

This may be the world's first functioning 3-d printed building

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Dubai has opened what it said was the world's first functioning 3-D-printed office building, part of a drive by the Gulf's main tourism and business hub to develop technology that cuts costs and saves time.

The printers -- used industrially and also on a smaller scale to make digitally designed, three-dimensional objects from plastic -- have not been used much for building.

This one used a special mixture of cement, a Dubai government statement said, and reliability tests were done in Britain and China.

The one-storey prototype building, with floorspace of about 2, 700 square feet, used a 20-foot by 120-foot by 40-foot printer, the government said.

" This is the first 3-D-printed building in the world, and it's not just a building, it has fully functional offices and staff," the United Arab Emirates Minister of Cabinet Affairs, Mohamed Al Gergawi, said.

" We believe this is just the beginning. The world will change," he said.

The arc-shaped office, built in 17 days and costing about \$140, 000, will be the temporary headquarters of Dubai Future Foundation -- the company behind the project -- is in the center of the city, near the Dubai International Financial Center.

Gergawi said studies estimated the technique could cut building time by 50 to 70 percent and labor costs by 50 to 80 percent. Dubai's strategy was to have 25 percent of the buildings in the emirate printed by 2030, he said.