

Paper waste shapes up as a wood substitute

German researchers have developed a form of "liquid wood" that can be injection-moulded like a plastic.

The Arboform material is made from lignin, the polymer that gives wood its rigidity. It is produced in large quantities as a by-product in the paper industry.

The first applications of the material could be used as the base for veneered steering wheels and instrument panels in cars.

At present, sharp changes in temperature can cause plastic base material to split from the wooden veneer. Other applications could include computers, televisions and mobile phone cases.

The material was developed by the Fraunhofer

Institute for Chemical
Technology in Pfinztal near
Karlsruhe.

The researchers, who have
formed a spin-off company,
Tecnaro, are researching
ways of making the material
more malleable and
heat-resistant.

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