

## 13-year-old invents Lego Braille printer

The next invention may be found at your local school science fair. Shubham Banerjee, 13, created a Braille printer out of LEGO pieces for a school science project. With the help of his family, turned his concept into a start-up company that gained financial backing from the tech company Intel Corp.

Shubham came up with the idea after researching Braille online and realizing that printers for the blind cost \$2,000 or more. Concerned it was too expensive for most people to afford, Shubham wanted to make an inexpensive version. He asked his dad for a Lego robotics kit that cost about \$350 and built a model in about a month for a science fair in early 2014. He shared the plan online in an "open source" format so that anyone could build it.

"He wanted to make it very cheap and DIY, do-it-yourself," his father Neil Banerjee said.

Children who were blind and their parents started contacting Shubham soon after, asking if he could make a printer they could buy off the shelves. Shubham made a prototype using parts from a desktop printer and an Intel chip with wifi and bluetooth. He showed what he created to Intel.

"They were really impressed," Banerjee said. Banerjee helped his son set up a company with Shubham as the founder. Malini Banerjee, Shubham's mother, assumed the role of CEO, and Neil became a member of the board. They called it Braigo Labs, a combination of Braille and Lego. A few months later, Intel announced they would back Shubham's company with an undisclosed amount of money.

"He's solving a real problem, and he wants to go off and disrupt an existing industry. And that's really what it's all about," Edward Ross, director of Inventor Platforms at Intel, told the Associated Press. Today, Braigo Labs has hired several professionals to work on the project and has enlisted an industrial design firm to help develop a product that can be manufactured, according to Banerjee.

Banerjee said his son wasn't willing to give up on his project after the science fair. "He really wanted to take this product to the real people so they could benefit from it," Banerjee said.

"It's a good story that did not stop at a prototype."