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CONTACTS:

Janessa Rivera

Gartner

+ 1 408 709 8220

janessa.rivera@gartner.com

Robert van der Meulen

Gartner

+ 44 (0) 1784 267 738

rob.vandermeulen@gartner.com

Gartner Says Worldwide Shipments of 3D Printers to Grow 49 Per Cent in 2013

3D Printer Shipments Set to Double Year Over Year

3D Printing Outlook to be Examined at Gartner Symposium/ITxpo 2013, 10-14 November, in Barcelona, Spain

STAMFORD, Conn., October 2, 2013 — Worldwide shipments of 3D printers (3DPs) priced less than \$100,000 will grow 49 per cent in 2013 to reach a total of 56,507 units, according to Gartner, Inc.'s first forecast of the less than \$100,000 consumer and enterprise 3D printer market. Rapid quality and performance innovations across all 3DP technologies will drive enterprise and consumer demand. Gartner said that shipments will increase further in 2014, growing 75 per cent to 98,065 units, followed by a near doubling of unit shipments in 2015.

In Western Europe, shipments of 3DPs will reach a total of 14,335 units in 2013, a 42.6 per cent increase in 2013 and will amount to 24,784 units in 2014.

"The 3D printer market has reached its inflection point," said Pete Basiliere, research director at Gartner. "While still a nascent market, with hype outpacing the technical realities, the speed of development and rise in buyer interest are pressing hardware, software and service providers to offer easier-to-use tools and materials that produce consistently high-quality results."

In 2013, combined end-user spending on 3DPs will reach \$412 million, up 43 per cent from spending of \$288 million in 2012. Enterprise spending will total more than \$325 million in 2013, while the consumer segment will reach nearly \$87 million. In 2014, spending will increase 62 per cent, reaching \$669 million, with enterprise spending of \$536 million and consumer spending of \$133 million.

"As the products rapidly mature, organisations will increasingly exploit 3D printing's potential in their laboratory, product development and manufacturing operations," continued Mr Basiliere. "In the next 18 months, we foresee consumers moving from being curious about the technology to finding reasons to justify purchases as price points, applications and functionality become more attractive."

From an enterprise point of view, current uses of 3D technology focus on one-off or small-run models for product design and industrial prototyping, jigs and fixtures used in manufacturing processes and mass customisation of finished goods. As advances in 3D printers, scanners, design tools and materials reduce the cost and complexity of creating 3D printed items, the applications of 3D print technology will continue to expand to include areas such as architecture, defence, medical products and jewellery design.

Gartner predicts that 3D printing will have a high impact on industries, including consumer products, industrial and manufacturing; a medium impact on construction, education, energy, government, medical products, military, retail, telecommunications, transportation and utilities; and a low impact on banking and financial services and insurance.

"The hype around consumer 3D printing has made organisations aware that the price point and functionality of 3DP have changed significantly over the last five years, driving increased shipments beginning in 2014," said Mr Basiliere. "Most businesses are only now beginning to fully comprehend all of the ways in which a 3DP can be cost-effectively used in their organisations, from prototyping and product development to fixtures and moulds that are used to manufacture or assemble an item to drive finished goods. Now that many people in the organisation, not only the engineering and manufacturing department managers but also senior corporate management, marketing management and others, have heard the hype, they want to know when the business will have a 3D printer."

3D printer prices will decrease during the next several years due to competitive pressures and higher shipment volumes, even after allowing for providers who will be offering devices with higher performance, functionality and quality that enable them to hold the line on pricing.

Gartner expects that by 2015, seven of the 50 largest multinational retailers will sell 3D printers through their physical and online stores.

"Major multinational physical and online retailers have the means to market the technology to consumers and enterprise buyers, generating demand for the devices and revenue by selling printers and supplies, as well as from sales of individual 3D-printed pieces," said Mr Basiliere. "Office superstore Staples is already in the market, and other superstores and consumer goods retailers, such as Yamada Denki, are prime candidates to sell printers and finished 3D printed items. Their presence in the market will have an impact on average selling prices, forcing providers into low-margin sales of consumer 3DP by 2017."

"Simply experiencing the technology and conceiving ways to use it will mainly drive makers and hobbyists, not the average consumer, to purchase a 3D printer to begin with," said Mr Basiliere. "However, we expect that a compelling consumer application — something that can only be created at home on a 3D printer — will hit the scene by 2016." This application, which will be the most compelling use case yet for consumer 3D printing, will arise from work done by makers and other enthusiasts who push the envelope of consumer 3D printing uses and enabled by manufacturers who develop "plug-and-play" tools.

More detailed analysis is available in the report "Forecast: 3D Printers, Worldwide, 2013." The report is available on Gartner's web site at <http://www.gartner.com/resId=2598122>.

Mr Basiliere will provide additional analysis of the 3D printing market at Gartner Symposium/ITxpo 2013.

About Gartner Symposium/ITxpo

Gartner Symposium/ITxpo is the world's most important gathering of CIOs and senior IT executives. This event delivers independent and objective content with the authority and weight of the world's leading IT research and advisory organization, and provides access to the latest solutions from key technology providers. Gartner's annual Symposium/ITxpo events are key components of attendees' annual planning efforts. IT executives rely on Gartner Symposium/ITxpo to gain insight into how their organizations can use IT to address business challenges and improve operational efficiency.

Additional information for Gartner Symposium/ITxpo 2013 in Barcelona, 10-14 November, is available at www.gartner.com/eu/symposium. Members of the media can register for the event by contacting Laurence Goasduff at Laurence.goasduff@gartner.com.

Additional information from the event will be shared on Twitter at http://twitter.com/Gartner_inc and using #GartnerSym.

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