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Print the Legend, Televising the 3D Printing Revolution

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Now screening via Netflix – as well as at theatres in New York and Los Angeles – the documentary feature *Print the Legend* depicts the larger-than-life characters behind the consumer 3D printing phenomenon.

The story of 3D printing has always been about scale. It's a technology that makes it possible to create editions of one as economically as older manufacturing methods could produce editions in the hundreds. The implications of scale reverberate through **Audax Films'** 100-minute documentary *Print the Legend* – not just in the output of the technology itself, but in the lives of the people behind desktop 3D printing's exponential growth.

The drama at the heart of the doc stars two main players, **Makerbot** and **Formlabs**, basement startups determined to bring the decades-old technology to desktops everywhere. There are supporting roles as well – **3D Systems** and **Stratasys**, two firms that developed industrial-scale 3D printing in the 1980s, and now stand as international corporate titans.

After establishing these players, and the basic methods that underlie all 3D printing, the film picks up the story just as Makerbot and Formlabs begin to grow by orders of magnitude – Makerbot moving into their new corporate headquarters, and Formlabs completing a hugely successful Kickstarter campaign.

The differences in scale between the four companies and their niches in the markets are immediately clear. Some printers sell for \$200, some for \$2,000 – and the industrial-scale printers for over \$200,000. To depict the growth of these companies over time, the filmmakers employ a coloured line graph that shows the number of employees at each company: zoom out to see the decades of growth of 3D Systems, and fledgling Formlabs – with only its three founders – becomes a hairline; zoom in to reveal Makerbot's swiftly expanding staff and Stratasys is abstracted to the size of landscape. Even operating on these wildly different scales, the upstarts make an impact: not long after the arrival of Makerbot and Formlabs, 3D Systems announced it was launching its own desktop-sized printer.