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## [The Marketing Association of New Zealand](#)

### **Apr 2007 - 3D Models open boundaries for NZ Company**

New printing technology introduced into the New Zealand market offers opportunities for new homeowners to get 3D models of their houses created overnight, surgeons to create models of injured or diseased organs and patent attorneys to create models of new inventions.

The three-dimensional modelling technology is ideally suited to architects and designers, property companies and developers. It also has far reaching applications in industry and engineering.

These include the creation of prototypes, industrial tooling and pattern making for moulds.

An example of the capability is a model of a multi-million dollar mansion that has been entered into the New Zealand Pride In Print Awards\*, under the "innovation in print" category, by Albany company 3D Print Ltd.

The house was designed by leading NZ architect Pete Bossley who provided the company with drawings and CAD files of the house plans. From these, 3DP was able to produce a model of the actual house by using ink-jet printer technology.

The print process involves interpreting the CAD files into individual layers and the printer plots these to scale and with accuracy. At the end of the process, there is a perfect scale model.

3D Print director Richard Keesing says the effect of the model on the end client was remarkable.

"The architect's clients were amazed to see exactly how their house would look when it was finished.

"It is one thing for them to be looking at plans and floor layouts, but this was an actual finished three-dimensional model showing how everything fitted together, and how the various parts of the house looked in proportion to one another. In fact, it showed them what their dream house will be like when they come up the driveway for the first time.

"They could tell immediately whether something worked, whether it did not and whether changes needed to be made from what they had in their mind's eye.

"They put it on the architect's office floor, dropped to their knees and marveled at it."



3D Print, based in Albany on Auckland's North Shore, grew from a specialist print company, The Colour Box, which has been operating in the large format ink-jet market since the mid 1990s, specialising in exhibition displays, posters, outdoor signs and banners.

The move towards three-dimensional printing came when The Colour Box director, Peter Dawson, saw the possibilities of using the Z Corp three-dimensional machine in the New Zealand market.

3D Print was then formed in 2006 when Peter partnered with Martin Brewer a software specialist, whose background is with Aarque Graphics, one of the top large format print specialists in New Zealand, and Richard Keesing with a background in marine mechanics and engineering.

Peter says three-dimensional technology has been around for a while but the new machine is a substantial step up.

“Ours is one of only a handful of such machines in this country and I could see that it had immense potential. It not only provides a rapid model solution, it does so at a price which is affordable and which can save considerable time and expense compared to the traditional methods of relying on drawings, artist's impressions and prototypes.”

It is already being applied to the creation of models of cutaway machine parts, commercial bottle design, a model of the mountains and the sea bed around Wellington harbour and the design of moulds for protective clothing.

“Patent attorneys will find this particularly useful for the creation of models which can be submitted along with the documentation for a patent application,” says Peter.

“Another application could be in the medical field for the creation of cut-away models of the human anatomy for teaching purposes.

“We can even take a CAT scan and create a model of the internal injuries revealed by the scan. Essentially, this is as big a technology leap as the fax was to telex and the telex was to the carrier pigeon.”

3DP sees itself now as consultants and experts in this area offering a whoa-to-go service including the ability to design from scratch in-house in 3D or convert 2D drawings and files into 3D files suitable for printing.

The company will know if they have won a Pride In Print award when winners are announced at Awards Night at Christchurch Convention Centre on June 15. Last year a sell-out maximum 1000 crowd attended the Awards Night in Auckland.

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