

Customizable 3D-Printing Phone Cases

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Problem Statement

Designing a phone case that could integrate the usage of a sliding puzzle with customizable tile pieces. These designed tiles can be selected upon users choice of preferences.



Motivation & Related Work



- Phone cases catered to specific needs and designs
- Existing products: Basic customization for cases (e.g. Custom photo or design on case back)

Easy customization + Fun Puzzle Component using 3D printing




Pipeline


1. User customize their pieces or select from our pieces
2. Select a supported phone model and a puzzle frame
3. Customize their config for the puzzle
4. Get a phone case and pieces that can be exported and printed!


GeneratePhoneCase  


Phone Model


phone1 

Pattern Part


Part 1 

Part 3 

Part 5 

Part 8 

Puzzle Frame

frame 

Puzzle X

20 cm

Puzzle Y

0 cm

Puzzle Z

-6 cm

Puzzle Size

50 cm


Frame Width Offset

3 cm

Puzzle Scale Z

100 cm

☒ Cut through



Final

Piece Customization

1. User create a model or import one
2. Create this feature and select the model and a base piece
3. Change these offsets to fit the piece
4. Customized piece is created!

Create Piece 1

✓

✗

Base Piece

Part 1

Input Model

Part 1

Part 3

Part 2

Model X

0 cm

Model Y

0 cm

Model Z

10 cm

Model Scale X

300 cm

Model Scale Y

300 cm

Model Scale Z

300 cm

Model Rotate X

0 deg

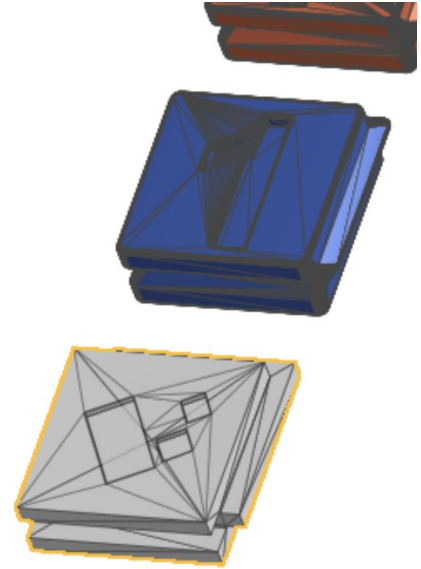
Model Rotate Y

0 deg

Model Rotate Z

30 deg

☒ Subtract



Puzzle Customization

1. Select a phone model
2. Select a puzzle frame
3. Change these offsets to fit the case
4. Customized case is created!

GeneratePhoneCase ✓ ✕

Phone Model

phone1 ✕

Pattern Part

Part 1 ✕

Part 3 ✕

Part 5 ✕

Part 8 ✕

Puzzle Frame

Part 9 ✕

Puzzle X

20 cm

Puzzle Y

0 cm

Puzzle Z

-6 cm

Puzzle Size

50 cm

Frame Width Offset

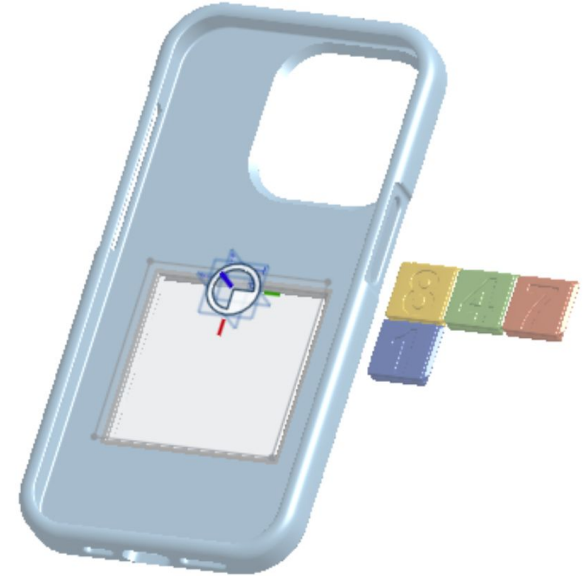
3 cm

Puzzle Scale Z

100 cm

☒ Cut through

Final



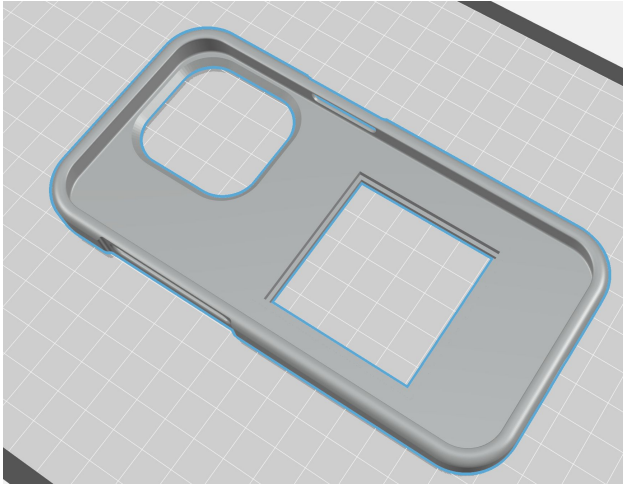
Computational Challenges

1. Written in OnShape, FeatureScript
2. Computational challenge: Models are mesh objects, no specific lengths and center. Hard to adjust position.
3. Solution: Calculate bounding box to acquire models lengths and center. Used for translation, scaling and boolean operations.

```
const getLength = function(body, axis)
{
  const bounding_box = evBox3d(
    context,
    {
      "topology" : body,
      "tight" : true
    }
  );
  return (bounding_box.maxCorner[axis] - bounding_box.minCorner[axis]);
};
```

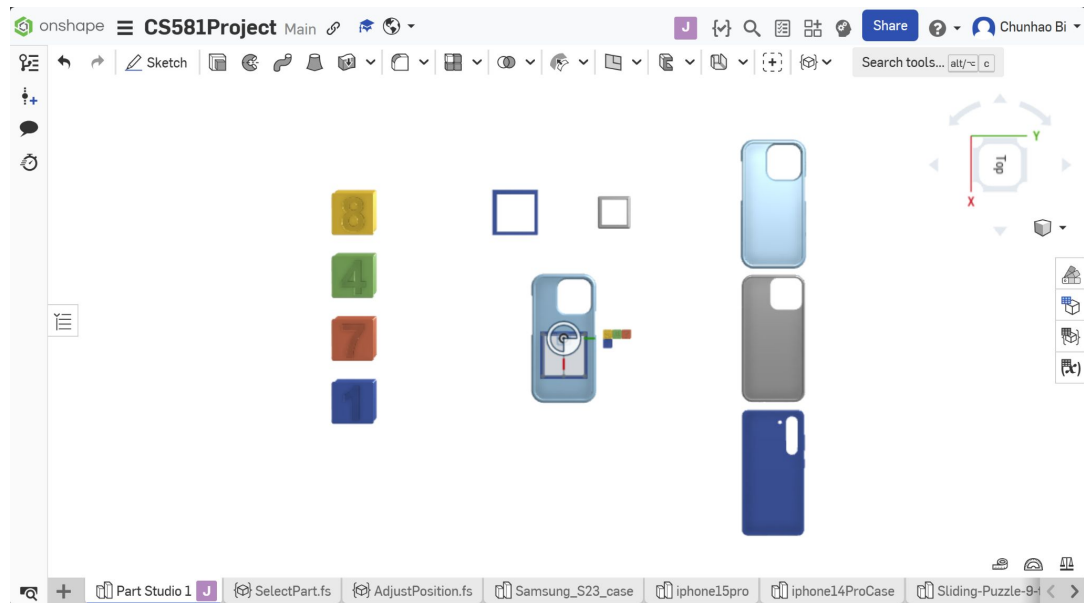
Exporting and Printing

1. Select the models, right click the export option, a .stl file will be downloaded.
2. Open the file in Makerbot and print it.
3. Phone case and pieces are printed separately for better result.

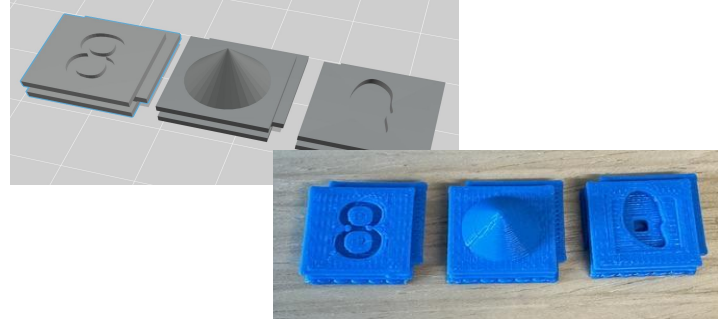


Live Demo

<https://cad.onshape.com/documents/202efb2eabb4069c72ee427b/w/2a84be3b3b90e2553530777e/e/3c12d3a3e75f12d8ca3b3668>



Fabrication



- Case fabrication - EPIC studio
 - **Materials:** TPU, Flexible Resin
 - Puzzle frame is integrated into the case
 - Malleable
 - Maintain enough structural rigidity to encase phone and puzzle pieces
 - ~\$1 per case (resin)

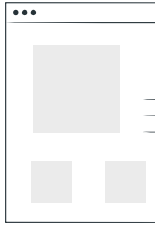
- Puzzle piece fabrication - MakerBot FDM
 - **Materials:** PLA
 - Scaled to fit the frame (+3~4%)
 - May need minor adjustments for proper fit
 - ~40 min to print all eight pieces
 - Recommended to print in batches to avoid premature cooling

Fabrication Challenges

- Warping problem of PLA prints
- Environment shielding - Covering open sides of the printer to block external airflow
 - Objects are less warped with shielding
- PLA print with Makerbot is not suitable for large prints (e.g. phone case)
- Print in small batches to prevent premature cooling

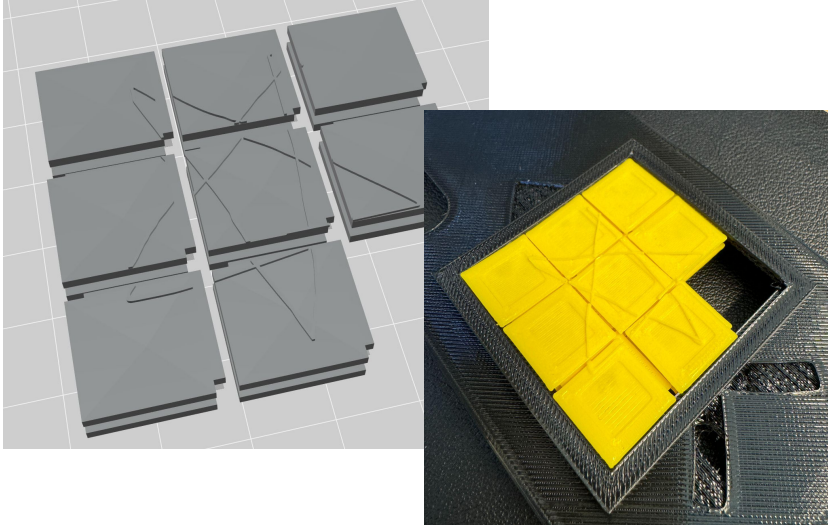


Environment Shielding



Results

- Phone case models for iPhone 14/15, and Galaxy S23
- Puzzle pieces
 - Numbered (Default)
 - Custom Piece Design
 - Custom Puzzle Design



Thank You!

