

DIY music kit turns to crowdfunding for takeoff

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(Phys.org) —A synthesizer has been modeled to transform any object into a musical instrument: A London-based creative design and invention company Dentaku, formed just last year, is turning to crowdfunding to get its device, Ototo, off the ground.

Their Kickstarter campaign is all about this small circuit board

synthesizer, which is slightly larger than a cassette tape. The device allows you to plug in different objects and [sensors](#) in order to create your own electronic music. You can, for example, connect breath or light-dependent sensors to the inputs. The keys on the Ototo are arranged as one octave of a musical keyboard; the synthesizer works as a musical keyboard straight out of the box. It also works if you use crocodile clips to connect the board to conductive materials, which will act as the sound trigger. What makes the DIY musical experience interesting are the sensor inputs that control different elements of sounds, one each for pitch and loudness and two that control the texture of the sound. The different combinations of sensors allow creatives to craft a suitable performance. "With Ototo," said the designers, "you can unpack the kit and start making a saxophone out of drainpipes, a vegetable piano, a custom [synthesizer](#) interface—anything you can imagine."

Ototo is powered by two AA batteries or micro USB. Campaign pledge amounts determine which kits are sent out; various sensors are being offered to experiment with light, force, and breath as well as standard dials and sliders. They said they are producing seven different sensors for music making.

If the campaign goes well, the company expects to deliver its Ototo kits to backers this June.

Yuri Suzuki and Mark McKeague are the two designers who co-founded the company and are behind Ototo. They both studied at the Royal College of Art. Suzuki has remarked that "getting into coding and understanding electronics can be a barrier for creativity. Ototo allows anyone to build amazing electronic sound projects with minimal knowledge." The two said they want to "empower people to create, whether that's a kid playing with electronics for the first time or a musician who wants more control how they perform or create sounds. We believe when you have this power then you can see the potential in

things."

As for pricing, there are a variety of kits being offered at different price tiers. Just as an example of what is among the different tiers: for \$82 one gets one board, 12 clips and guide. For \$205 one gets board, guide, clips, rotation, light, slide, breath, force, joystick and touch strip sensors and seven sensor cables. For \$674 the kit comes with "everything you need to run an instrument building workshop." That includes five Ototo boards, illustrated guides, packs of clips and two of each sensor and sensor cables.

More information: www.kickstarter.com/projects/9...-music-from-anything

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