

Pass the Bubbly

By [Richard Romano](#)

A month or so ago, I was binge-watching on Hulu+ the British comedy panel quiz series *Q.I. (Quite Interesting)*, simultaneously the most fascinating, funniest and, at times, bawdiest TV program on the air (Stephen Fry hosts four British comedians who answer impossible questions about obscure knowledge—right up my alley!). In an episode called “[Kitsch](#),” the subject of Bubble Wrap came up, and I learned that today, January 26, is “[Bubble-Wrap Awareness Day](#)” or, alternatively, “Bubble-Wrap Appreciation Day.” (It was started by a radio station in 2001.)

It turns out that there are an awful lot of [appreciation days](#), or even weeks, from the important and worthwhile ([Down Syndrome Awareness Week](#), [National Cervical Cancer Prevention Week](#), [World Autism Awareness Day](#), and various other medical awareness days and weeks) to the frivolous ([National Popcorn Day](#), [International Pillow Fight Day](#), and [National Flip Flop Day](#)).

There is actually a [3D Printing Day](#) on December 3, but there does not seem to be any kind of general “Print/Printer Awareness Day.” Perhaps it’s high time we started one—sounds like a job for [Two Sides](#)?

We might want to start our appreciation with a 19th-century French printer named Édouard-Léon Scott de Martinville (1817–1879), who kicked off a bunch of things that ultimately led to the establishment of Bubble Wrap Awareness Day. (We could probably go even further back, but we have to start somewhere, and these posts are long enough as it is!)

Scott de Martinville was a Parisian printer and bookseller, and amongst the things he printed were science textbooks. Not content with just printing them, he also read them, and sought to stay up-to-date on many of the latest advances in science. Inspired by the latest developments—as it were—in photography, he had the idea of doing for sound and voice what photography did for light and image: capture them. While proofreading a physics textbook, he came across illustrations of how the human auditory system worked. Thus inspired, Scott de Martinville went on to patent, in 1857, the [phonautograph](#), the earliest known device for recording sound. However, while it *did record* sound, it was unable to play it back, unlike later inventions. What the phonautograph did was transcribe a visual representation of a particular sound. Not intended for home entertainment, it was primarily meant as a research tool for the investigation of sound waves.

(In 2008, researchers at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory in Berkeley, Calif., did successfully convert a “phonautogram”—“squiggles on paper”—recorded in 1860 to a digital audio file. Not exactly a progressive-rock epic, it was a 10-second clip of a singer, possibly female, crooning “Au clair de la lune.” It is believed to be the earliest known sound recording, preceding Thomas Edison’s “Mary had a little lamb” by almost two decades [Rosen, 2008]).

Scott de Martinville alas never really got the credit he deserved, and Edison is known as the inventor of the [phonograph](#), the first device that was capable of both recording and playing back recorded sound, originally using wax cylinders.

Sound like music.

(In 1996, the band They Might Be Giants recorded several songs at the Edison Laboratory on wax cylinders. One was the great “[I Can Hear You](#),” a look at then-modern communication devices that sounded no better than old wax cylinders. And still don’t.)

The (arguably) first “pop music star” owed much of his success to the early phonograph. Even those generally unfamiliar with opera—and who likely couldn’t name a contemporary opera star beyond maybe Pavarotti (I was only ever familiar with Beverly Sills because she once appeared on *The Muppet Show*)—will likely know the name Enrico Caruso. Born in 1873, he took the opera world by storm, but what made him stand out amongst his peers was his embrace of new technology: the phonograph. Between 1903 and 1920, he made somewhere in the neighborhood of 290 commercially released recordings, which are still available in modern formats today (go to the iTunes Store and you can purchase Caruso’s recordings—interpret “digitally remastered” with a grain of salt). Later generations of opera singers (Mario Lanza, et al.) all cite Caruso as their chief inspiration, and in large part this was due to their being able to listen to him in their own homes. Many of his contemporaries in the opera world dismissed the phonograph, believing the quality to be too poor. They changed their tunes—so to speak—once they found out how much money Caruso was making from commercial recordings.

Caruso died in 1921 at the age of 48 (hastened by his fondness for cigarettes). However, he does play a major role in another new technological development, a key one in the history of 20th-century mass media.

On January 12, 1910, part of the performance of *Tosca*, starring Caruso, was broadcast live from the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City. Broadcast live...on what? Well, it was the first live *radio* broadcast. It was an experiment conducted by Lee DeForest, one of the inventors of what we know today as “radio” (it was originally called “wireless” but DeForest disliked that term and preferred “radio”). DeForest dubbed himself “The Father of Radio,” and is famous for the quote, “I discovered an Invisible Empire of the Air, intangible, yet solid as granite.” You could say he could see DeForest for the trees. But anyway.

DeForest was embroiled in a variety of patent lawsuits, but he is generally acknowledged as the inventor, in 1906, of the *Audion*, an electronic amplifying vacuum tube originally developed for use in radio receivers and other types of nascent electronic equipment. The three-electrode “triode” version of the Audion was what essentially spawned the electronic age. Whilst the *vacuum tube* was eventually superseded by the transistor, virtually all the precursors of today’s electronic devices—TVs, radios, computers, and myriad scientific equipment—used vacuum tubes. The vacuum tube also has a role to play in the final chapter of our story.

In 1957, in a Hawthorne, N.J., garage, two engineers—Alfred W. Fielding and Marc Chavannes—were beavering away on something they hoped would change interior décor as we (or more likely they) know it. They sealed two plastic shower curtains together and attempted to market the result as wallpaper. Alas, the world was not ready for plastic wallpaper. Strike one. (They were probably a few years too early; add a few psychedelic images and it could have decorated the set of *Rowan and Martin’s Laugh-In* a decade later.) They then tried to sell it as insulation for greenhouses. Nope. Strike two. However, there was one distinguishing characteristic that eventually made the material a success; in between the layers of shower curtain were small pockets of air. Bubbles, you might say.

Timing is everything, isn’t it, and the Sealed Air Corporation, founded by Fielding and Chervannes in 1960, had time on its side. In 1959, IBM had introduced the *1401*, the first in its 1400 series of business computers. It was one of the world’s first mass-produced computers, and still ran on vacuum tubes. It also had other fragile internal components. How to protect them during shipping to customers?

According to the Sealed Air Corporation’s company lore, a marketing expert named Frederick Bowers brought the shower-curtains-with-air-bubbles to IBM and it proved to be the perfect material to protect delicate glass and electronic computer components.

And thus was born Bubble Wrap.

In another blow for the printing industry, however, the subsequent popularity of Bubble Wrap for packaging and shipping displaced newspaper for these purposes; crumpled up newspaper had been the previous low-cost packaging material. So it goes.

Since then, Bubble Wrap has become almost a cultural icon—if not for packaging then certainly for the popping of the bubbles. (There is even an iPhone app that lets you pop “virtual Bubble Wrap,” for reasons passing understanding.) Bubble Wrap also played an interesting role in a 2013 study of “cuteness” and the extent to which cuteness triggers aggression (Pappas, 2013):

Dyer and her colleagues asked 90 male and female volunteers to come into a psychology laboratory and view a slideshow of cute, funny and neutral animals.

Researchers told the participants that this was a study of motor activity and memory, and then gave the subjects sheets of bubble wrap. The participants were instructed to pop as many or as few bubbles as they wanted, just as long as they were doing something involving motion.

In fact, the researchers really wanted to know if people would respond to cute animals with an outward display of aggression, popping more bubbles, compared with people looking at neutral or funny animals.

That’s exactly what happened. The people watching a cute slideshow popped 120 bubbles, on average, compared with 80 for the funny slideshow and just a hair over 100 for the neutral one.

Here is how the study was described on *Q.I.*:

Quite interesting.

At any rate, Happy Bubble Wrap Awareness Day.

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Mo' and Mo' Betta QR Codes

By [Heidi Tolliver-Walker](#)

QR Codes continue to get better. That is, the content on the back end of them, anyway. I want to share with you the last three QR Codes I've seen on products, and all of them were very well done.

[Cybex landing page](#)

Cybex Elliptical: The first was on an elliptical machine at Planet Fitness. It was right on the front of the machine by the controls. When scanned, it took me to a mobile landing page with instructions on how to use the machine. There I found information I couldn't find on the machine itself, such as the max range for incline and resistance. It also provided detailed information on the different workout options which, again, were not available on the machine.

This was a smart use of QR Codes. Does it sell products? Not directly, but it provides value for the gym's members, increasing their likelihood of using the equipment. Equipment usage is critical to gym membership renewals, so education about the usage and value of specific pieces of

equipment is a smart business move.

[Otter Box landing page](#)

Otterbox: The second was on the instruction booklet that came with my new Otterbox. There the landing page invited me to sign up for the Otterbox newsletter, which allowed Otterbox owners to “find out first” about new products, new color cases, and any new releases before anyone else. It also offered the opportunity enjoy “random distractions,” such as consumer reviews on hot new mobile apps. Finally, it invited Otterbox owners to become “influencers” by filling out occasional surveys with their thoughts on things like colors, styles, and future case projects.

Again, a smart use of these codes. The easier to make it to sign up for a newsletter, the more likely people are to do it. Great timing, too. What better time to ask people to sign up than when they first buy the product? The placement of this QR Code on the in-box packing materials was a smart choice.

[Big Lots landing page](#)

Big Lots: The last one was on the back of my Big Lots rewards card, which allows users to register their cards to earn exclusive deals and discounts. Not fancy, but effective.

These are smart uses of QR Codes that show that marketers are starting to understand how, when, and where to incorporate them. These are different uses than we’ve seen in the past, but perhaps it’s a good thing. Marketers are really starting to figure this out.

Is Your Marketing Working?

By [John Foley](#)

Your business spends all this time, money, and resources on marketing your products and services.

But, is it even worth it?

The only way to tell if your organization’s marketing is working is through proper reporting and analytics. If your marketing efforts aren’t trackable, they’re not even worth doing. It’s time to take a good look at your current marketing strategy. When you’re analyzing your marketing efforts and marketing software, there are certain reporting features that you need to be able to track.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the importance of tracking your marketing activities, and which marketing statistics you need to monitor, measure, and analyze to keep improving processes.

Please take a moment to read and share this article at <http://ilink.me/Track>. What metrics are most important for your organization? I’d love to hear in the comments below!

Bicycle Couriers

By [Richard Romano](#)

Last November, I spent a night in Northampton, Mass., and no trip to Northampton can be complete without a stop at the [Northampton Brewery](#). One of the specialties at the time was called the Juggernaut IPA, which was very good. (Hoppy? Well, it was rather like having one’s sinuses filled with thousands of tiny, hyperactive nano-rabbits.) I got to thinking about the word “juggernaut”—and well, why not?—which has always been one of my favorite words, if only because of its etymology.

The word means, says [Oxford](#), “A huge, powerful, and overwhelming force or institution,” as in “WhatTheyThink is an industry information

juggernaut.” The word comes from the Sanskrit Jagannātha, one of the names of Krishna. There’s a temple to Jagannātha and an annual celebration that comprises a procession of immense chariots. [It has been said](#), apocryphally, that the more enthusiastic of Jagannātha’s devotees would hurl themselves in front of these chariots and be crushed beneath their wheels.

The ritual itself was first described to the West in the 14th century in a book called *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*. The thing is, no one has ever been able to prove that there ever *was* anyone named John Mandeville who made these travels. In any case, a lot of the things “John Mandeville” wrote about were actually made up.

Be that as it may, it took a few centuries to percolate, but by the 19th century, the word *juggernaut* had come into prominent use. Charlotte Brontë used it in *Jane Eyre* and Robert Louis Stevenson used it to describe his titular Mr. Hyde (*Jane Eyre and Mr. Hyde*—now there’s a mashup I’d love to see!).

H.G. Wells wrote this passage in his 1895 novel *The Wheels of Chance*:

Anon Mr. Hoopdriver found himself riding out of the darkness of non-existence, pedalling Ezekiel’s Wheels across the Weald of Surrey, jolting over the hills and smashing villages in his course, while the other man in brown cursed and swore at him and shouted to stop his career. There was the Putney heath-keeper, too, and the man in drab raging at him. He felt an awful fool, a—what was it?—a juggins, ah!—a Juggernaut.

The Wheels of Chance is a far cry from what Wells is typically known for (Victorian science fiction) and is subtitled “A Bicycling Idyll.” It was written during what was considered to be “the golden age of bicycling,” those halcyon days before the invention of the automobile. The bicycle had just recently come onto the market and took Europe like...well, like a juggernaut. (If you’ve ever walked in New York City, bicycle couriers almost regularly run down pedestrians like those ostensible devotees of Jagannātha.)

The bicycle went through a bit of an evolution before it became commercially successful, but the precursor was something called the “Laufmaschine” (“running machine”), invented circa 1817 by [Baron Karl von Drais](#). It has been suggested (more via circumstantial evidence than anything else) that von Drais was motivated to invent the Laufmaschine because of a climate anomaly. 1816 has been called “[The Year Without a Summer](#)”: due to a combination of low sunspot activity and a series of major volcanic eruptions, global temperatures plummeted by as much as 1.7°F. Indeed, in Europe, it snowed in the summer of 1816. This caused agricultural disasters, which led to the starvation and slaughtering of horses, and thus—among other things—a transportation crisis, since at the time everyone pretty much needed horses to get anywhere. Hence the need for something horseless, and the “horseless carriage” was still a ways away.

Von Drais was a flamboyant character and his life later took a few bad turns: he was fired from his day job as a forester as he was deemed “unfit,” and he got embroiled in retribution for a political murder. For a complicated series of reasons, he had to spend much of his later life in exile in Brazil. He died penniless. The Laufmaschine and what it eventually led to were his legacy—even if he didn’t profit from it in his lifetime—but so is one other thing. He also invented the typewriter. Well, okay, *a* typewriter. Well, yes, okay, not even a typewriter, *really*, but more of a shorthand or stenography machine. Wikipedia says that it was the first typewriter with a keyboard, but that’s not really true.

Von Drais invented and marketed two typewriter-like devices, a 25-character model in 1821 and a 16-character model in the early 1830s. Von Drais used to claim, in good PR fashion, that his device was capable of typing a thousand characters a minute. Wrote typewriter historian Michael Adler in *Antique Typewriters*:

That kind of flamboyant extravagance was consistent with the inventor’s well-documented character and, if at all credible, must surely be related simply to the maximum number of random marks the machine was physically capable of making using all fingers... and perhaps a few toes, for good measure (Messenger, 2014).

Ouch. Poor Von Drais; even among his contemporaries he was the Rodney Dangerfield of inventors. At an exhibition of his machine in Frankfurt in 1831, [one wag described it](#) as “eine mechanische Narrheit und alberne Erfindung” (“a mechanical madness and an absurd invention”). Double ouch.

The typewriter as we know it (assuming there are people who still know what a typewriter is!) was invented by Christopher Latham Sholes. Or, to be more exact:

The fifty-second person to invent the typewriter and the first person to call it that, was Christopher Latham Sholes (Romano, 1986).

The dominance of the typewriter for written communication led to a number of typographic conventions that still remain with us—even if they are anachronisms in today’s word processing, desktop, and online publishing worlds. One of my pet peeves is the tendency to put two word spaces after a period. This is said to date from the Age of the Typewriter, but that is not *entirely* true. Back before any kind of automated typography, if you wanted justified text, you had little recourse but to noodle with word spacing, and typesetters used to routinely add entire en and em spaces after periods. (Today’s desktop publishing programs noodle far more deftly with a combination of word and character spacing to justify text.)

The practice of adding additional space after periods was later adopted by typewriter users when typewriters were only capable of using monospaced typefaces like Courier. With such faces, each character and each word space has exactly the same width, which adversely affects legibility. The two-word-space convention was thus a visual cue to make it clearer that a sentence had ended. [CreativePro](#) has a nice essay on this, saying:

It’s a question of balancing the white space bound up in each character with the spaces around them. In addition, a single word space simply lacks the visual impact to cue the reader that a sentence has ended. The punctuation mark alone, in short, isn’t enough to punctuate the texture of the type flow.

Makes perfect sense in retrospect. But, alas, it makes little sense when using a proportional-width typeface like Times.

Monospaced typefaces like Courier (or a similar typeface called, cleverly enough, American Typewriter) are still common; in fact, they’re required for professional playwrights and screenwriters (monospaced typefaces and standard script formats make it easy to gauge timing). Those of us who have done electronic prepress are no doubt intimately familiar with the infamous “Courier substitution,” or what RIPs used to put into page layouts—or on expensive film—when the correct font wasn’t available, although the advent of PDF has largely made the Courier substitution history. (I remember around late 2000 or so I picked up a print edition of my local newspaper, *The Saratogian*, and on the front page, every headline and photo caption was in Courier. In the Help Wanted ads, I noticed a big ad saying that the paper was looking for a managing editor. I bet.)

Why was Courier almost always the default font? Why not something more appealing or less obtrusive?

Courier was designed by Howard “Bud” Kettler in 1955 and later redrawn by Adrian Frutiger for the IBM Selectric Composer series of electric typewriters. The typeface had been commissioned by IBM, but the company chose not to copyright, trademark, or patent it—unlike other typefaces—so Courier has always been completely royalty-free. Ergo, this is why it has become so ubiquitous and remains so. No one has to pay for it.

Why the name Courier? It was originally called Messenger, but, [Kettler once said](#), “A letter can be just an ordinary messenger, or it can be the courier, which radiates dignity, prestige, and stability.”

I’m not sure that Courier—or even couriers—still radiate those traits, but that was the thinking.

So thanks to IBM’s decision to not patent or copyright the typeface, Courier, for better or worse, has become a typographic juggernaut.

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New Marketing Hires Have These Skills — Do You?

By [Heidi Tolliver-Walker](#)

When marketers — your customers — are looking to make new hires, they are hiring people with specific skill sets. Those skill sets translate into the types of marketing campaigns these new marketing hires will be creating and the skills and expertise they expect from their print suppliers. Does what you offer match what they need?

According to Econsultancy's "Skills of the Modern Marketer" report, tops on marketers' "very important" lists are a lot of soft skills and behaviors such as adaptability, articulation and persuasion, hunger to learn, collaboration, creativity, data-driven decision making, empathy, curiosity and passion. But the hard skills are the ones they will expect from you.

Tops on the list?

- Data
- Multichannel
- Mobile marketing
- Web analytics
- Social media

When it comes to choosing a print suppliers (or switching suppliers), marketers are looking for companies that can integrate all of their channels into a single campaign. This isn't about being a "one stop shop." It's about channel integration, strategy, and planning.

It's impossible to integrate print and mobile, for example, if they are being handled by two different suppliers. If their current print provider doesn't offer mobile, a client may not move all of their print marketing to another supplier, but for projects that require integration between print and mobile (or other combination of channels you may or may not offer), they will.

With this combination of skills becoming increasingly important to marketers, that's going to be a growing percentage of the marketing budget. It's simple math based on who is getting hired.

If you haven't branched out past adding email marketing, it's time to do so.

Essential Skills For Marketers (partial list) (% of Respondents)

<i>Broad Skills</i>	<i>Very Important</i>	<i>Vertical Skills</i>	<i>Very Important</i>
Customer experience	59%	Mobile marketing	51%
Data	51%	Content marketing	50%
Multichannel	44%	Web analytics/data	46%

Source: Econsultancy, May 2014

In Marketing, Timing Is Everything

By [Heidi Tolliver-Walker](#)

Have you ever gotten a marketing piece that made you think, “Gosh, these people don’t know my business at all!” My husband, who is the director of facilities for a private high school, feels this way a lot.

In fact, here is the pitch that landed in front of him this morning.

Hi, STEWART,

Remember the winter we had last year? Don't be caught off guard by another winter filled with snow, ice and bitter cold temperatures.

Before the first flakes fall, get all the supplies you need to keep your facility and people safe throughout this upcoming winter.

Don't risk running out of those essential winter products you need to keep everything in and around your facility moving, especially ice melt.

[Company] has all you need for the inside of your facility—floor mats and wet floor signs for entrances and lobbies—and the outside, featuring a great selection of ice melt products, as well as spreaders for even, effective application to parking lots, roadways and sidewalks.

Okay, perhaps we can forgive the lack of comma after the salutation and his name being spelled in all caps. We might even forgive the fact that winter is no longer “upcoming” and the first snowflakes have already fallen. Here’s the real problem with this piece.

As he said so eloquently, “Every year, there are some suppliers and vendors that just don’t get it. No one worth their ‘salt’ is ordering winter materials in early January.” As any vendor to this marketplace ought to know, those supplies are ordered in late summer. So if this company is wondering why its campaign failed, this is probably why.

Sometimes a campaign lives and dies by the list. Sometimes by the creative, the message, or the incentive. But sometimes it’s the timing. Something as simple as a buying cycle is something every B2B marketer ought to know. So when working with your clients to develop marketing campaigns, whether direct mail, email, or multichannel, try to get involved early enough in the process to ask about the timing, too.

Power Windows

By [Richard Romano](#)

A few years ago, while in England, I visited Canterbury Cathedral. (We were on a pilgrimage and we all told tales as we trekked southward, a doughy poet feverishly writing them all down in rhyming couplets; and as the Miller told his tale, our faces, at first just ghostly, turned a whiter shade of pale. We continue.) The first cathedral at Canterbury dates from A.D. 602, dedicated by St. Augustine. It was destroyed by fire in 1067 and over the next couple of centuries was rebuilt into the magnificent structure we can visit today.

One of the most notable features of the cathedral—aside from the shrine to Thomas Becket, who had rather a bad day there in 1170—is the stained glass. Indeed, Canterbury Cathedral contains [more than](#)

[1,200 square meters](#) of stained glass which, like the stained glass found in many a medieval church and cathedral, depicts stories from the Bible, as well as other related events, lives of the saints, and so on. Some of Canterbury’s windows also depict the life of St. Thomas (Becket).

[DigNirv-010715-Stained Glass](#)

The stained glass was not just decorative, although it certainly is that; medieval stained glass is quite beautiful. Much of it did, however, serve a more practical purpose: back in the Middle Ages, prior to the invention of printing, the vast majority of the population was illiterate. Stained glass windows (not all of them, but most cathedrals had various picture series) were a communication medium, a form of visual storytelling. (The verbally related tales that Chaucer's pilgrims told on the way to the shrine to Thomas Becket were also a dominant form of communication at the time.)

(Quick quiz: what's the difference between a church and a cathedral? The latter contains the *cathedra*, or the seat where the bishop sits. It's not true, though, that bishops can only move diagonally.)

Anyway, in the sixteenth century, there was a revolt against all things iconic, and many churches and cathedrals throughout Europe saw their stained glass and other iconography destroyed. (Whence the word *iconoclast*, "breaker or destroyer of images.") Canterbury was spared much of this destruction, although the English Civil War brought damage to some of the windows. (The German bombing of England during World War II also took a bit of a toll.)

However, a recent *Wall Street Journal* story (via [Gizmodo](#)) identifies a new threat to stained glass or, more specifically, the stained glass industry—one with which our own industry is not unfamiliar. (And if you didn't know that there even *was* a stained glass industry, you are not alone.)

[C]hurch architects and experts say modern churches rely more on video and photo slideshows, which they say connect with attendees more than the static imagery of stained glass. "They want to have it dark, so they can project PowerPoint onto a screen," says Richard Gross, editor of Stained Glass Quarterly.

There is a Stained Glass Association of America, the industry trade group, which

has seen membership dwindle to around half of its peak size of 900 during the 1970s. The annual conference draws about half the number of attendees it once did, and SGAA officials say they have privately considered broadening the group's name.

One can't ignore the fact that stained glass is *really* expensive. That, combined with the inevitable force of modernization, the desire to appear modern to bring in the parishioners, and the fact that stained glass uses decidedly static imagery, have all led new churches to use LED screens or HD projectors to display dynamic content like text, video, images, and PowerPoints (and, perhaps St. Paul's First Email to the Ephesians).

As a result, stained glass manufacturers are looking at potential secular installations to keep their businesses going, such as casinos, retail establishments, restaurants, hospitals, and private homes.

And, hey, the stained glass industry has a "Dr. Doom," too:

Kenneth F. von Roenn saw this trend coming nearly four decades ago. At an industry conference inside a Nevada hotel, Mr. von Roenn says he tried to warn his fellow artisans, urging them to shift focus to nonreligious buildings, in a speech called "Time to Jump Ship."

His advice won a lot of glassy-eyed stares and little applause...

You might even call him an iconoclast.

Here is a case of individuals and companies in a market that are seeking alternate, more technological alternatives, and as a result those individuals and companies are altering their production (such as adopting a cheaper, more efficient way of producing the stained glass) and actively seeking new markets beyond their traditional ones.

3D Printed Model of the Week

By [Heidi Tolliver-Walker](#)

To keep tabs on what is happening in the 3D printing industry, I recently signed up for the newsletter with updates from around the industry. Just as we have come to enjoy the [Super-Cool Fold of the Week](#) from The Fold Factory, we can now enjoy the 3D Printed Model of the Week from the [3D Printing Industry](#).

This week, it's a 1/10 scale model of the L M Strati. While there are plenty of free downloadable test files, this one comes from [Sketchfab](#), which includes the "best of the best" as staff picks. When I see this model, I don't envision a business model for printing out automotive prototypes. I envision promotional items and marketing incentives for the automotive market vertical.

If you think 3D printing is *not* going to affect you at some point, I recommend signing up for the newsletter because it provides a comprehensive picture of what's happening in the industry. Among this week's articles:

1. Source for 3D design for everything from prototypes to replacement parts (they design it, you print it).

The point here is to understand that, if you are without expensive machinery, 3D printers, CNC mills, and design software, you can still have access to great designers and quality objects, parts, gadgets and prototypes.

2. Free 3D printable model of the week.

3. China getting its first 3D printing college. If that's not a statement, I don't know what is.

So check it out.

I continue to believe that commercial printers shouldn't see 3D printing as a "me, too" product. There are plenty of places to get 3D models printed. But I do believe that there are ways to incorporate 3D printing into existing business models, either as a convenience service for existing clients or as a way to produce unique and compelling incentives for marketing campaigns. (For more on this, see related Digital Nirvana articles or my report [State of 3D Printing in the Commercial Printing Industry](#).)

About Digital Nirvana

The Digital Nirvana blog provides insight on how evolving marketing and print technologies can fuel opportunities for business growth. Featuring compelling authors, prominent industry analysts and other thought leaders, the blog is a catalyst for a lively exchange of the most current thinking and a variety of viewpoints. The Digital Nirvana is a partnership between WhatTheyThink & Canon Solutions America.

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