two main types of polymers

## Thermoplastics



Semicrystalline



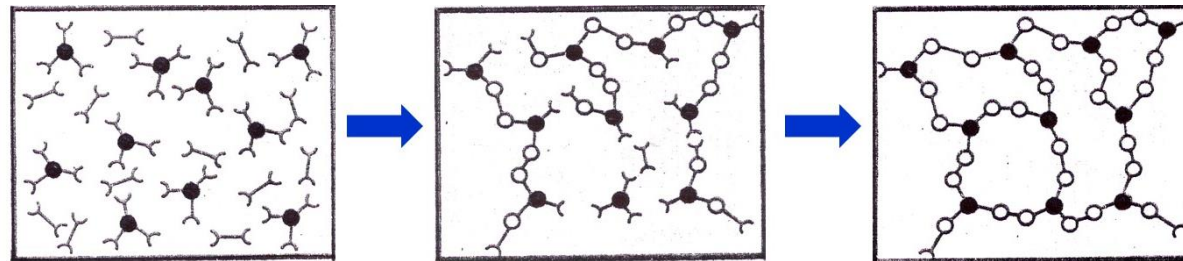
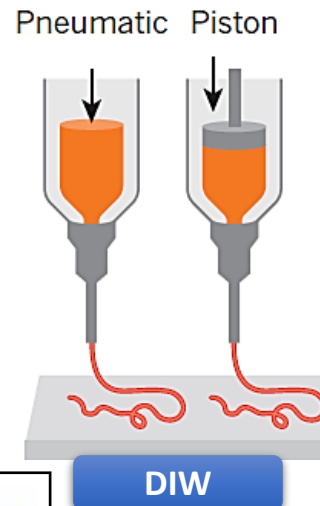
Amorphous



## Thermoplastics vs. Thermosets

- Solid vs. liquid (room temperature)
- Reversible vs. irreversible curing and processing
- Different properties
- Different viscosity behavior = very important for any process including 3D printing

## Thermosets



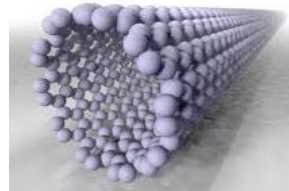
## CHALLENGES TO PRINT COMPOSITES

- Increased viscosity and poor flowability
- Nozzle wear and clogging
- Inhomogeneous dispersion
- Reduced interlayer adhesion
- Thermal and rheological incompatibility
- Surface roughness and dimensional accuracy
- Orientation and anisotropy



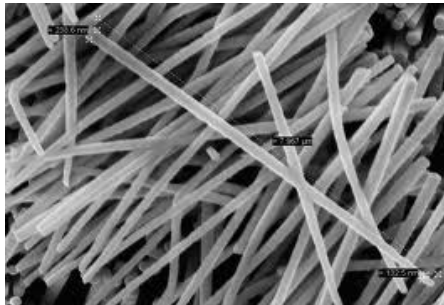
# VARIOUS FILLERS FOR COMPOSITES

Size of fillers	Type of fillers	Shape of fillers	Loading of fillers
Nanoscale (1-100 nm) Mesoscale (100 nm – 1 $\mu$ m) Microscale (1-100 $\mu$ m)	Metals Ceramic Carbon	1D (fibrous) 2D (platelet) 3D (spherical)	Low to high



1D (fibrous)

Glass nanofibers



Nanoglass.com

Chopped and milled  
carbon fibers

m-chemical.co.jp

Continuous carbon fibers

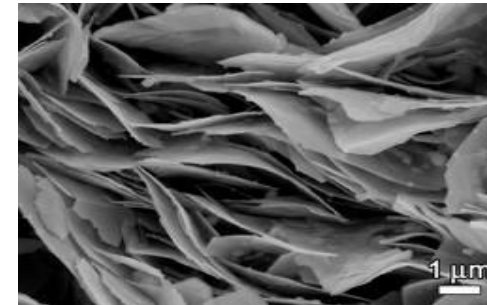


sglcarbon.com

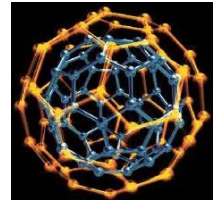


2D (platelet)

Graphene



jcwinnie.biz



3D (spherical)

Silver-coated silica  
microparticles

cospheric.com

## OUTLINE

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- Future perspectives

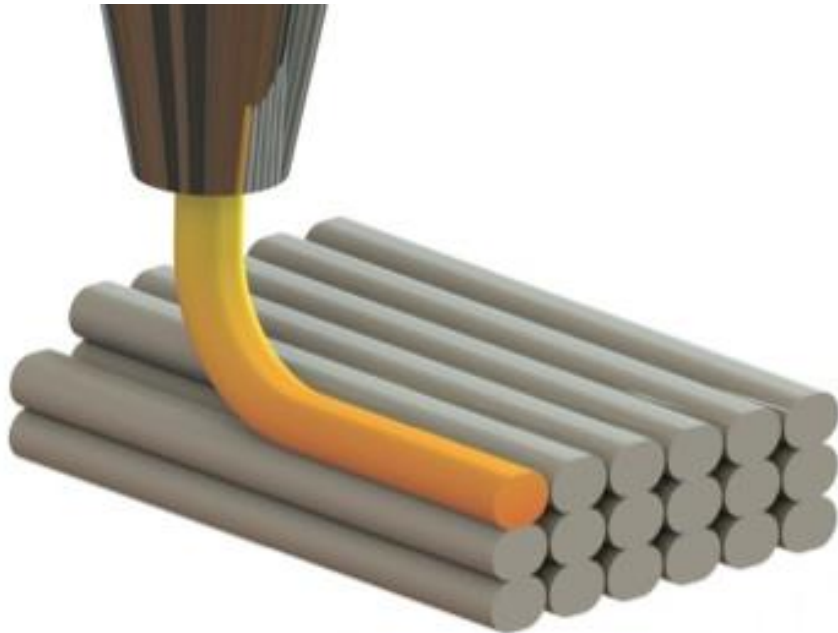


# FUSED FILAMENT FABRICATION (FFF)

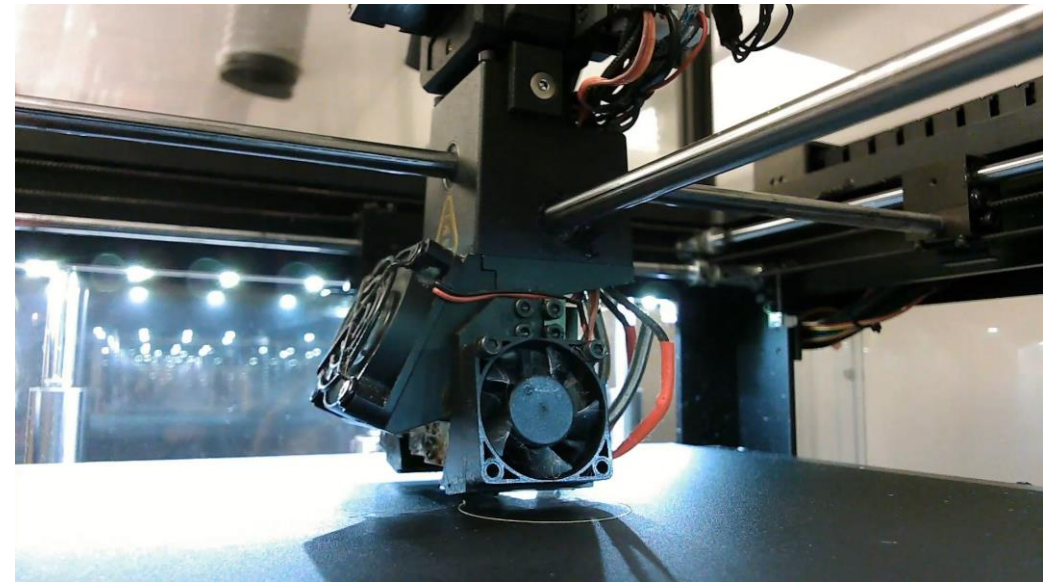
- Main characteristics
  - Deposition layer by layer of extruded hot filaments
  - Materials: thermoplastics (PLA, ABS, Nylon and many more) and reinforced thermoplastics
  - Main printer manufacturers: Prusa, Ultimaker, Bambulab, Stratasys, etc.
  - Most popular 3D printing method



Prusa MK4 printer

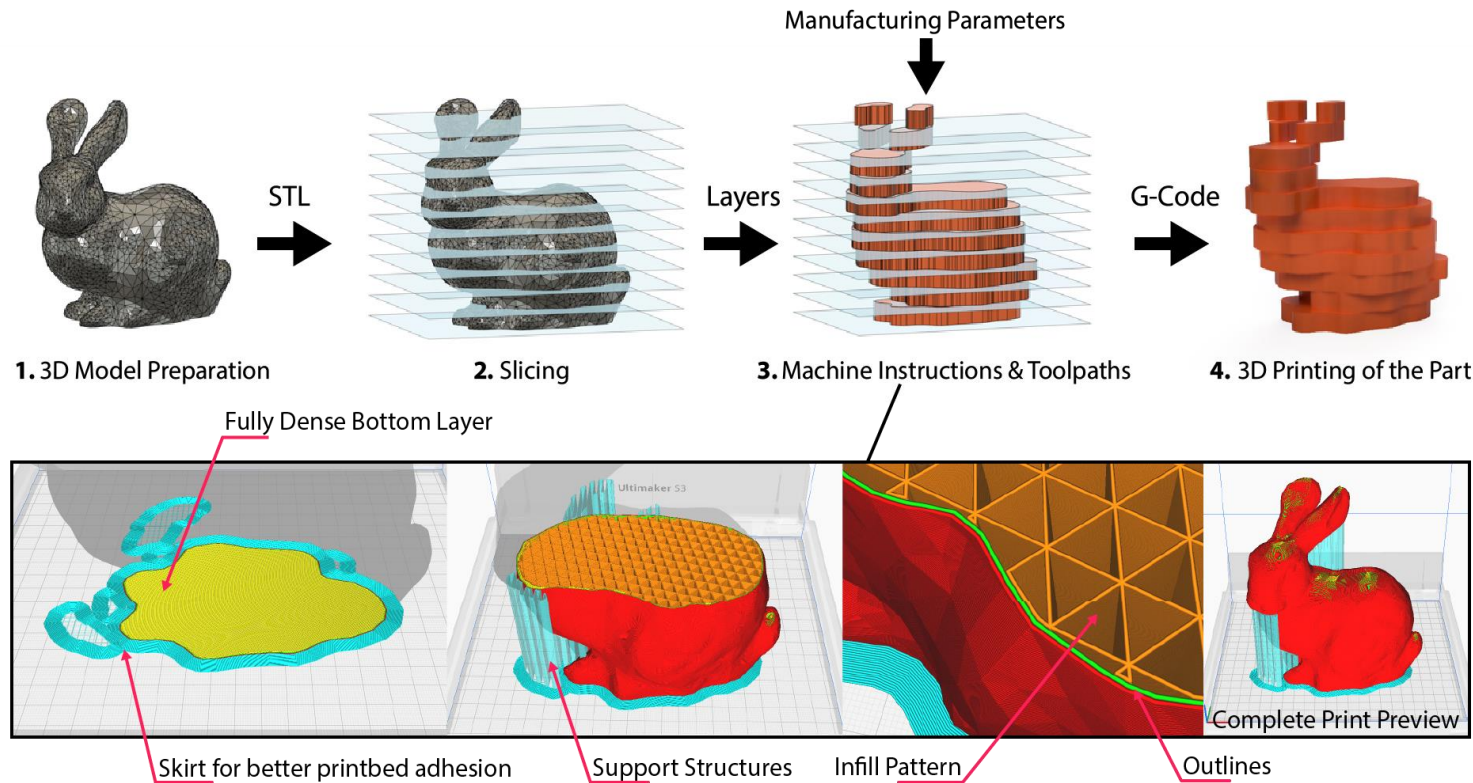


Schematic of FFF process  
(additive3d.com)



Printing timelapse of a PLA chess part with  
an FFF Raise3D printer

# FUSED FILAMENT FABRICATION (FFF)



Slicing Process from 3D model to G-Code

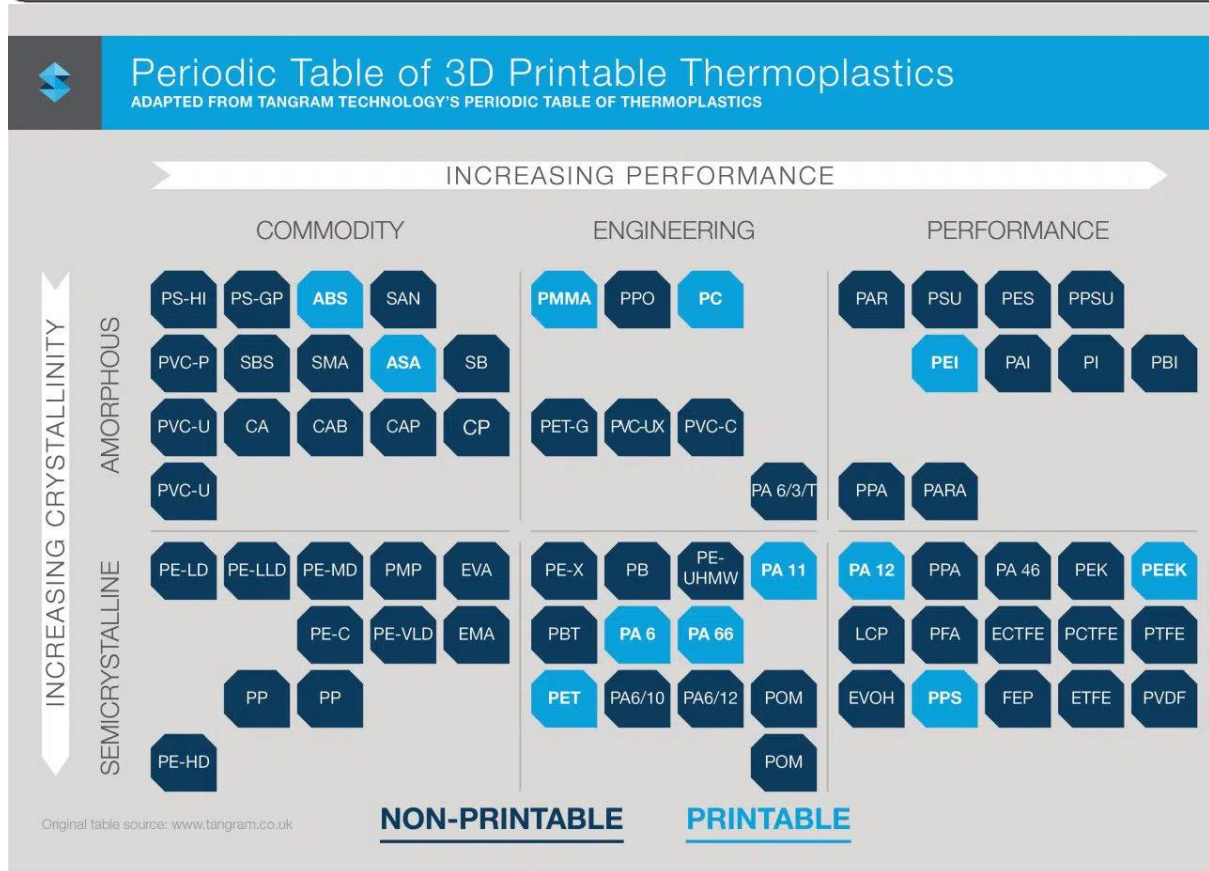
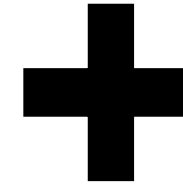
Multiple slicing software available: Cura, Slic3r, Simplify3D, GrabCAD print

1. Starts with a 3D model in .STL format of the desired part
2. .STL mesh is separated into layers
3. Each 2D cross section is used for toolpath generation
  - Types of toolpaths: Outlines, Infill, Support, Bridging
  - Optimization of the toolpath strategy
  - Process parameters are used to calculate feeds and speeds
4. G-Code file is created for printing

# 3D PRINTABLE THERMOPLASTICS

## 2018

## 2025



- Polypropylene (PP)
- Thermoplastic Polyurethane (TPU)
- Polyethylene Terephthalate Glycol (PETG)
- Polysulfone (PSU)
- Polyethersulfone (PES)
- Polyphenylsulfone (PPSU)
- and many more.



# COMMERCIAL AM INFRASTRUCTURE – PROS AND CONS

## LOW TEMPERATURE PRINTERS



Bambu Lab XE-1



Prusa XL

### PROS

- Basis of commercial and domestic printers
- Compatible with composite material printing
- Compatible with multi-material printing
- Cheap (\$2-3k) and flexible
- Fast (e.g., 500 mm/s for PLA - Bambu Labs)
- Open materials and open slicer

### CONS

- Small Build Volume: 256 × 256 × 256 mm<sup>3</sup>
- Maximum nozzle temperature of 320°C
- No heating environment – Room to low temp. (~60°C)
- Not suitable for high temperature materials like PEEK

## HIGH TEMPERATURE PRINTERS



Hylo – AON3D



H2- 3DXTECH

### PROS

- 250°C heated chamber
- Relatively large build area (450×450×650 mm)
- Maximum nozzle temperature of 500°C
- Fast printing (500 mm/s for PLA)
- Open materials and open slicer
- Ideal for printing material such as Ultem™ PEI, PPSU, and PEEK
- Improved part strength and dimensional stability
- Print large parts or multiple small parts

### CONS

- Not suitable for nonplanar parts
- Not YET suitable for multi-process

## LARGE-SCALE INDUSTRIAL PRINTERS



Stratasys F3300 printer

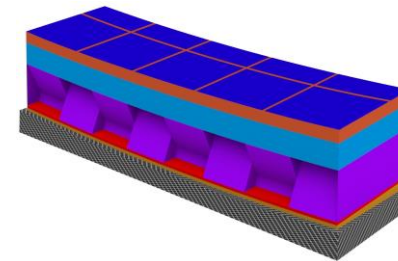
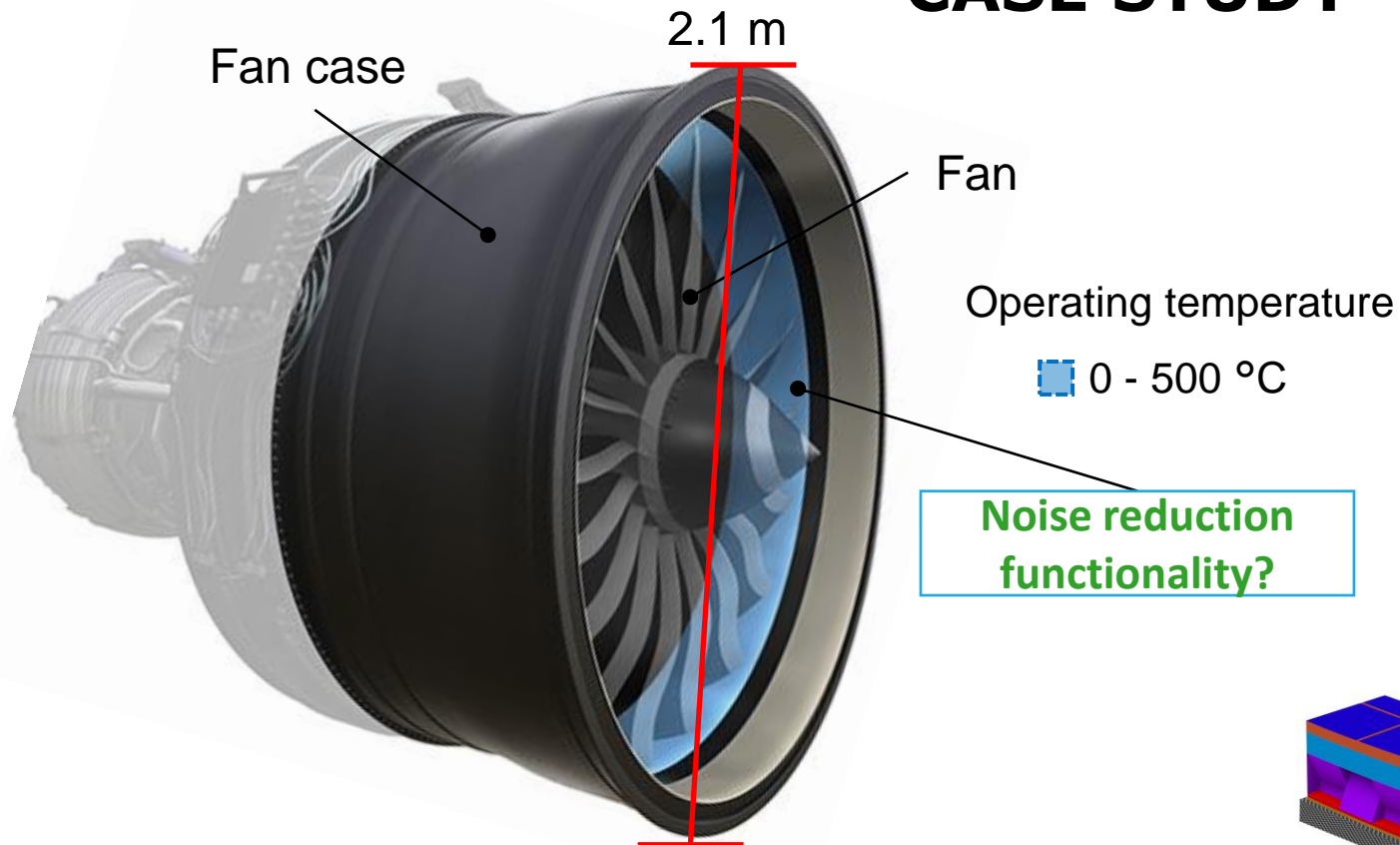
### PROS

- High temperature heated chamber (value unknown)
- Relatively large build area (600×600×800 mm)
- High temperature nozzle (value unknown)
- Fast printing (value unknown)
- Ideal for printing Ultem™ PEI, PC and Nylon
- High quality of printed parts

### CONS

- Proprietary materials and slicer = CLOSED SYSTEM
- Not suitable for nonplanar parts
- Not YET suitable for multi-process

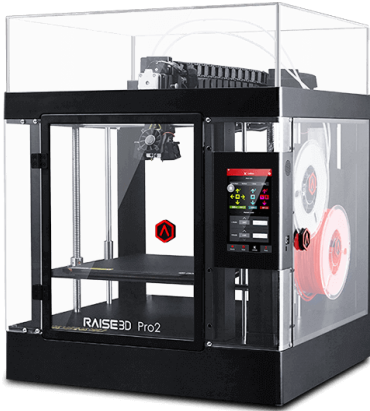
## CASE STUDY



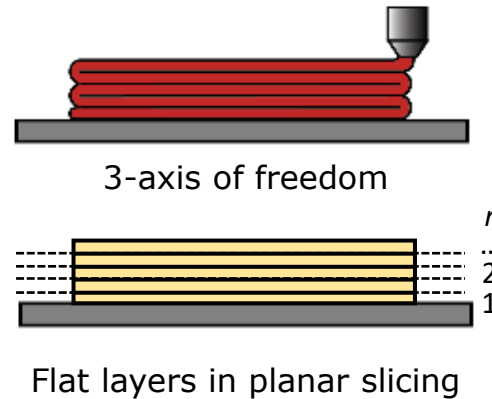
- Design criteria and requirements
  - Materials to be **resistant to high temperatures**
  - To print on a **non-planar complex surface** of the fan case
  - **Reasonable production time**
  - **Multifunctionality**: abrasability, acoustic, lightweight, moderate heat resistant
  - **Multi-material**: thermoplastic composites and abradable thermosets



# PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION AND SOLUTION



Raise3D FFF 3D printer

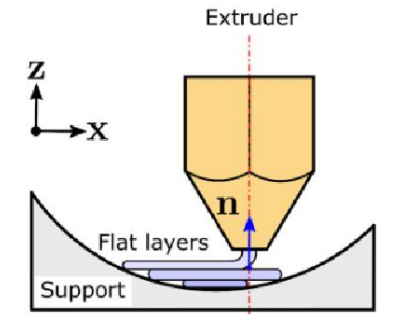


## Pros

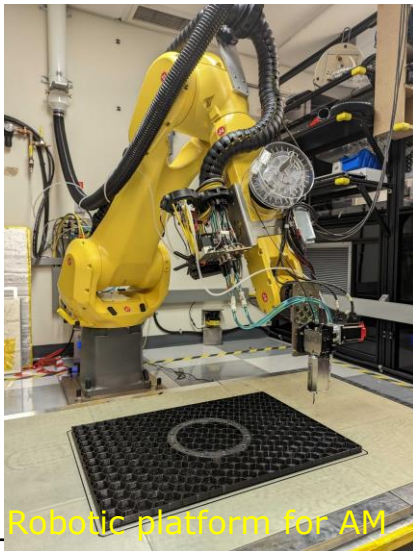
- Simple to operate

## Cons

- Typically for **small-scale** applications
- **Limited conformal printing**
- Staircase effect



Stacking of flat layers<sup>1</sup>



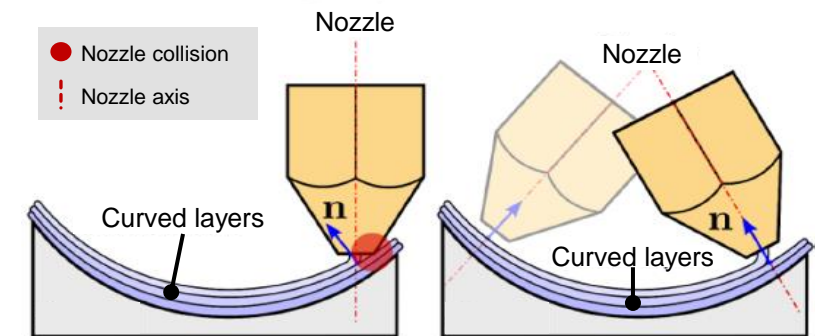
Robotic platform for AM

## Pros

- Suitable for large-scale builds
- **Non-planar or conformal printing**
- High control over nozzle and filament orientations

## Cons

- **Complex toolpath programming**
- Higher system inertia



Conformal printing with and without collision<sup>1</sup>

1. Adapted from Chen et al., 2019.



# SOLUTION: ADAPTING 6 DOF OF ROBOT ARMS

## Synchronization



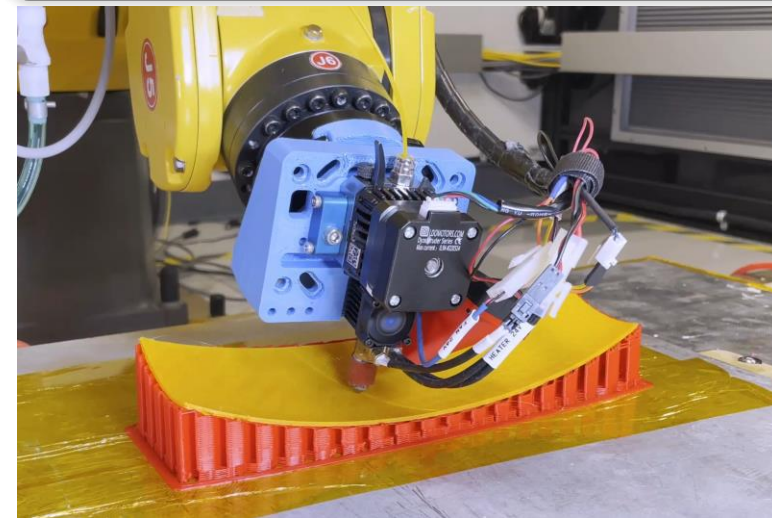
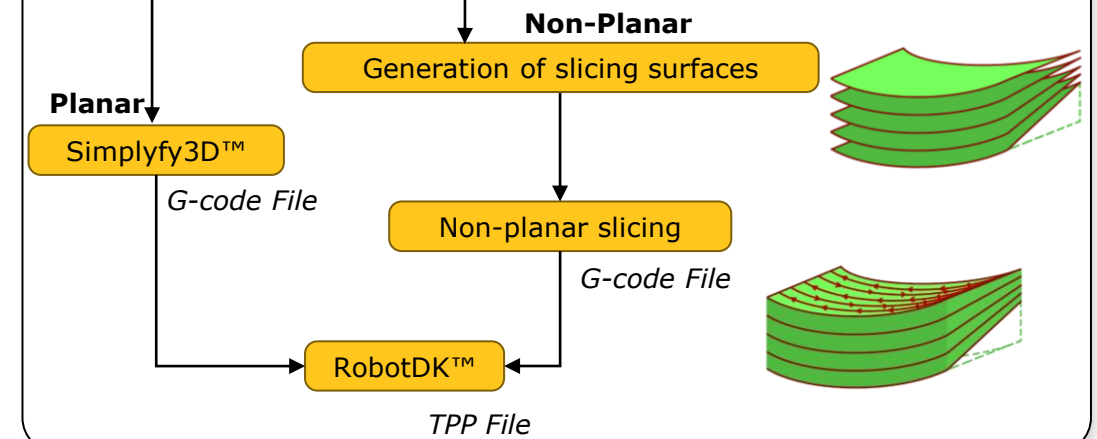
## Heated printing ambient



Infrared heater



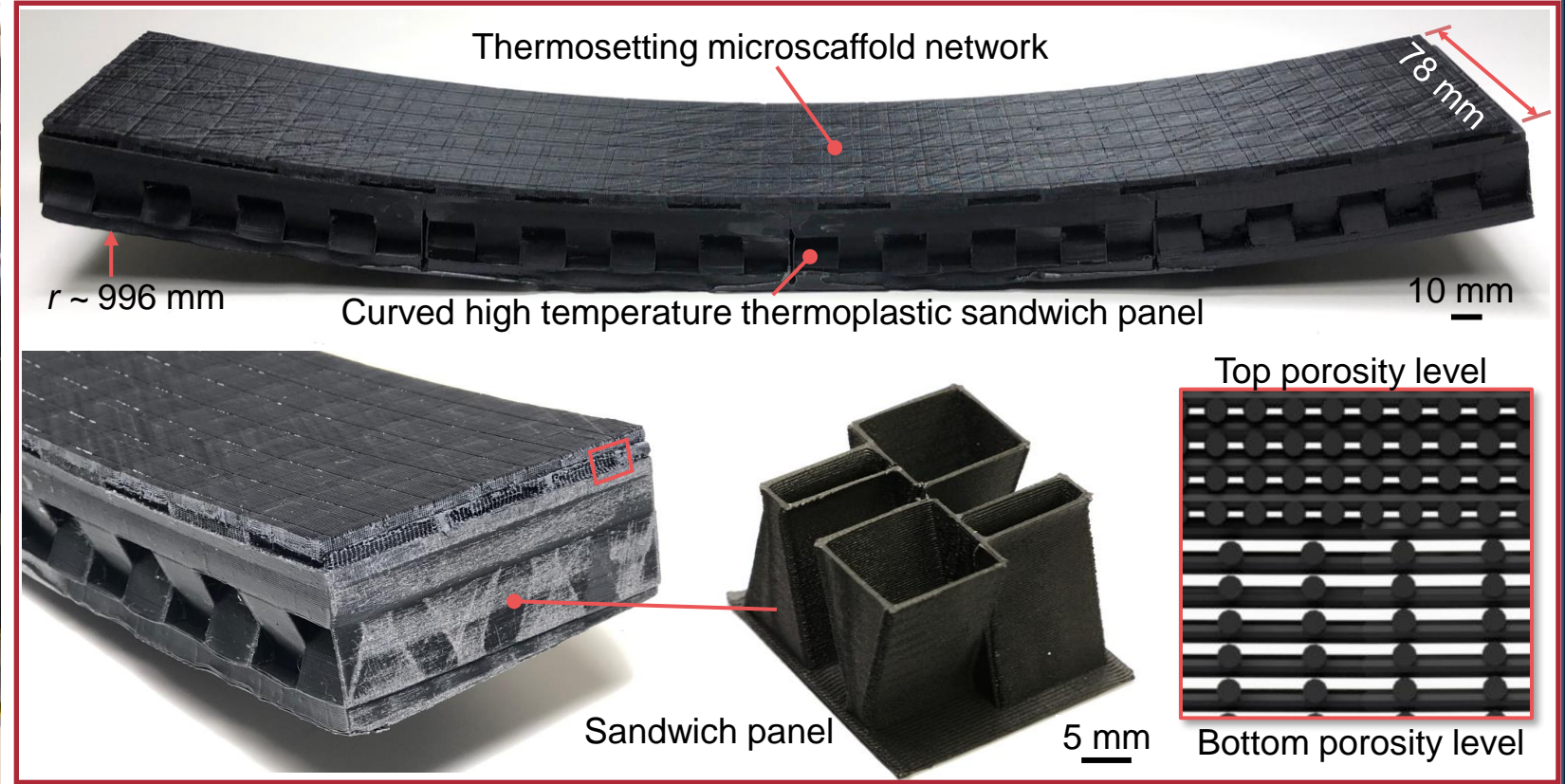
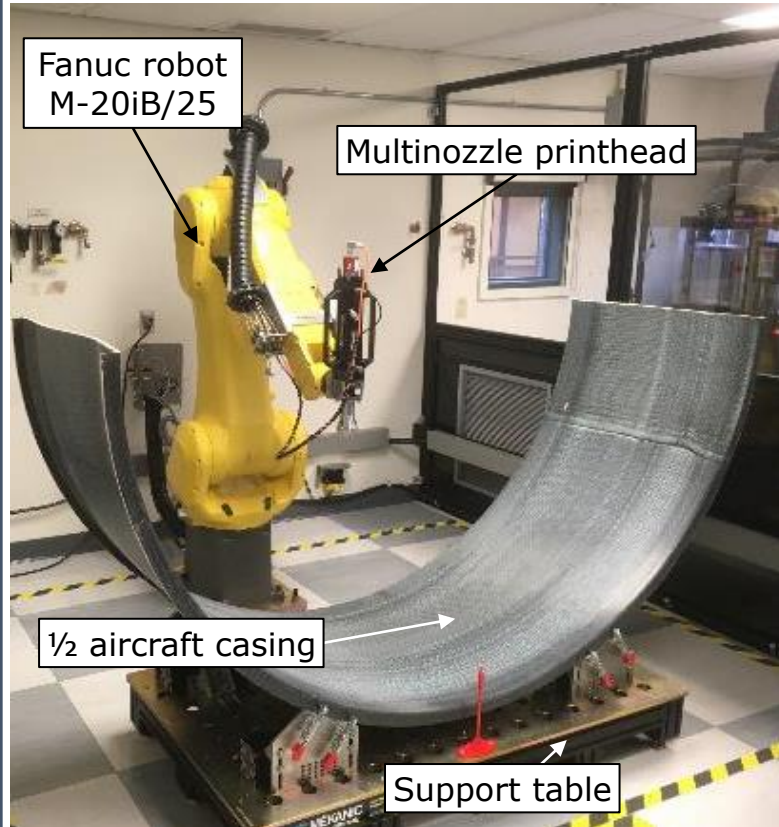
## Non-planar slicing





# TECHNOLOGICAL DEMONSTRATOR

## AIRCRAFT ENGINES – ACOUSTIC AND ABRADABLE



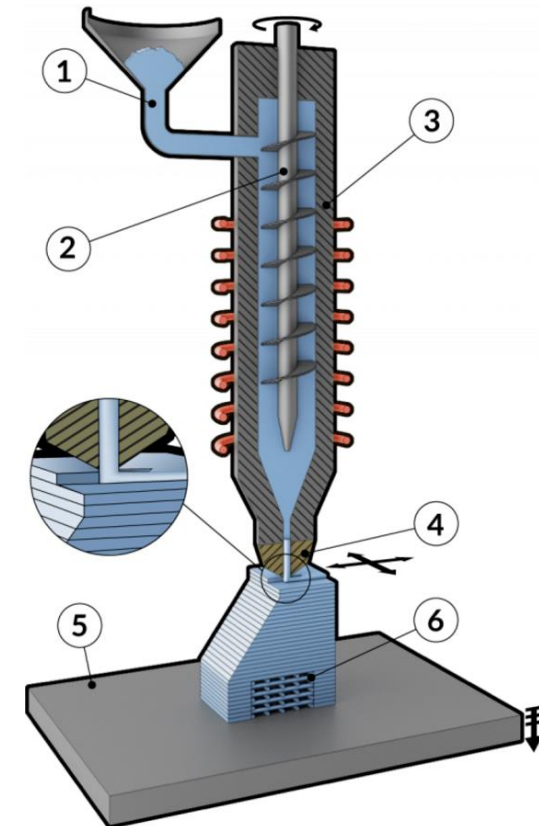
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# FUSED GRANULATE FABRICATION (FGF)

- Main characteristics
  - Use of a single-screw pellet-extrusion printhead for printing of granules/pellets instead of filaments in FFF
  - Materials: thermoplastics (PLA, ABS, Nylon and many more) and reinforced thermoplastics
    - High flow (Faster printing)
    - Cheaper costs of materials



## FUSED GRANULATE FABRICATION (FGF)

Issue with filament-based additive manufacturing: **mass flowrate**

- E3D V6 Hotend: **60g/h**<sup>2</sup>
- Dyze Design Pulsar Pellet Extruder: **2.5kg/h**<sup>3</sup>



E3D V6<sup>1</sup>




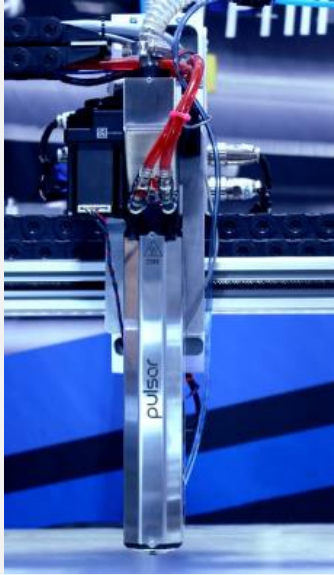

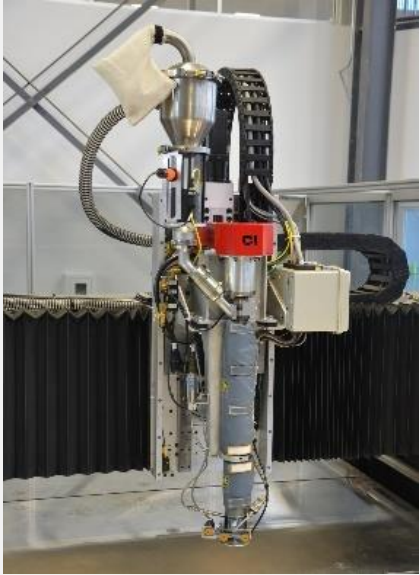
Anti-Ooze Nozzle

Pulsar pellet extruder<sup>3</sup>

1. <https://www.matterhackers.com/store/printer-accessories/v6-hotend-full-kit-1.75mm-universal>  
2. <https://e3d-online.com/blogs/news/finish-your-print-quicker-than-ever-before-the-supervolcano-has-erupted>  
3. <https://dyzedesign.com/pulsar-pellet-extruder/>



# TAKE-HOME MESSAGE

Feature / Model	Pulsar™ Atom	Pulsar™	CEAD E50	Cincinnati BAAM
Type	Small-scale pellet extruder 	Medium-scale pellet extruder 	Large-scale pellet extruder 	Large-scale pellet extruder 
Max. Throughput	~1 kg/h	~2.5 kg/h	~12 kg/h	~50 kg/h
Max Temperature	450 °C	500 °C	450 °C	450–500 °C
Nozzle Diameter	0.4–2.5 mm	0.5–2.5 mm	2–6 mm (customizable)	3–12 mm (customizable)
Manufacturer	Dyze Design (Canada)	Dyze Design (Canada)	CEAD (Netherlands)	Cincinnati Inc. (USA)

# LARGE-SCALE INDUSTRIAL FGF PRINTERS: CEAD

## GANTRY SYSTEMS



Flexcube CEAD printer

### • Specifications

- High throughput with CEAD pellet extrusion
- Very large print envelope (4 m x 2 m x up to 12 m)
- **Not suitable for nonplanar parts**

## 6-AXIS ROBOTIC SYSTEMS



Flexbot CEAD printer



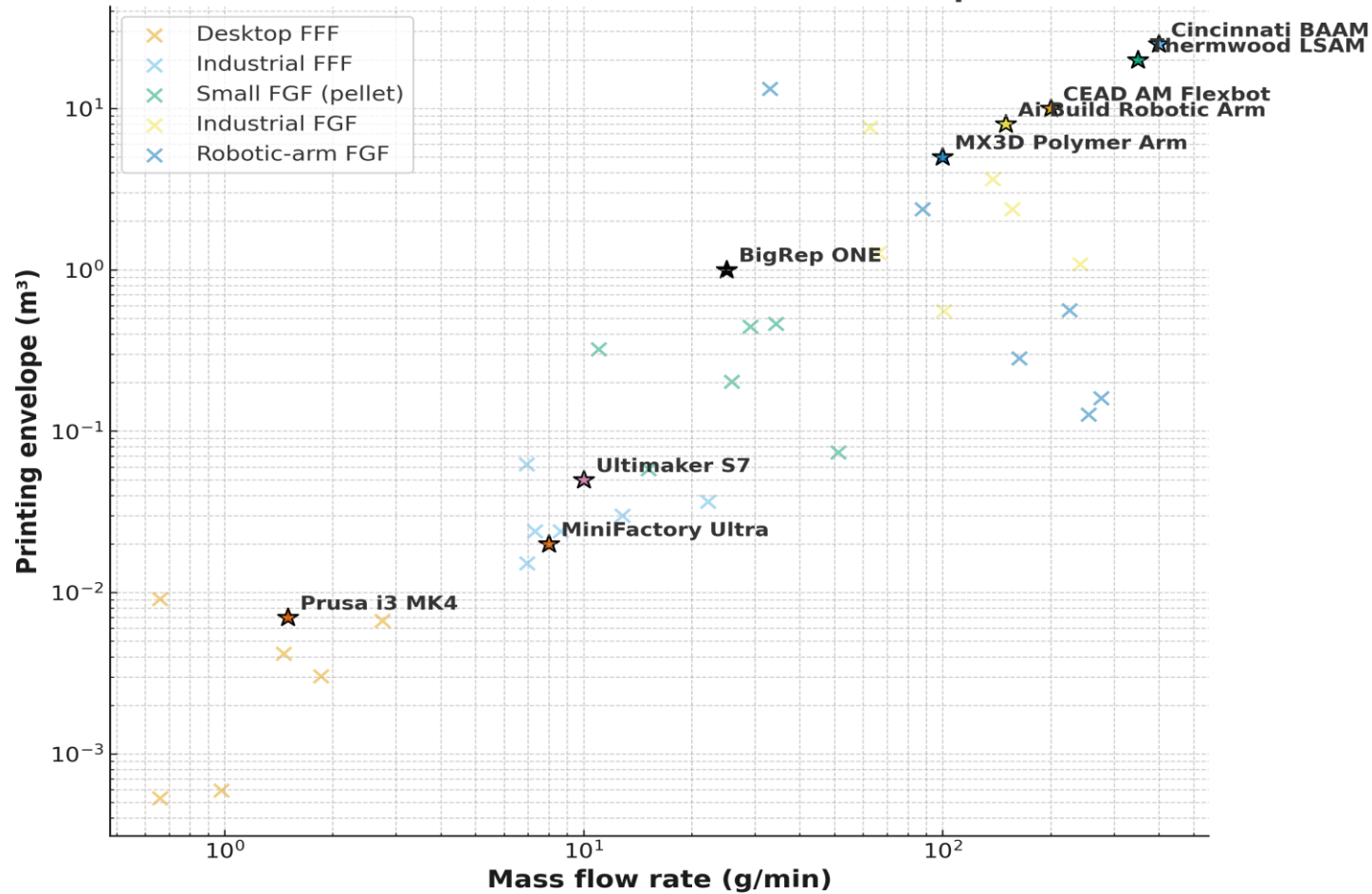
Flexbot CEAD printer

### • Specifications

- Six degree of freedom
- Very large print envelope (4 m x 4 m x 3 m)
- Suitable for large nonplanar parts
- High throughput with CEAD Pellet extrusion (85 kg/hr)

# COMPARISON OF COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL PRINTERS

Ashby-style plot: Printing envelope vs Mass flow rate  
FFF & FGF 3D Printers (with real examples)

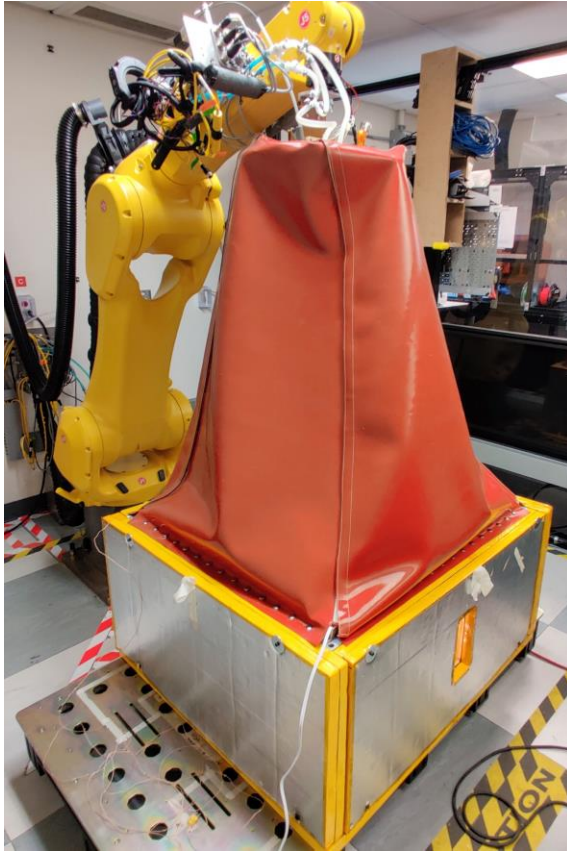


AI generated plot.



# AM INFRASTRUCTURE AT LM2 – PROS AND CONS

## CUSTOM-BUILT 6-AXIS AM - LM2



Six-axis AM platform with a heated chamber



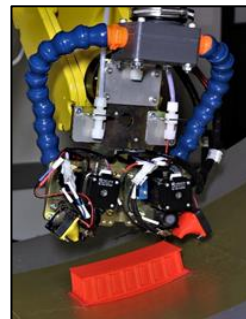
Pulsar Atom  
Pellet Extruder  
(Dyze Design)



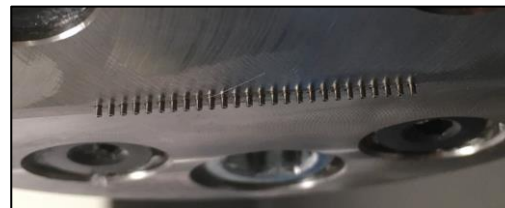
Pulsar Pellet Extruder  
(Dyze Design)



Typhoon (Dyze Design)



Two FFF printheads



Multinozzle printhead for thermosets

### • PROS

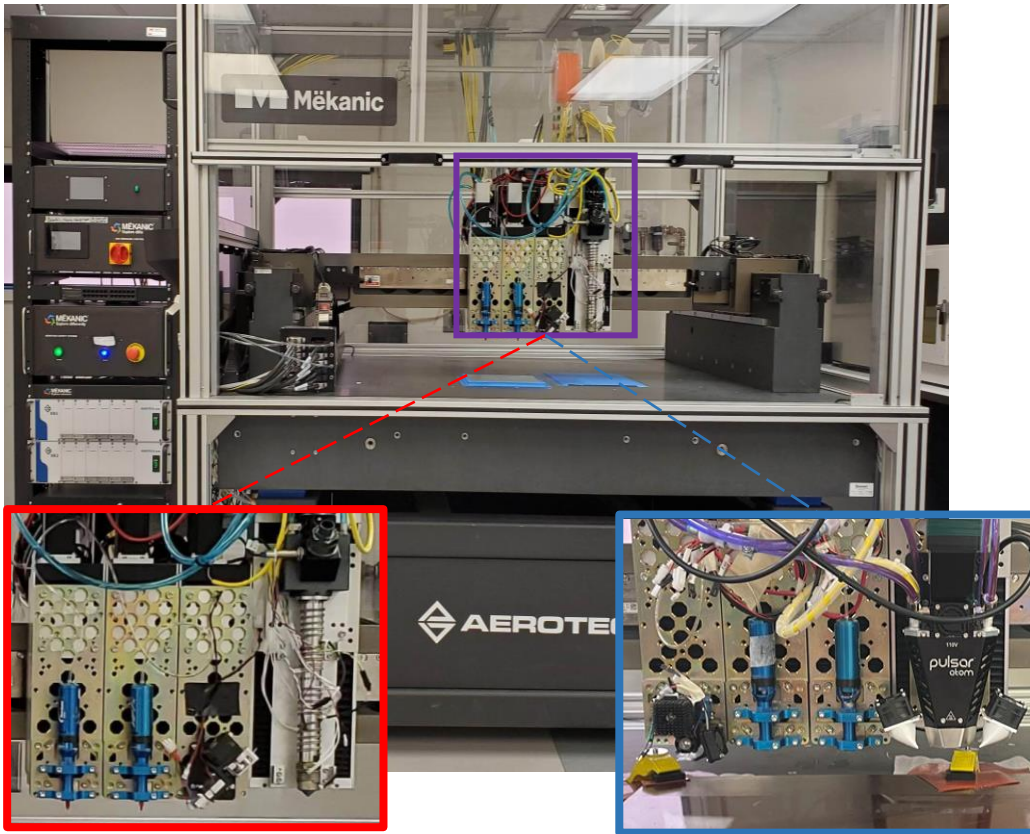
- Very large build area (800×1100 mm)
- Six degree of freedom
- With heating environment – up to 120°C
- Suitable for high temperature materials
- Suitable for large nonplanar parts
- Open materials and open slicer
- Compatible for various printheads
  - FFF
  - Direct-ink writing (e.g., thermosets)
  - FGF: Pellet-extrusion printheads (e.g., ATOM Dyze Design)

### • CONS

- Limited temperature of the heated enclosure
  - Current version: 120°C = not high enough for printing high-temperature materials

# AM INFRASTRUCTURE AT LM2– PROS AND CONS

## CUSTOM-BUILT GANTRY AM - LM2



Aerotech system equipped with different 3D printing heads

### • PROS

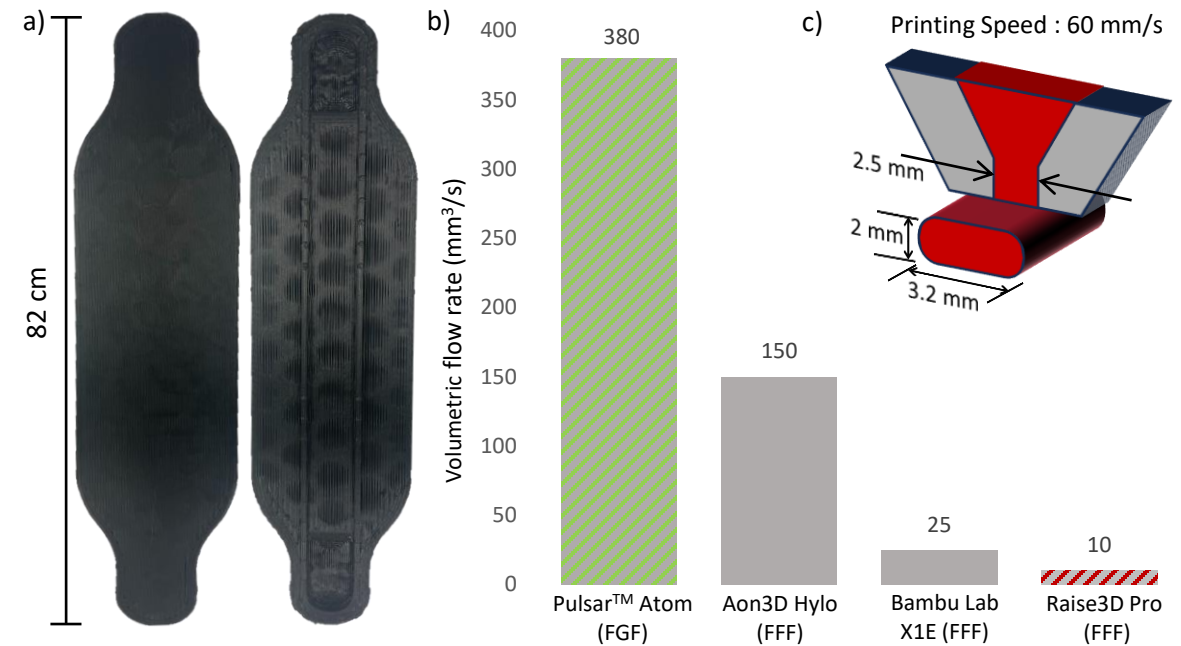
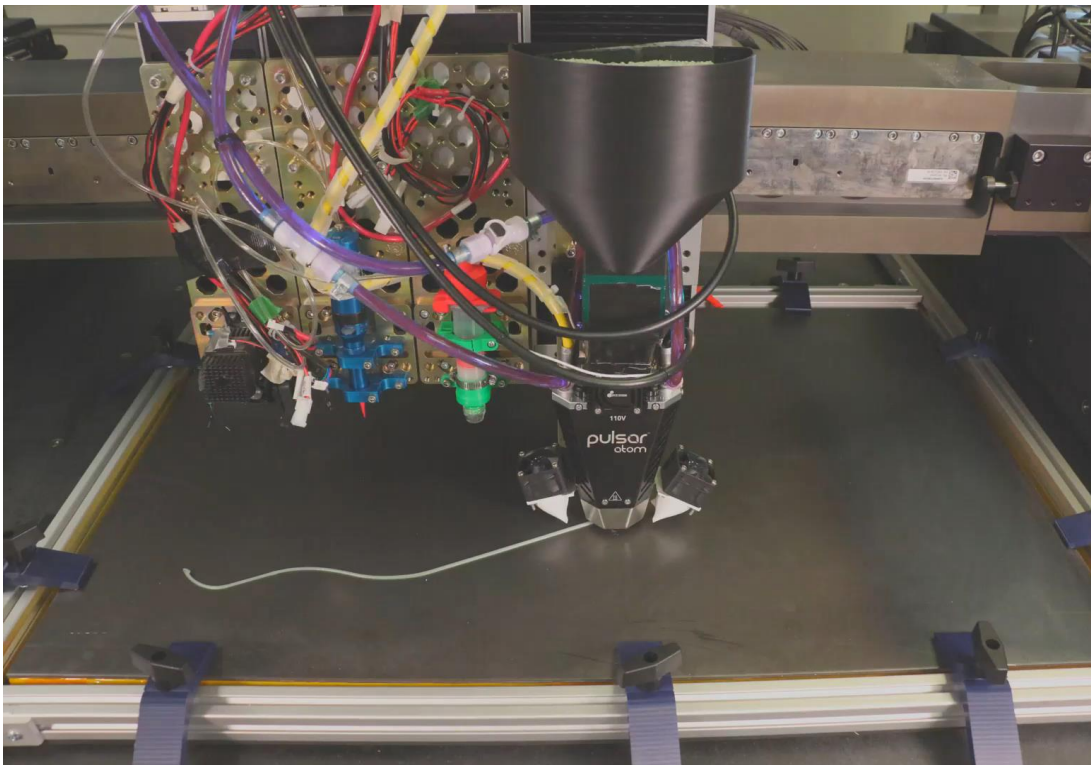
- Relatively large build area (400×400×250 mm)
- Accurate printing with air bearing gantry system
- Multi-material printing
- Multi-process printing
- Open materials and open slicer
- Compatible for various printheads
  - FFF
  - Direct-ink writing (e.g., thermosets, UV-curable resins)
  - FGF: Pellet-extrusion printheads (e.g., ATOM Dyze Design)

### • CONS

- Cartesian 3 axes
- Not suitable for nonplanar parts
- Might need support materials
- No heating environment – Room temperature printing
- Not suitable for high temperature materials like PEEK

# CASE STUDY

## AM OF A LONGBOARD USING THE GANTRY SYSTEM AND PULSAR ATOM PRINTHEAD



High-throughput FGF printed longboard using PETG- reinforced with recycled glass fiber, produced in 2h 45min with a weight of 1590g

1. **Very high flow rate achieved**
2. Successful printing of relatively large sandwich panel (longboard)
  - ➔ Adapt technology to high-temperature resistant composites
  - ➔ Adapt to non-planar + large scale printing



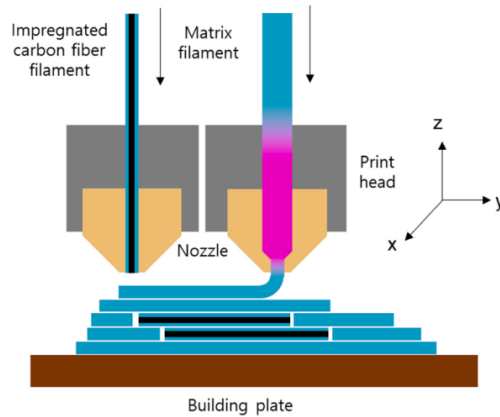
## OUTLINE

- Who is Daniel Therriault?
- Introduction to additive manufacturing (AM)
- Introduction to Fused Filament Fabrication (FFF)
  - Case study
- Introduction to Fused Granulate Fabrication (FGF)
  - Case study
- **Introduction to Continuous Fiber Fabrication (CFF)**
  - Case study
- Circular economy in AM of composites
- Industry questions... and some answers
- Future perspectives

# AM OF CONTINUOUS FIBER COMPOSITES

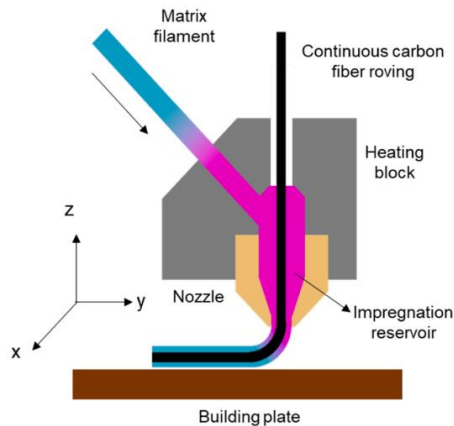
## 2 main approaches

### Towpreg <sup>1</sup>



- Better fiber impregnation
- Expensive material feedstock
- Limited geometric complexity

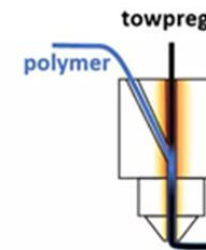
### In-situ <sup>1</sup>



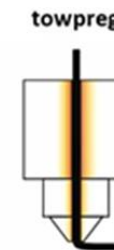
- Dry fiber feedstock possible
- Limited fiber impregnation
- Challenging cutting mechanisms
  - Very limited geometric complexity

## 5 methods based on the 2 main approaches <sup>2</sup>

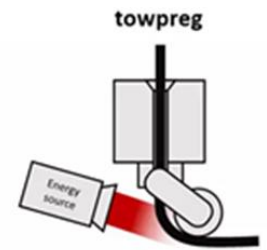
### Co-Extrusion with Towpreg



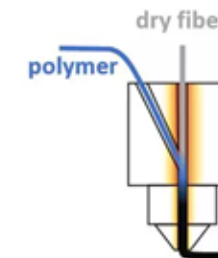
### Towpreg Extrusion



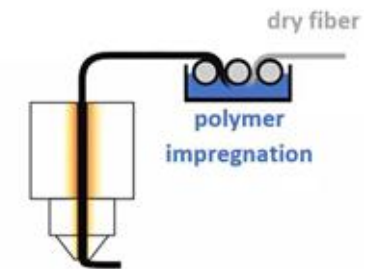
### In-situ Consolidation



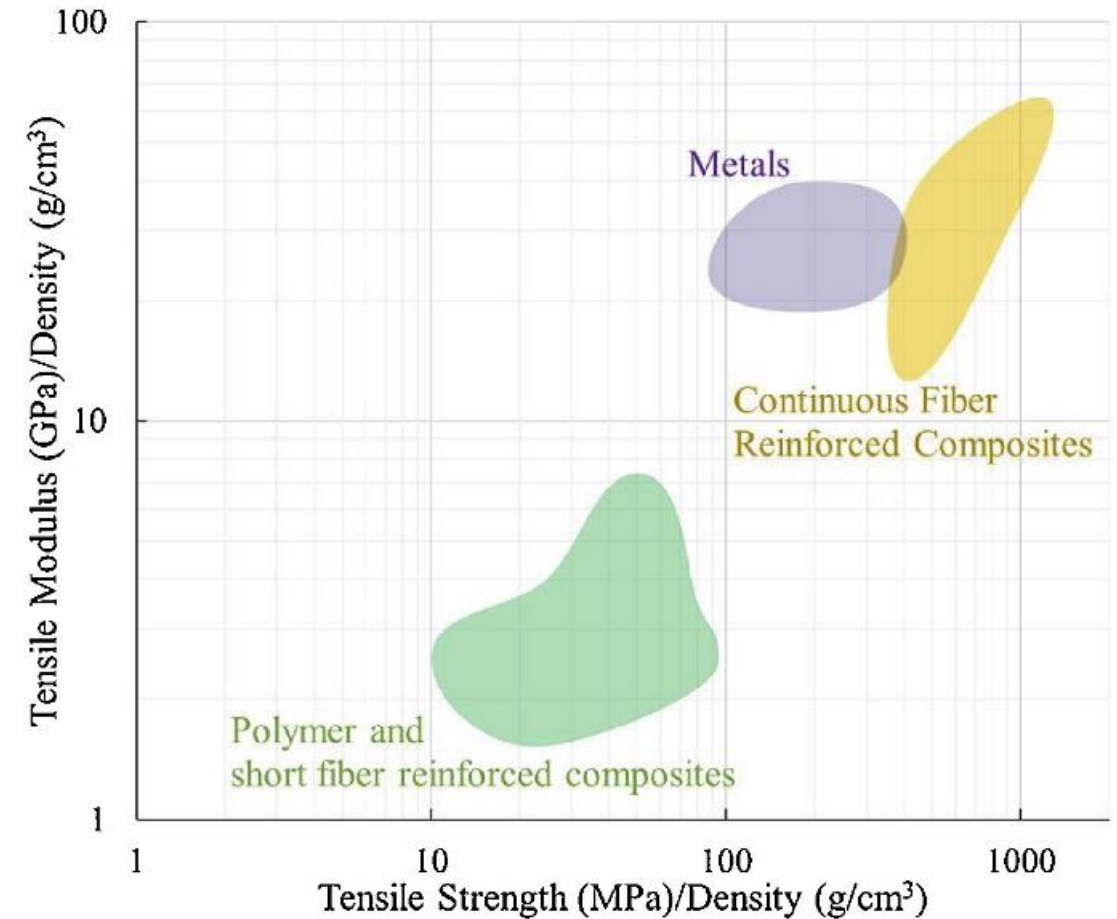
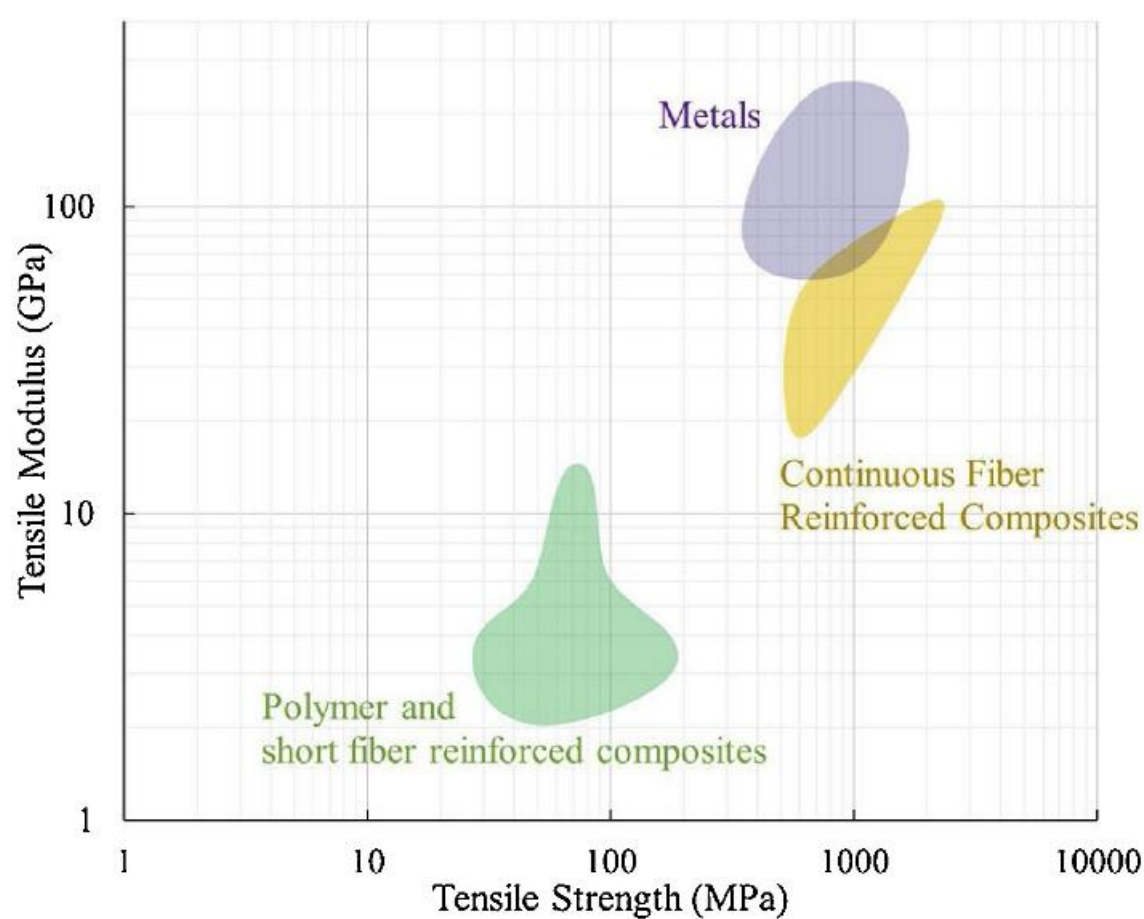
### In-situ Impregnation



### Inline Impregnation



# AM OF CONTINUOUS FIBER COMPOSITES

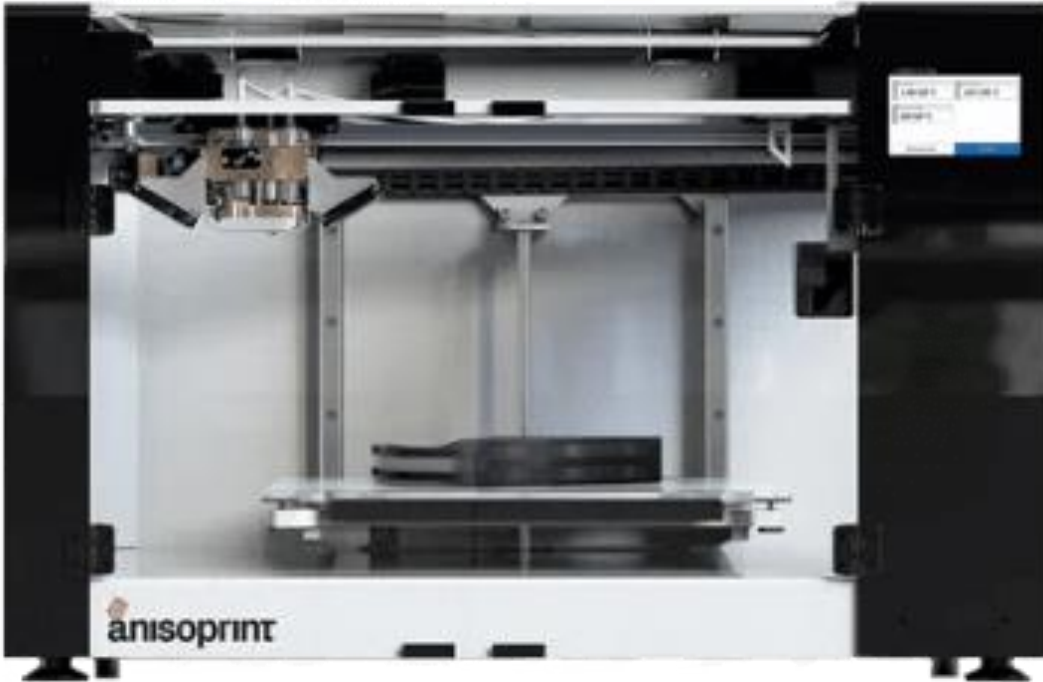


Ashby plot for regular and specific tensile properties of additively manufactured materials [1].

[1] Van de Werken et. al., Additive Manufacturing, 2020.

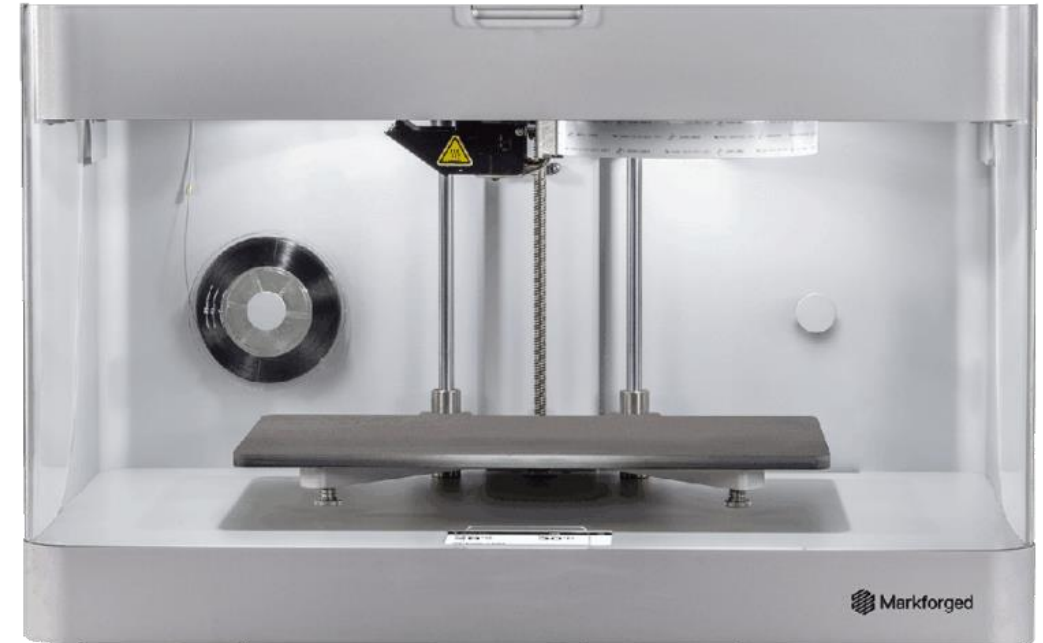
## AM INFRASTRUCTURE – CONTINUOUS FIBER

### ANISOPRINT COMPOSER A4



- Proprietary thermoset towpreg co-extrusion
- Fiber volume fraction ( $V_f$ ) < 65 vol.%
- Rely on short fiber extrusion for complex features

### MARKFORGED MARK II

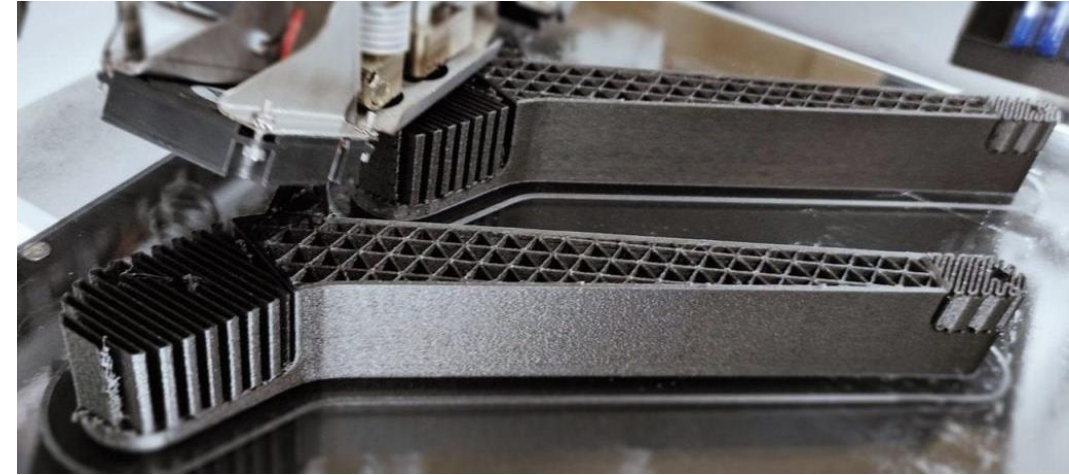


- Proprietary towpreg extrusion
- $V_f$  < 11 vol.%
- Rely on FFF printhead for complex features



# AM INFRASTRUCTURE – CONTINUOUS FIBER

## LARGE-SCALE: ANISOPRINT: PROM IS 500

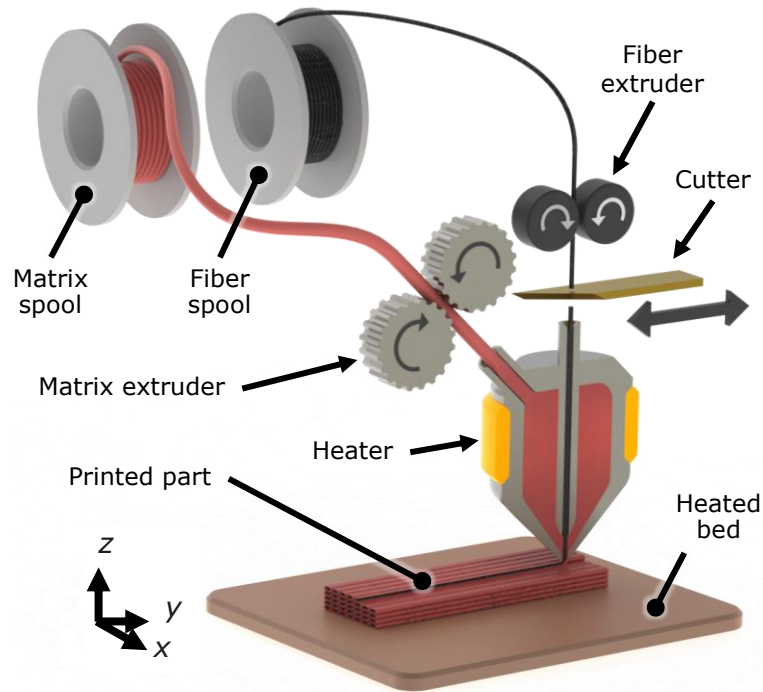


### Key Specifications

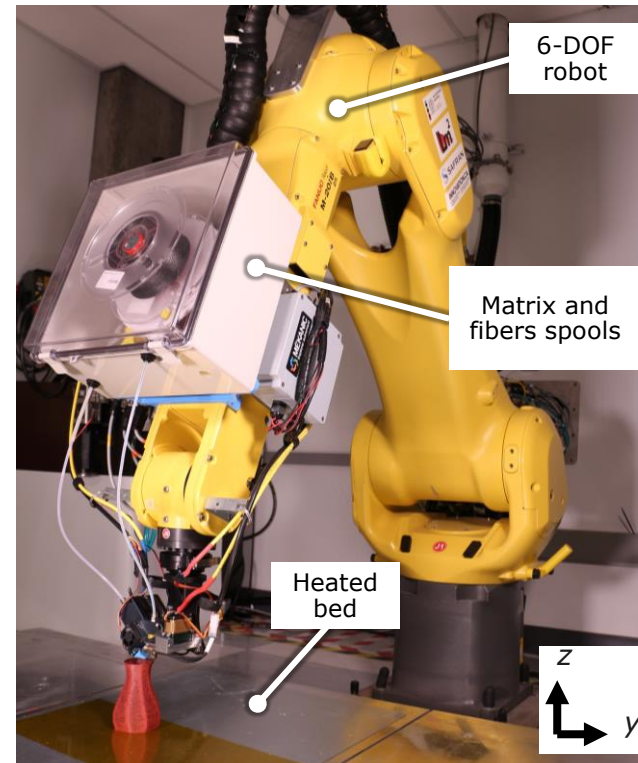
- Large Build Volume: 600 x 420 x 300 mm.
- High Extrusion Temperature: Up to 410°C
- Compatible with: PEI, PEEK, PEKK, PAEK, PPSU, PSU, PA, PC.
- Relatively High Heated Chamber Temperature: Up to 160°C.
- High Printing Speed: 20000 mm/min.

## CASE STUDY: COEXTRUSION APPROACH AT LM2

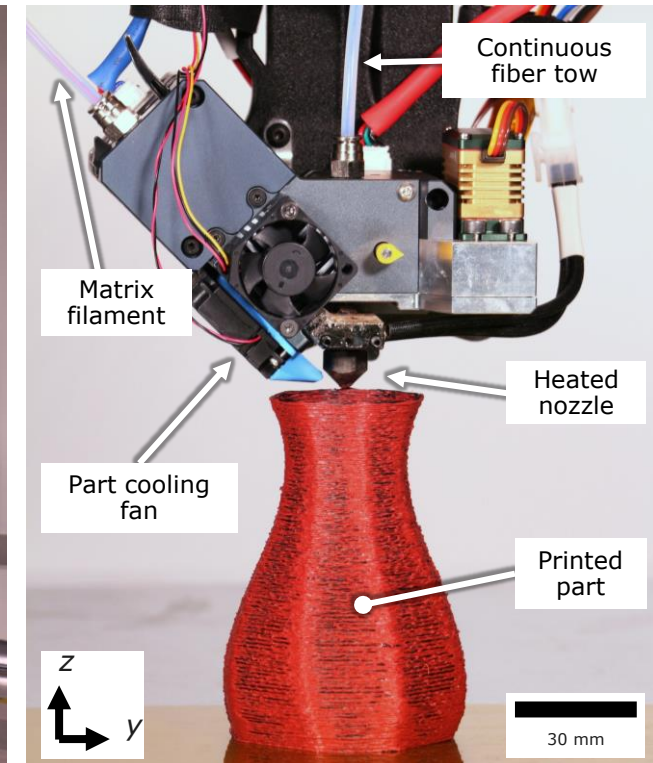
- A co-extrusion method: high-flowrate extrusion, complex geometries, and lower cost by eliminating the need for the production of expensive towpreg filaments



Co-extrusion printhead with a thermoplastic filament extrusion system, a continuous fiber tow extrusion system, a fiber cutting mechanism, a heated co-extrusion nozzle.



Photograph of the 6-DOF robot with the co-extrusion print head installed

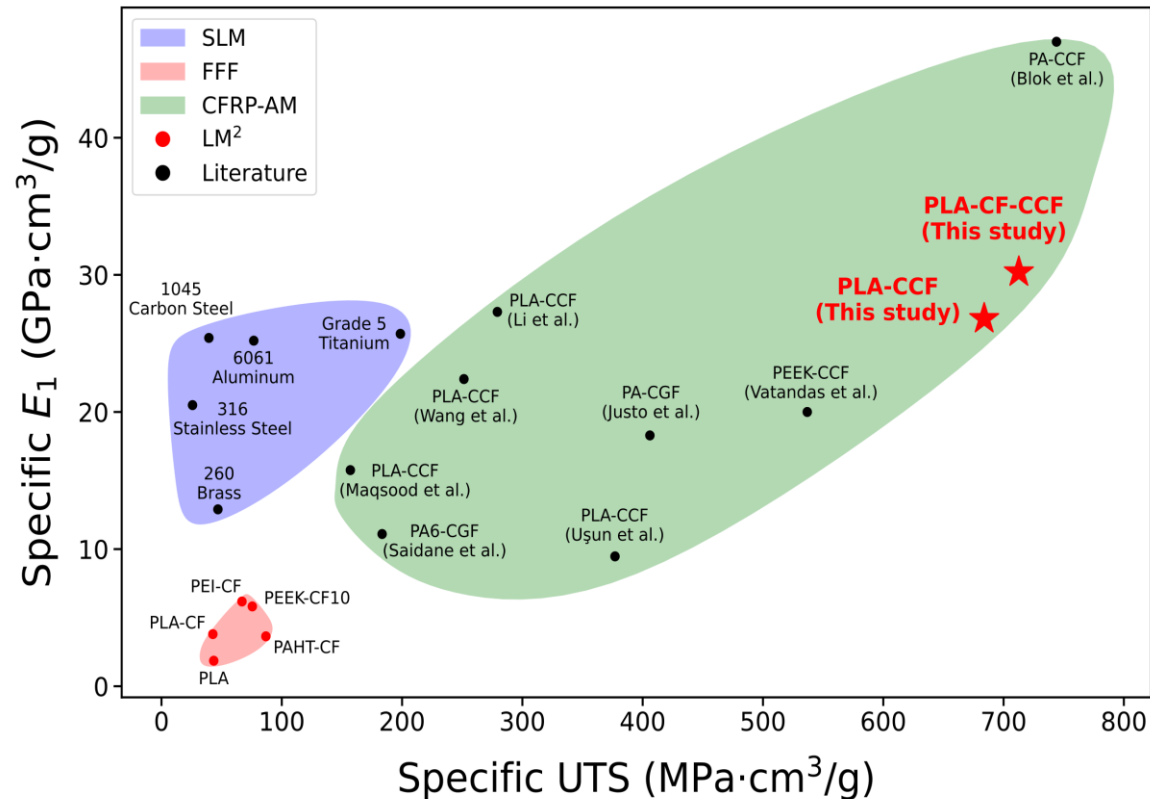


Photograph of the co-extrusion print head printing a vase

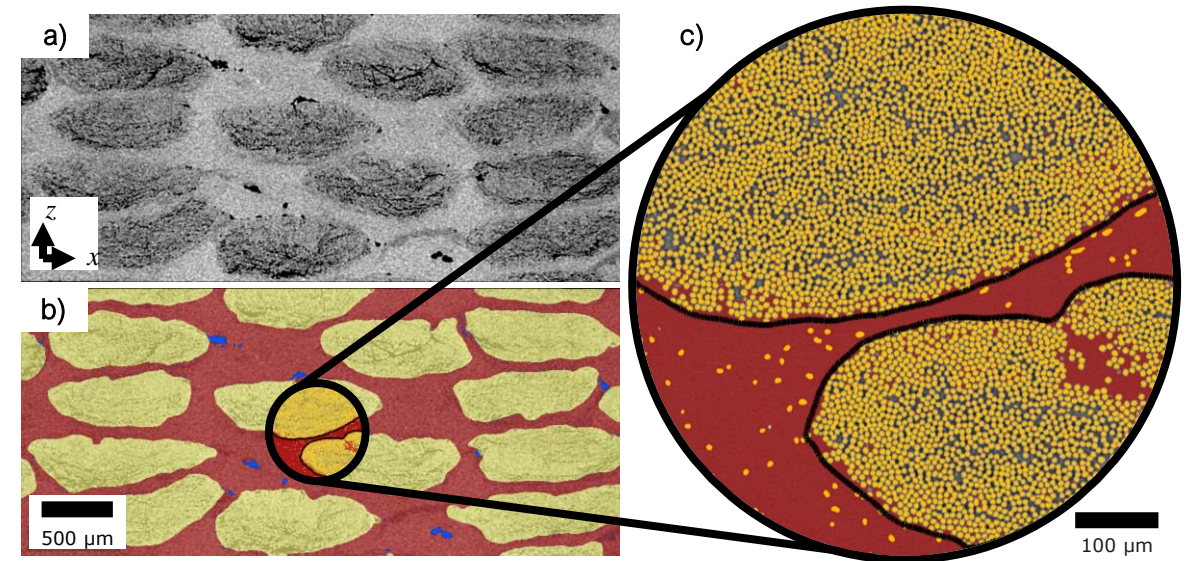


# CASE STUDY: COEXTRUSION APPROACH AT LM2

- Mechanical and microstructural characterization



Ashby diagram of different 3D printing materials from the literature and our results comparing their specific Ultimate tensile strength (UTS) and specific stiffness in the principal direction ( $E_1$ ).



Micro-tomography imaging of a PLA-CF-CCF printed sample. a) The mesoscale reconstruction of multiple printed layers. b) The meso-scale segmentation of multiple printed layers, and c) The micro-scale segmentation of the inter-tow region.

Continuous fibers represent ~44 vol.% (~58 wt.%) of the composite while voids and porosities represent 0.4 vol.% and 7.9 vol.%, respectively.

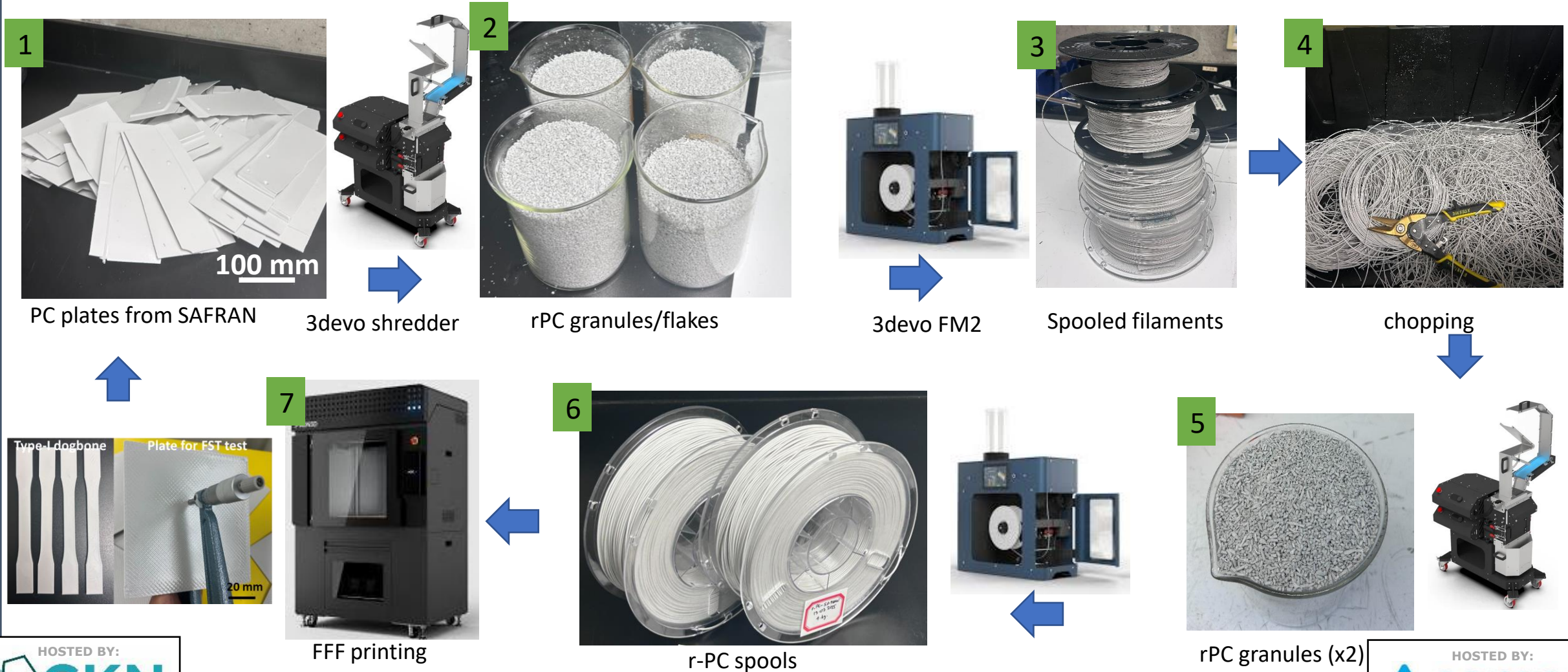
## OUTLINE

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- Future perspectives



# CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN AM

- Recycling aerospace scraps: methodology for making 3D printing filament



# EXAMPLES OF AM APPLICATION IN COMPOSITE MANUFACTURING

## TOOLING



AM of a composite autoclave mold for carbon fiber lamination of a drone nose structure [1]



Photo of hollow complex part with sacrificial interior support using a thermoplastic material dissolvable in a basic solution [2]

## AIRFRAME STRUCTURES



Photo of a demonstrator composed of CF/LMPAEEK laminate produced by AFP and a composite core by FFF printing of PEKK filament [3]

[1] <https://caracol-am.com/resources/case-studies/3d-printed-lamination-mold>.

[2] <https://www.theengineer.co.uk/content/product/sacrificial-tooling-and-mandrels-for-composite-part-fabrication-design-guide>

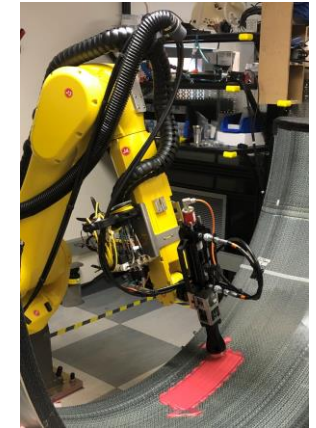
[3] <https://www.compositesworld.com/articles/combining-multifunctional-thermoplastic-composites-additive-manufacturing-for-next-gen-airframe-structures>.



# INDUSTRY QUESTIONS... AND SOME ANSWERS

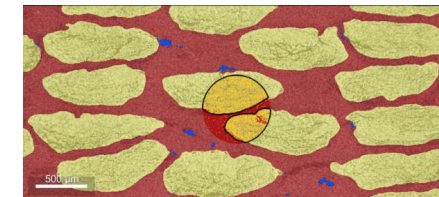
- Can we print structures **large** and *fast* enough?

- **Robotic and gantry systems**
- *High-flow rate printhead*
- *Fused granule deposition (FGF)*
- *Multinozzle design*



- Can we print structures **STRONG** enough?

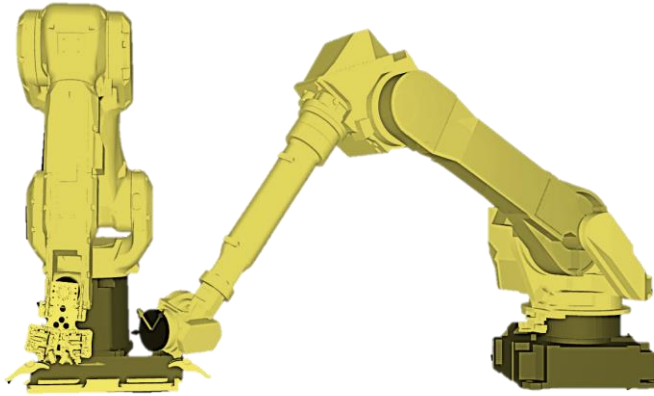
- Short fiber-reinforced polymer composites
- **Continuous-fiber printing**



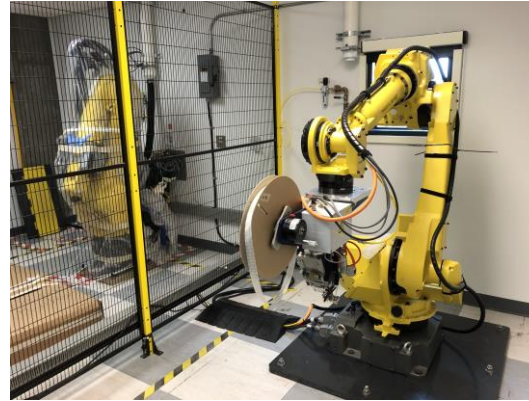
- Can we print *sustainably*?
  - **Recycling** and life cycle analysis



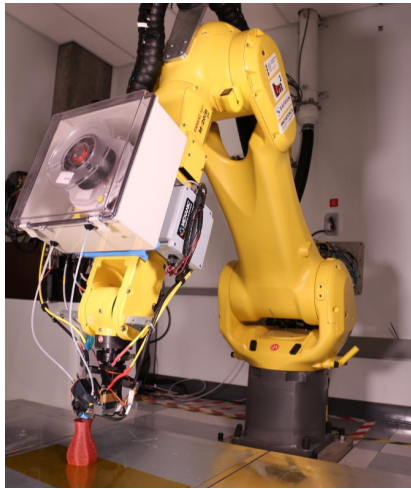
# FUTURE PERSPECTIVES



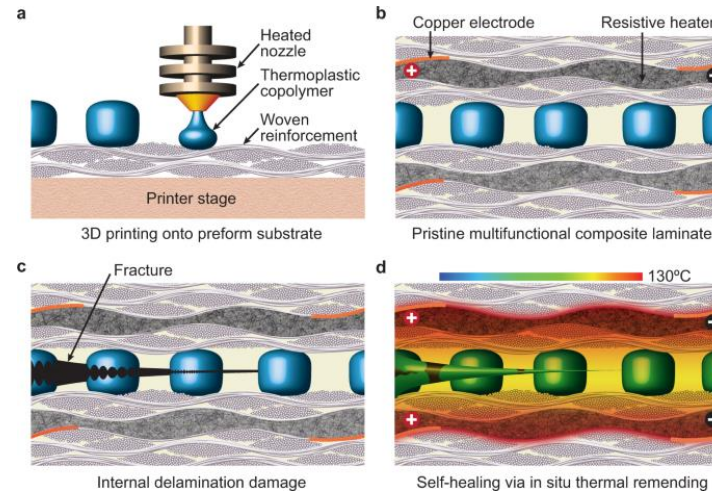
Collaborative robots: additive manufacturing and automated fiber placement (AFP)



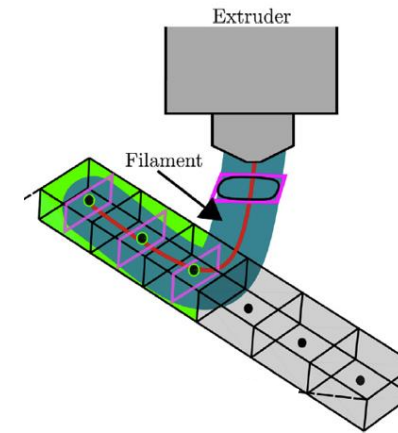
Multiprocess part: "overprinting" onto premade CFRP surface and brackets [1]



Continuous fiber printing (LM2)



Self-healing composites [2]



Digital twin of AM



- [1] Composites World: Future composite manufacturing - AFP and Additive Manufacturing  
 [2] Snyder et al., Nature Communications, 2022.  
 [3] Lampron et al., Additive Manufacturing, 2023.



**Thank you for joining us!**

***Keep an eye out for upcoming AIM events:***

*An Overview of Composite Tooling Construction*

*Hosted by Dr. Casey Keulen*

*November 26, 2025*

<https://compositeskn.org/KPC/A396>

***And don't forget to visit the KPC for more information:***

<https://compositeskn.org/KPC>

***Today's Webinar will be posted at:***

<https://compositeskn.org/KPC/A395>