





Photocells being printed

Especially interesting was [Oron Catts](http://tcaproject.org/) (<http://tcaproject.org/>) highlighting the hype around synthetic biology. By way of illustrating his latest work – the 'Mechanism of Life' (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G3DRmq1phGQ>) wherein a 3D printer prints protocells – he notes that synthetic biology is a century old term steeped in the at times fierce debate about what constitutes a living thing.

Harking back to bygone days when the soft sciences didn't find themselves excluded from the debate regarding scientific advances is an important precedent to recall. Nowadays nobody bats an eyelid when 'startup mode' and 'synthetic biology' are mentioned in the same breath. That's in spite of the fact that the same mindset and environment that makes that synergy possible is 100% toxic to the sort of [measured decisions](#) ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asilomar\\_Conference\\_on\\_Recombinant\\_DNA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asilomar_Conference_on_Recombinant_DNA)) requisite to technology that hopes to reengineer the oldest life on earth into the factory floor of the future.

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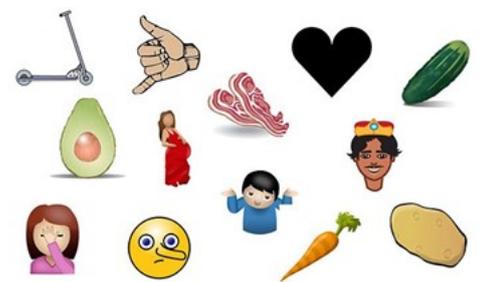
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