

3d Printing for Gaming and Miniatures

Types of Printers

FDM (Filament Deposited Material). This is essentially a computer controlled 'Hot glue gun'. Good for larger pieces, very economical. Can be a bit finicky to use and maintain. Examples Creality Ender 3. Prusa etc. Good for larger pieces like terrain, dice towers, game aids etc.

Resin Printers. These use a variety of optical technologies to cure liquid resin in a pool a layer at a time to build the object. More expensive than FDM to purchase and operate but much greater resolution. Good for small pieces with lots of detail.

Printing is a hobby in and of itself

Don't let it frustrate you. There are a great many online resources to help you troubleshoot issues, understand various materials and their limitations etc. Youtube is your friend. For FDM printers the Tomb of 3d Printed Horrors is superb.

Maintaining your equipment is very important

Without proper maintenance you will get a lot of failed prints and a great deal of frustration. Parts will also wear out. All these units are designed with user repairs and replacements in mind – fixes are generally simple. The most frustrating part is often diagnosing the issue.

Keep Economy in Mind

Particularly for small miniature printing in resin. Resin can be pretty pricey so often it simply makes more sense to purchase minis rather than printing them off. However for small parts, insignia or other 'things you cannot buy' these machines open up a whole new world of opportunities.

When talking FDM you can often make things more economically than you can buy them and often with equivalent (or even better) quality. This will take time though.

Finding files

Thingiverse, Wargaming3d, and many other sites have literally hundreds of thousands of files for you to print. Many times someone has already done what you want to do, so have a look.

Don't be afraid to edit and alter

Blender has a steep learning curve, but there are online tutorials for almost anything you want to do. Meshmixer is very user friendly, but more limited. Both are free and great for modding up your own files or making changes to existing ones. 3d design is yet another hobby/skillset, but basic tasks are easily within the range for new hobbyists. Many people have had good experiences with Sketchup and Fusion3d as well although these usually have licensing fees.

If you do have other questions

Hobbyists are generally pretty helpful. You can always email me directly at Senekal@shaw.ca