

# The Fun of Connection

## Abstraction for Data Systems

Chet Mancini

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**LEGO** **BASIC**

545





Duplo®

Godtfred K. Christiansen  
US Pat. 3597105 / Aug. 1971

Fischertechnik®  
K'Nex®

Artur Fischer  
US Pat. 3464147 / Sep. 19, 1966

Krinkles®  
Lego®

Joel Glickman & M. Doeprer  
US Pat. 5061219 / Dec. 11, 1990

Walter Heubl  
US Pat. 3603025 / Sep. 30, 1968

Lincoln Logs®  
Tinkertoy®  
ZomeTool®  
Zoob®

Godtfred K. Christiansen  
US Pat. 3005282 / Jul. 28, 1958

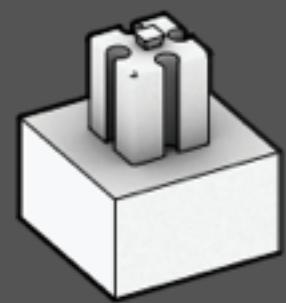
John Lloyd Wright  
US Pat. 1351086 / Jan. 8, 1920

Charles H. Pojeau  
US Pat. 1113371 / Jul. 8, 1914

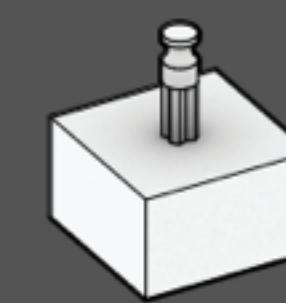
Steven Rogers & P. Hildebrandt  
US Pat. 6840599 / Nov. 1, 2002\*

Michael J. Grey  
US Pat. 5097417 / Dec. 11, 1990\*

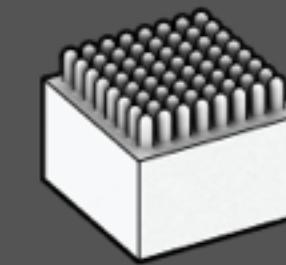
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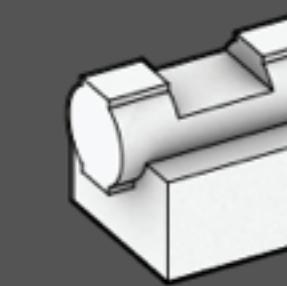


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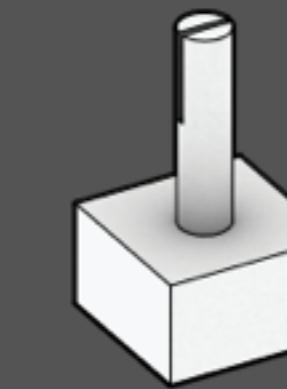


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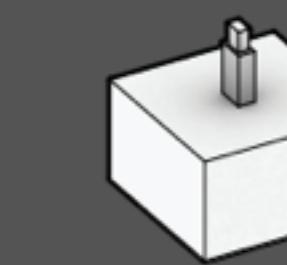
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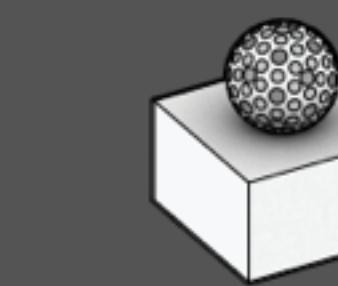
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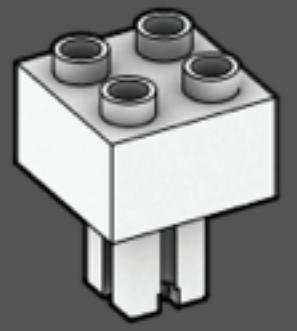


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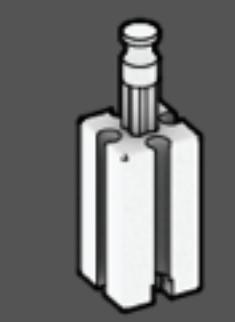
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Duplo®



uck-01f00m

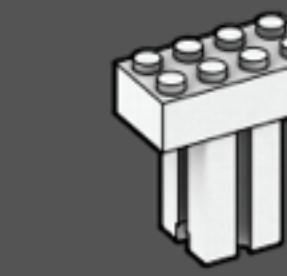
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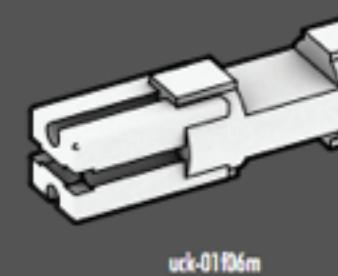
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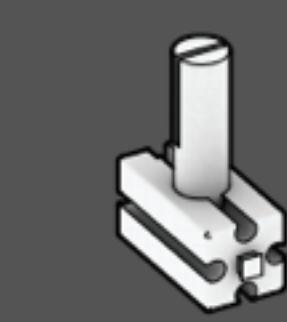
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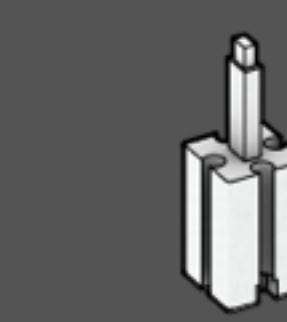
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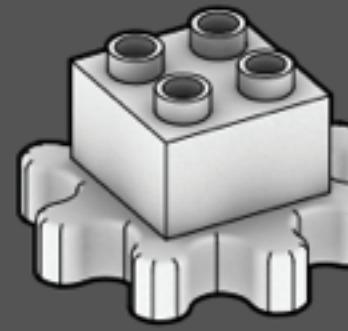


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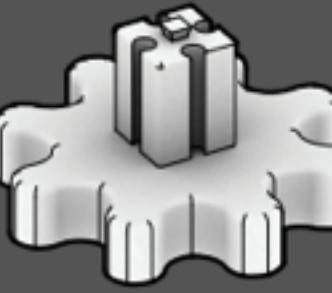


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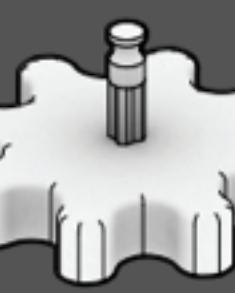
Fischertechnik®



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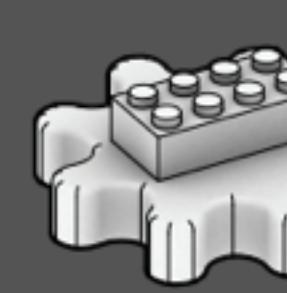
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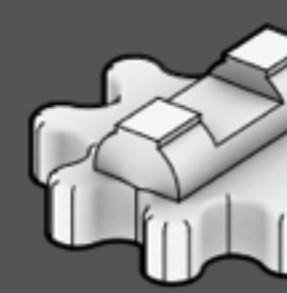
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uck-02f04m



uck-02f05m



uck-02f06m



uck-02f07m



uck-02f08m



uck-02f09m

Gears!  
Gears!  
Gears!



uck-03f00m

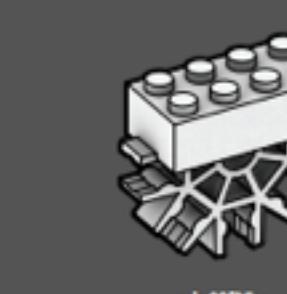


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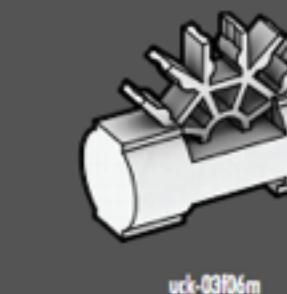
(K'Nex to K'Nex)



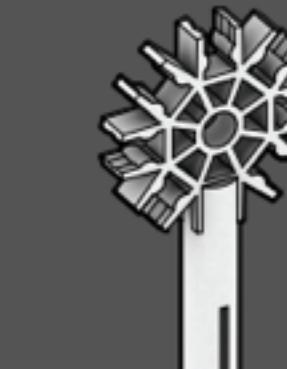
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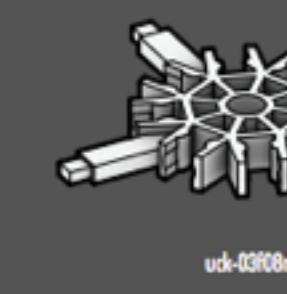
uck-03f05m



uck-03f06m



uck-03f07m



uck-03f08m



uck-03f09m

K'Nex®



(Krinkles to Krinkles)



uck-04f04m



uck-04f05m



uck-04f06m



uck-04f07m



uck-04f08m

Krinkles®

Krinkles®



uck-04f00m



uck-04f01m



uck-04f03m

(Krinkles to Krinkles)



uck-04f05m



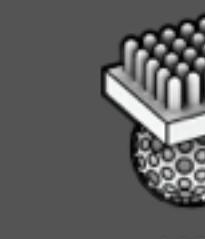
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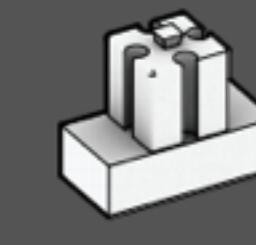


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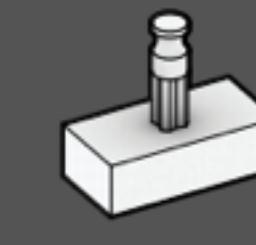


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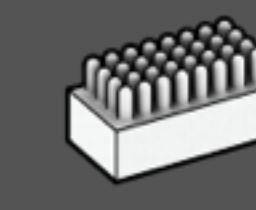
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already supported  
by manufacturer)



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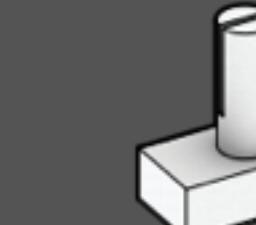


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(Lego to Lego)



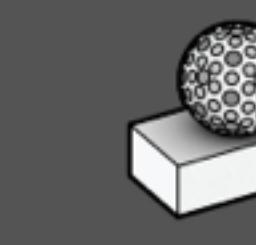
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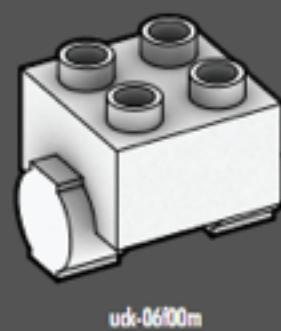


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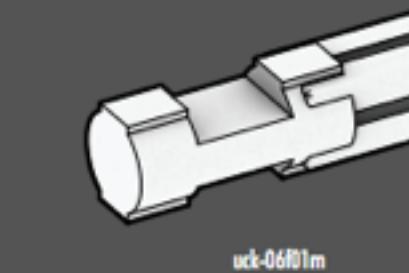


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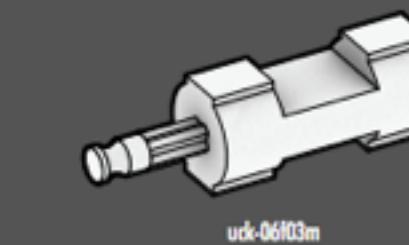
Lego®



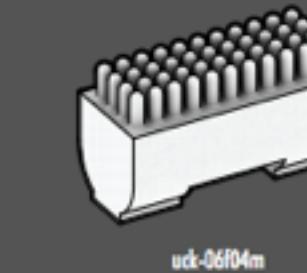
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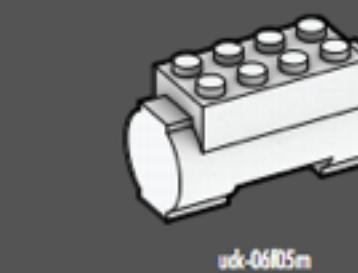
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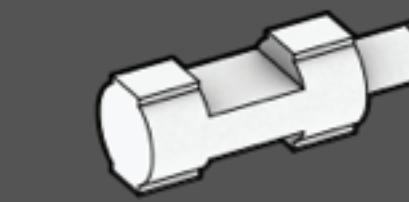


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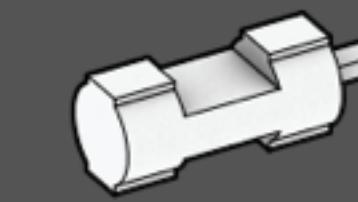


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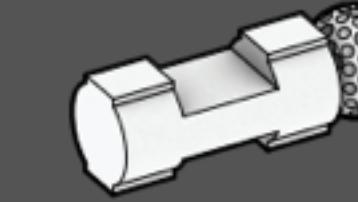
(Lincoln Logs to  
Lincoln Logs)



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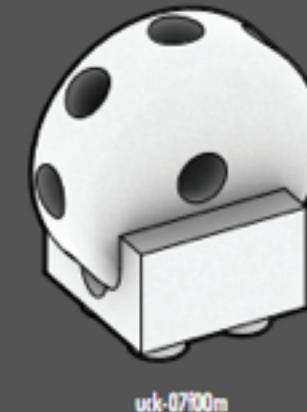


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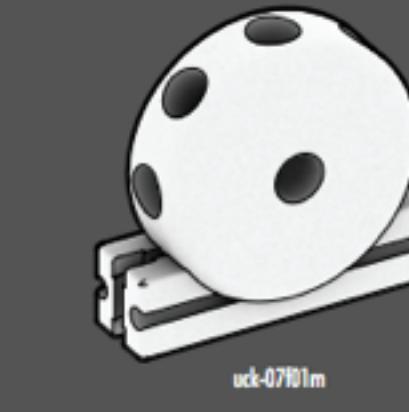


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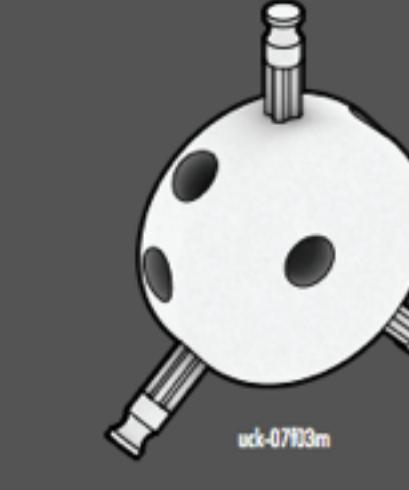
Lincoln Logs®



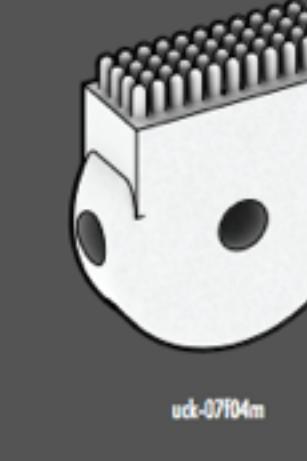
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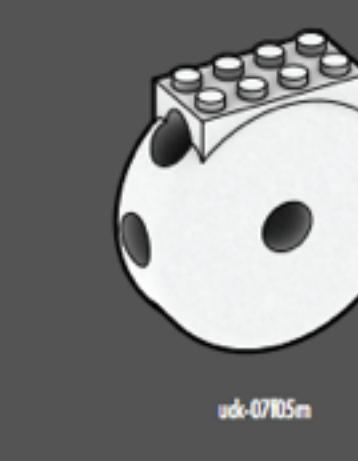
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uck-07f04m



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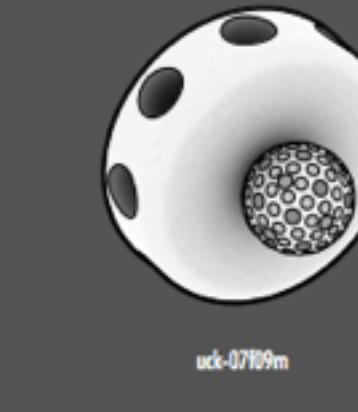


uck-07f06m

(Tinkertoy to  
Tinkertoy)



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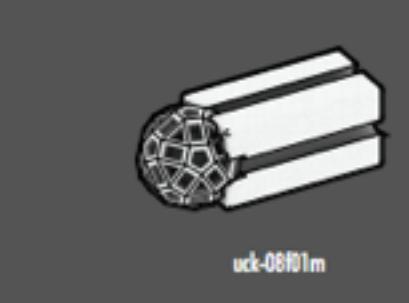


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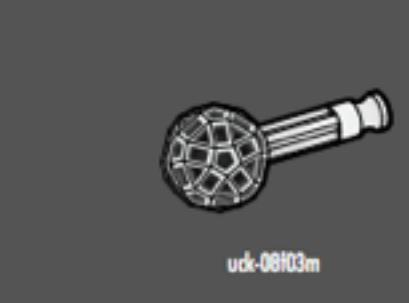
Tinkertoy®



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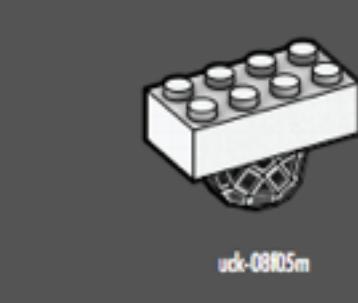
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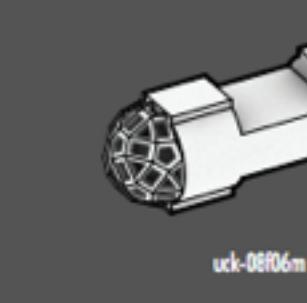
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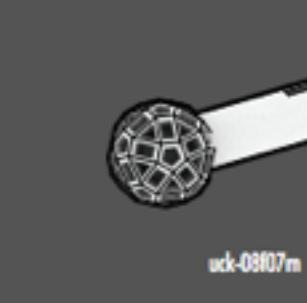
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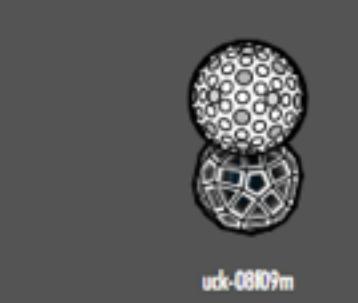


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uck-08f07m

(ZomeTool to  
ZomeTool)

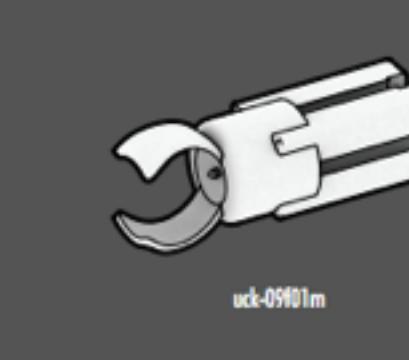


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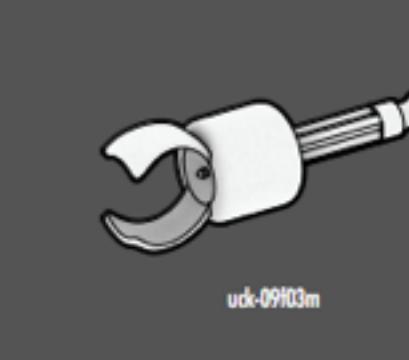
ZomeTool®



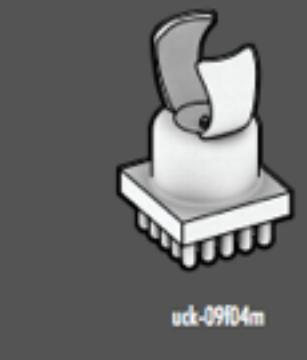
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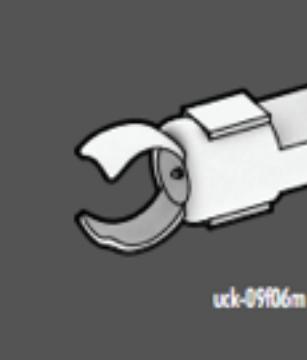
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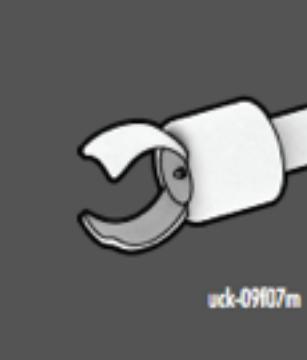
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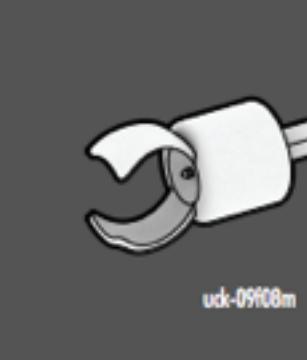
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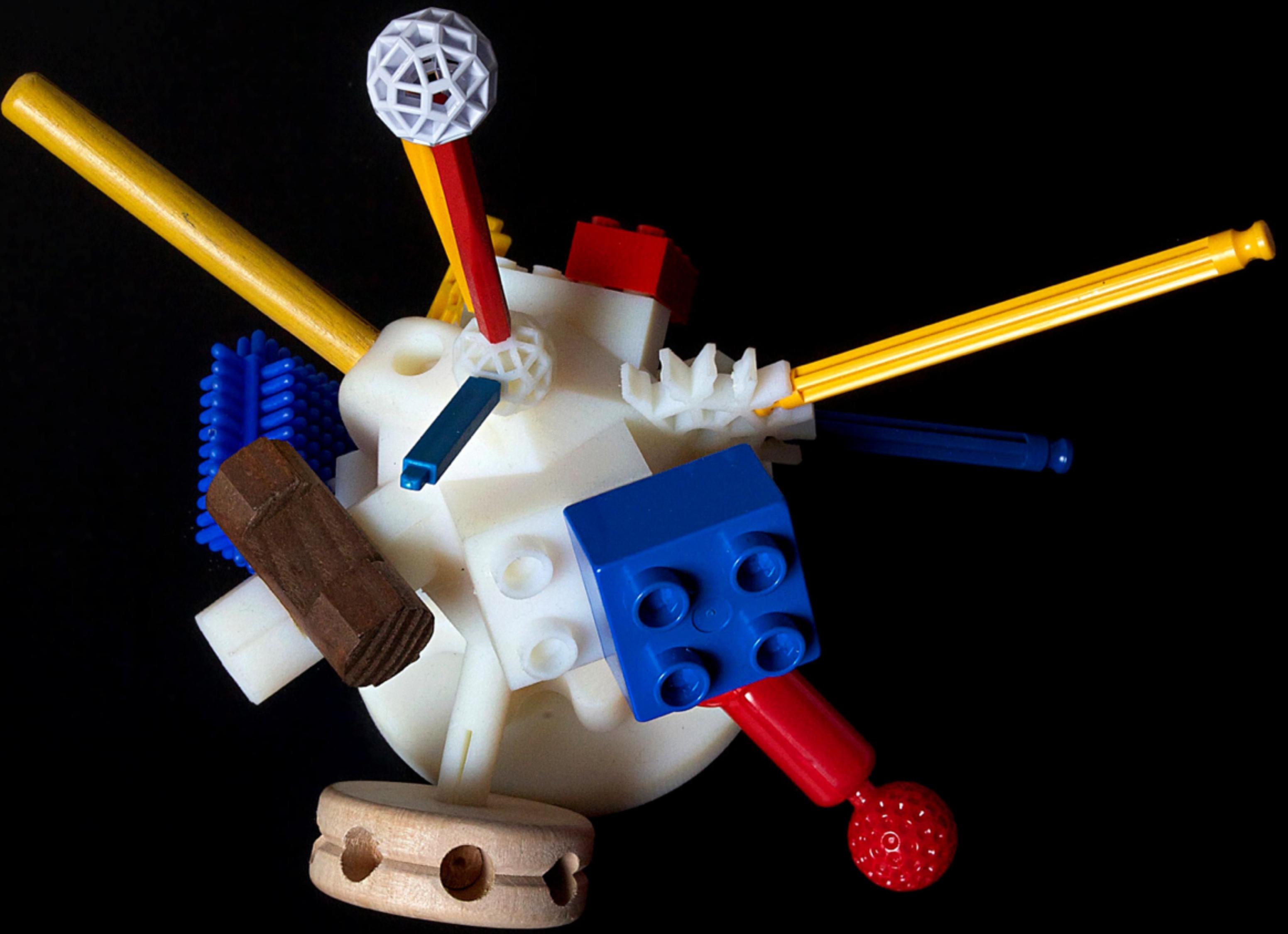


uck-09f08m

(Zoob to Zoob)

Zoob®





*“I thought of objects being like biological cells and/or individual computers on a network, only able to communicate with messages”*

—ALAN KAY, writing on OOP

[github.com/cognitect/transit-format](https://github.com/cognitect/transit-format)

- A format & set of elements and extensions for representing typed values.
- Encoded as valid JSON or Msgpack
- Self-describing. Schemas and convention not required.
- Standard libraries for Clojure, JavaScript, Java, Python, and Ruby.

[github.com/Prismatic/schema](https://github.com/Prismatic/schema)

[github.com/intentmedia/schema-transform](https://github.com/intentmedia/schema-transform)

- Transform an Avro schema to Prismatic Schema.
- Transform Prismatic to string in Avro format.
- Maintains major primitive types and supports complex types like arrays, maps, and records. Fields can be optional or required.

```
(defschema Record
  {:name      String
   :keywords  [String]
   :updated-at Long})
```

# Nulls

- no field at all
- NULL / NIL / NA / NAN
- “”
- “unspecified whitespace”
- “NULL”
- -1 or magic number
- “NOT\_FOUND” / “MISSING” / “UNKNOWN”

- Have you weighed performance / convenience? Is it human readable? Does it need to be?
- Are you maintaining type information? Can you maintain data structures?
- Do you have common semantics for boundary cases like NULLs?
- Can you extend and modify your schema safely? Is it versioned?
- Can you extend into new language ecosystems?

- *Easy to use.* Does communicating with other components feel native?
- *Easy to extend.* Can you add new components? New languages? New fields? Without downtime?
- *Easy to generate.* Can we pass around a data blueprint? Automate manual coding?

*Fear no data*

[chetmancini.com](http://chetmancini.com)

Github/Twitter: @chetmancini

Thanks to these companies:

**intentmedia/schema-transform**

**prismatic/schema**

**cognitect/transit-format**