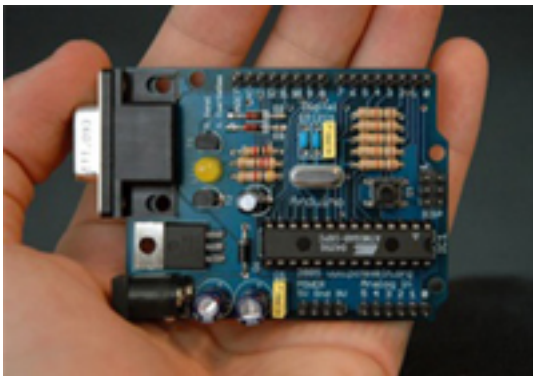


Open Source clearly works for software. So why not a hardware approach?

The design for the palm-sized Arduino, a microcontroller board, is online for anybody to build and sell knockoffs.



Yet Smart Projects SNC from Scarmagno, Italy (a 2-person firm) will sell at least 60,000 of the microcontrollers at \$30 a piece (up from 34,000 last year). Owner Gianluca Martino says he has to contract out production to keep up with growth.

And some other makers pay royalties to carry the Arduino name.

Can an open-source model could provide a new way for makers to develop and improve products?

Ms. Leah Buechley, an MIT professor, developed a washable version of Arduino (LilyPad) to sew into fabric for flashing LED clothing. Manufactured by SparkFun Inc., about 4000 of the \$21 LilyPads have sold.

Built on the Arduino design, the LilyPad is also open source: anybody could copy it. Ms. Buechley believes by that time she will have moved the product on. Cloners will be where she was, not where she will be.

Recent open-source hardware initiatives include Chumby (a clock-radio type of device that runs widgets to display weather or to stream music) and Bug (snap-together modules to make a variety of computing devices).

Go [Arduino](#)