

# VFab Plugin for Netscape

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This README file contains instructions for the VFab plugin for Netscape, as of February 1997. The VFab plugin allows a designer to upload a DXF file to a web page which automatically submits it directly to a manufacturer. The current implementations of VFab only include the laser cutting of sheet stock up to 1/4 inch thick. Future versions will also be able to handle bending and automated punch processes, as well as many other different types of fabrications. Follow these steps closely:

- 1) Set "Mail & News Preferences" as follows: under "servers" set outgoing mail server to **smtp.itd.umich.edu** set incoming mail server to **pop** under "identity" fill in name, email, and reply-to. Make sure signature is selected for "none".
- 2) Copy VBuild.java into the "netscape-classes" folder, in the "java" folder, in the "Netscape" preferences folder.
- 3) Copy VFabPPC plugin into Netscape's plugin folder.
- 4) Prepare a sheet of proposed 2D shapes to be cut out, nesting them together to produce as little wastage of material as possible. Make sure the units is in inches. The shapes may be prepared in any program, but must be finally brought together in Form Z draft. From Form Z draft, save as a DXF file. When the "save" button is pushed, the special DXF dialog will be brought up. It is important to make sure the settings are correct. Keep the settings like this:

**DXF Drafting Export Options**

Scale Factor : X : 1.0000 Y : 1.0000 Z : 1.0000

Export Visible Layers Only

Export Dimensions As Blocks

Newlines : Macintosh ▼

Symbol Options... Cancel OK

- 5) Prepare a text file that explains material type (steel, stainless, brass, plexiglass, cardboard, etc.) and thickness. It should read something like: "The DXF file that follows this one is to be on 1/8 inch sheet steel. There are 16 shapes in the file nested on a sheet." just for courtesy to our manufacturer.
- 6) Open up Netscape and type in: **http://www-personal.umich.edu/~ashowe/VFab.html**
- 7) A dialog will immediately appear asking for a file. First choose the explanation text. When that has finished, push the reload button on Netscape and then when the file dialog appears again, choose the DXF file. The files will automatically go to the manufacturer.

Before getting onto VFab.html, you may wish to open up the java console under "options". The java console will contain messages letting you know what the plugin is doing. For some large files it may be helpful to watch the java console since it may appear at first that the machine has frozen up. Each time the VFabPPC plugin is used, an email message will automatically go to A. Scott Howe for the purposes of statistic collection in the research project. The VFab and VBuild projects are currently strictly for research purposes. Unauthorized use is prohibited! Future versions are planned which will be open to public use. Fabrications will be delivered Monday mornings to 170 Advanced Technology Laboratory (ATL) building!