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SKIN THAT SUCKER



The "iRobot I Love Robots Skin" for an iRobot Roomba Discovery. Photo courtesy of iRobot Corp.

Just when you thought that it was a silly idea to plaster decals and stickers all over your Roomba, iRobot has introduced an innovative way to personalize your robot floor vac — iRobot skins.

A new April addition to the iRobot Store, these glossy vinyl iRobot skins — called Skinit — range from sports and college themes to a list of photorealistic skins that will catch your eye as Roomba cleans your floor (e.g., eye, pizza, and quarter skins). Best of all, Skinit isn't restricted to the supplied iRobot themes. You can roll your own.

Just snap your own digital photograph, upload it to the iRobot Skinit server, and iRobot will adapt your work of art to your Roomba or Scooba.

All of this fancy art doesn't come cheap, however. A skin — pictured here — "I Love Robots" costs \$19.98. Plus there is an additional charge of \$4.95 for postage and handling. Luckily, you don't have to handle your new skin with care — they are removable.

You can order iRobot skins from Skinit at www.irobotskins.com

FREE STUFF

Have you ever been frustrated with wanting to build a great widget only to give up because you can't find the right electronic part? Well, so did Limor Fried. That is until she organized a comprehensive list of sources for free electronics.

Able to sling a soldering iron with the best of 'em, Fried got fed up with part obsolescence, high priced ICs, and difficulty in locating a unique analog chip, so she created the definitive list for procuring free electronic components.

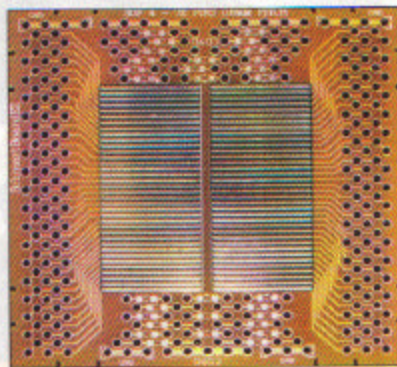
Need a PIC, Maxim serial line driver, or a ZigBee thingie? Fried can show you how you can request a "sample"

IC that won't cost you a thing or at least it won't cost you an arm and a leg.

After you've learned how to procure electronic components from Fried, be sure and nose around the rest of her website. Inside you will find some great circuits, wonderful kits, and an encyclopedia's worth of knowledge — all for free.

You can become enlightened by Limor Fried at www.ladyada.net and can see her list of freebies at www.ladyada.net/resources/procurement.html

GET SCHMART!



The Package. Photo courtesy of SchmartBoard.

If you or your company are looking to add some design flexibility to your printed circuit boards, then SchmartBoard just might be able to make this whole process "EZ." Just what makes it so "EZ?"

In a nutshell, SchmartBoard's "EZ" technology enables anyone to solder surface-mount components to PCBs ... by hand. While the SchmartBoard product has been available as a line of prototyping boards (e.g., in SO, QFP, PLCC, and BGA packages) since 2003, early this spring the SchmartBoard|ez technology was opened to independent licensing.

Now you can add a "EZ" SMT solder pad to any mass-manufactured PCB. Just think, your company could add an "EZ" pad to an experimenter's board or incorporate an "EZ" pad into a new circuit design reference board prior to the delivery of the ICs. Then new ICs could be tested and evaluated on these "EZ" PCBs without committing to a large manufacturing run.

Visit www.schmartboard.com for further info on the SchmartBoard. **NV**