

An Analog Printer for a Digital World

Check out this pretty cool Kickstarter idea backed by 465 people, who have pledged a whopping \$55,873. The best part - they only asked for \$10,000! That's when you know it's good.

The mPrinter is a small thermal printer that prints dynamic snippets of information we call mPrints.

What is it?

The mPrinter is a small, portable thermal printer that prints dynamic snippets of data we call mPrints. mPrints can be simple text, HTML, images, or best of all, fully dynamic data created from a custom hosted Javascript environment on our website.

By utilizing Javascript, the programming language of the web, we are able to breath new life into printing useful information. Nearly anything you can do in a web browser, you can do in an mPrint. Possibilities include pulling data from a database, using remote APIs such as Facebook, Twitter, or Flickr, and parsing data in realtime.

If Javascript isn't your forte, we have multiple other ways to print. Our website has a "Quick Print" function with a full WYSIWIG editor (think Microsoft Word), that lets you instantly print anything from fully formatted mPrints to simple one-liners.

We have an iOS application for iPhone, iPods, and iPads that allows you to utilize the quick print functionality, manage your mPrints, and has a fun "doodle" feature.

Update: We've had a lot of inquires about an Android version. Based on popular demand, we now plan to have an Android version available at launch.

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The mPrinter iPhone application

We plan to have browser plugins for site scraping, dashboard widgets, and more.

We are going to make the schematics, board layouts, and firmware open source.

How does it work?

USB-only mPrinters connect to your computer (Mac and Windows at launch) via USB. WiFi mPrinters contain a small built-in web server and connect to your network (or adhoc device) via WiFi. You can configure your WiFi mPrinter via its web interface, or USB.

All mPrinter models have built-in charging circuitry and a battery compartment for an optional LiPo battery, which will be available for purchase separately after we have evaluated suppliers.

Currently, we are utilizing 2" wide print heads. **If we hit \$20,000 or more in funding, we will automatically upgrade all orders and models to an extra-wide 3" print head.**

For dynamic mPrints, we utilize a sandboxed Node.js environment. If you enable outside interaction, each mPrint is assigned a URL that may be used by outside services to interface with the mPrint. You can make mPrints private, or share them with the community. You can hide the source code, or make it available to others.



Various sample mPrints

We have developed prototypes based on Arduino, bare Atmel AVR, and Microchip PIC32 and PIC24F microcontrollers. The WiFi module is made by Microchip. We are going to evaluate community feedback prior to making the final platform choice.

We have tested off-the-shelf serial print heads, as well as sourced samples from possible large-quantity suppliers in China.

How and where will it be made?

The thermal print head, parts of the control board, and the circuit board will be provided by the same suppliers in China that we have gotten prototype parts from. Currently, we plan to use a local Dallas-based USA supplier for the injection molded cases. All electronics components will be sourced from a US-based distributor, with parts made in a variety of countries including the US and China.

Portability

We are making the mPrinter as small as possible, while still holding a reasonable amount of paper. Our print heads were specifically selected for their voltage and current specifications in order to allow for battery power. As noted above, all mPrinters will include charging circuitry and a battery compartment for an optional LiPo battery.

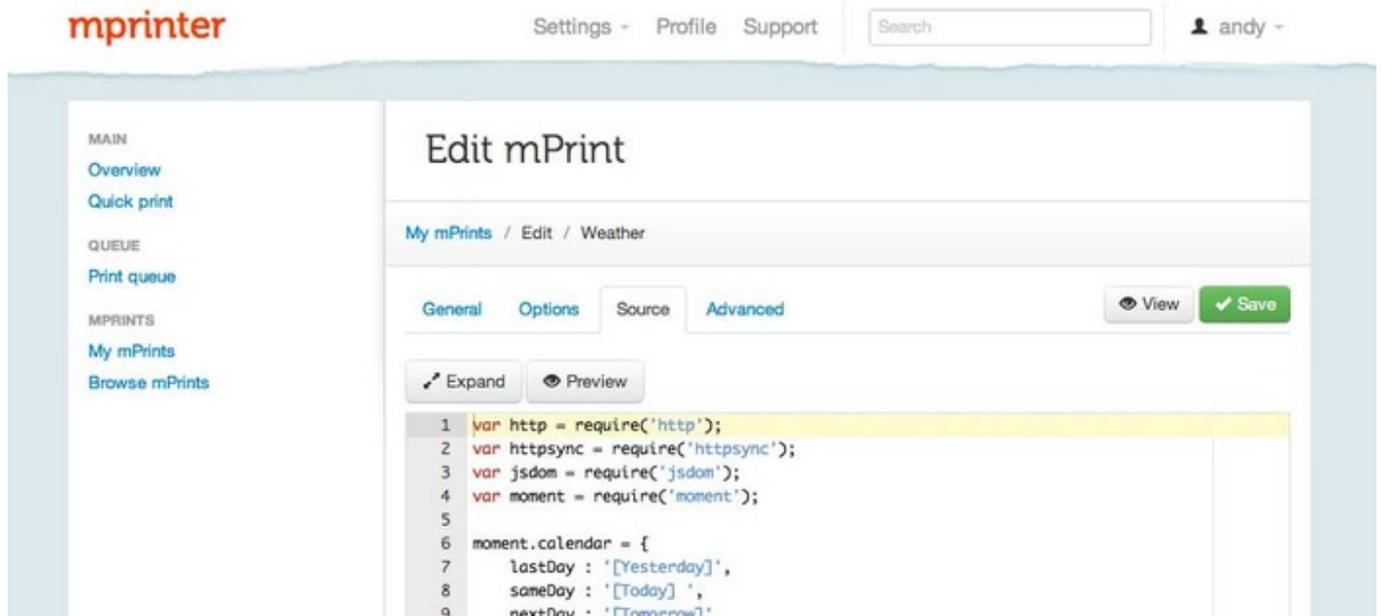
Combined with an adhoc network, battery power would allow you to use your mPrinter with a device such as an iPhone nearly anywhere.

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A thermal printer? Don't those print receipts?

Indeed they do. However, the underlying hardware is much more capable than just printing out a few numbers. The printhead we are using in the mPrinter has over 200 dpi, a resolution that gives crisp, clear text and the possibility of halftone black-and-white graphics.



Our website lets you easily create and share mPrints

Who's making it?

His name is Andy Muldowney. He's a technology veteran with a wide range of experience - including hardware design, web programming, and iOS development. He enjoys projects that encompass a wide range of his skills, and this certainly fits the bill.

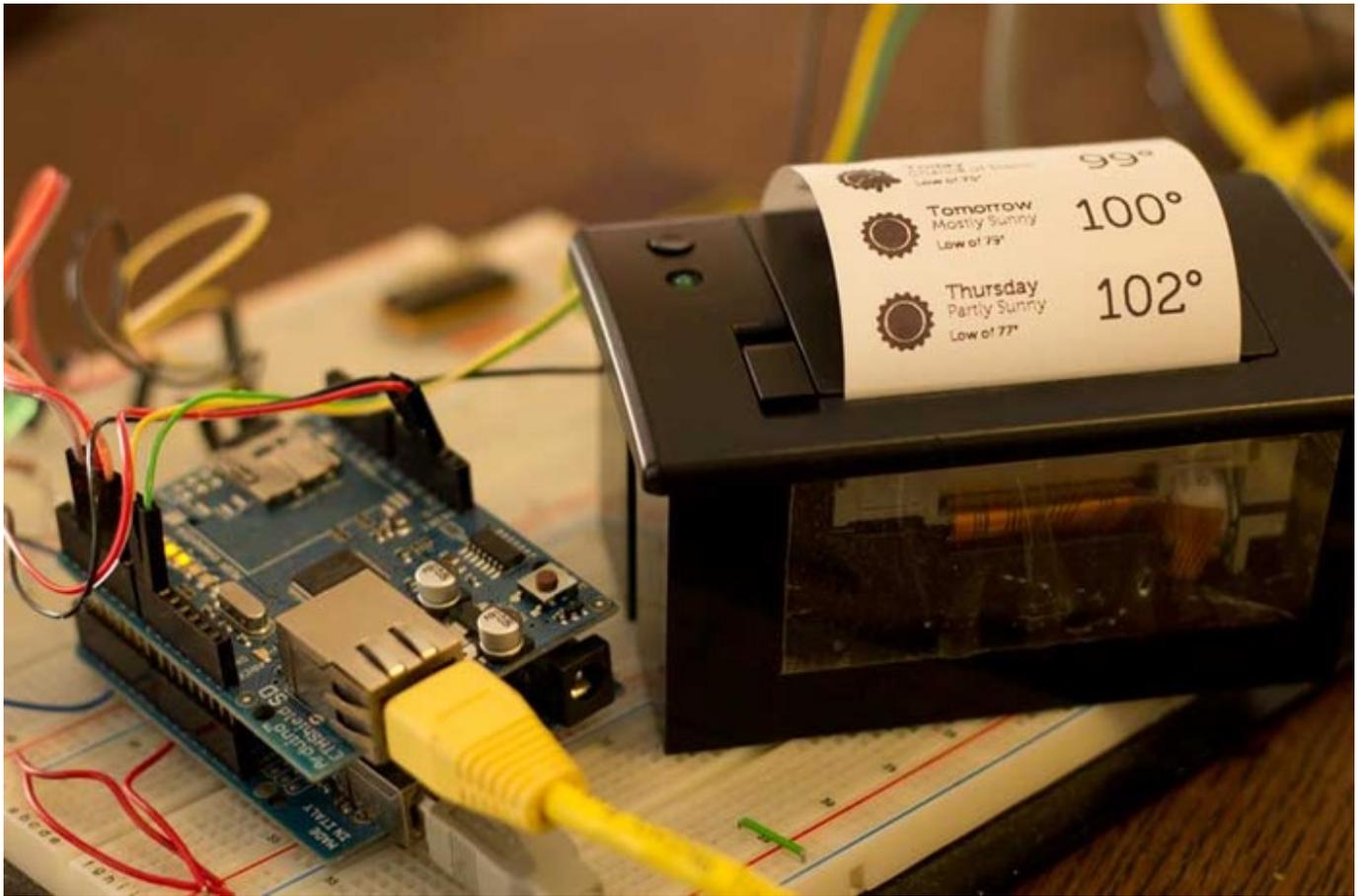
He currently serves as the CTO of a large VoIP company where he has led development of applications for mobile, web, and desktop platforms in use by over 4,000,000 people across the globe.

How far along are you?

Several prototypes have been made and are functioning. The website is largely complete. The bulk of our timeline involves sourcing components, manufacturing the circuit boards, and getting the custom cases made.

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One of the mPrinter prototypes

Will the mPrinter work with...?

In theory, the mPrinter can be made to work with nearly anything. We are actively seeking specific launch partners and are open to any suggestions. If you think your product or service could benefit from the mPrinter, please contact us for deep integration possibilities.

Read More **OR** Back this Project Here:

<http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1953425088/mprinter-an-analog-printer-for-a-digital-world?ref=category> [1]

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