

What Do Homemade Firearms Mean for Gun Control?



Summary: A landmark legal case allows gun making blueprints to remain online.

Cody Wilson uploaded plans for a blueprint for a 3D printed gun on his website Defcad.com, and almost a week later, the US State Department sent him a cease and desist. Worried about paying fines or facing jail time, Wilson fought back and his case could change the way DIY guns are handled in the United States, according to [Wired](#).

Wilson, a former University of Texas Law student, had written on his website that gun control would never be the same thanks to technology. Because of the internet and 3D printers, anyone could download and make their own firearm with ease and no regulations.

At first, the State Department tried to control Wilson. They demanded that he remove his blueprints or face prosecution for violating federal export controls under the International Trade in Arms Regulations (ITAR). Wilson was basically accused of shipping his gun to another country without a license, and he faced millions of dollars in fines and years in prison.

Wilson took down his website, but he decided to fight the case in court. In the process, he "unlocked a new era of digital DIY gun making that further undermines gun control across the United States and the world—another step toward Wilson's imagined future where anyone can make a deadly weapon at home with no government oversight," according to [Wired](#).

The Department of Justice offered Wilson a settlement to end the lawsuit, which was filed in 2015 and focused on how his right to free speech and his right to bear arms were violated. Wilson and his co-plaintiffs' lawyers argued that forbidding Wilson from posting 3D gun blueprints were unconstitutional.

"If code is speech, the constitutional contradictions are evident," Wilson said. "So what if this code is a gun?"

As part of the settlement, the Department of Justice agreed to change their export control rules, and Wilson was allowed to publish any DIY gun making information he wanted. He is in the process of relaunching his website with more firearm-making information, and this will be available to anyone with the internet.

[Wired](#) noted that with Wilson's case the gun control movement now has a new foe. Proponents of gun control have been especially vocal after the Parkland school shooting in February, and while Congress has made no major changes, if they were to do so, new regulations may not matter if people are allowed to create guns in the comfort of their own homes.

"This should alarm everyone," said Po Murray, chairwoman of Newtown Action Alliance. "We're passing laws in Connecticut and other states to make sure these weapons of war aren't getting into the hands of dangerous people. They're working in the opposite direction."

Wilson said that he did not want his guns in the hands of criminals or the mentally ill, but he acknowledges that anyone could make a gun thanks to his work.

"All this Parkland stuff, the students, all these dreams of 'common sense gun reforms'? No. The internet will serve guns, the gun is downloadable." Wilson said. "No amount of petitions or die-ins or anything else can change that."

- [New York Law School Starts Gun Control Clinic](#)
- [Gun Control Becomes Hot Topic After Florida School Shooting](#)

What do you think of DIY gun making? Let us know in the comments below.