News from CES: How desktop 3D printing adds value for engineers

ALPHEN AAN DEN RIJN, THE NETHERLANDS, - January 7, 2015 Leapfrog 3D printers publishes a whitepaper disclosing its research insights into the current state of the adoption of desktop 3D printing by engineers. The report showcases research results, provides illustration through client cases and analyses the added value by looking at the engineering process chain. This is the second publication in a larger series of reports called the "Added Value Series" which explains the added value of desktop 3D printing in a variety of markets. All publications are free to download from Leapfrog's website: www.lpfrg.com/press.

Adding real value for engineers
Desktop 3D printers are those relatively small, affordable (generally noted to be under €5000) and easy to use 3D printers that utilize affordable materials such as polymers. Desktop 3D printers should by no means be mistaken for toys. Although some of them are used in a hobbyist or an early adopter consumer environment, this report shows that they are used in highly professional settings to add very real business value.

**Cutting costs, optimizing design and avoiding downtime**
The main findings of the research are that engineers are currently using desktop 3D printing in improving design and quality of products and machines and saving costs and time in the engineering process , thus increasing time to market and getting early market feedback. Engineering companies use desktop 3D printing to quickly prototype at low costs, to create agile feedback loops in the design process and to cut time and costs in producing a finished design by weeks and by hundreds, sometimes thousands, of euro's. Desktop 3D printers are also used as powerful and highly convincing sales tools and help engineers in optimizing design of machines and parts. This is because 3D printing allows unrestricted design variety and affordable production, which in turn allows optimization of design for function. In addition results show that desktop 3D printing is more and more used to avoid downtime in processes or of machines, the latter by printing machine parts on the spot when they break down.

Print materials are key and cultural overhaul needed for more added value
To be able to add more value in the (near) future, a few things need to happen. Engineers indicate that for them, the key is in the materials. The more materials they can print with, the more applications desktop 3D printing can be used for. When more engineering plastics get available for 3D printing, we will experience a move towards more and more use for different kinds of prototyping and end products. In addition, we have found that engineers need to make the mindswitch in even considering 3D printing as an option for prototyping, production and maintenance. Secondly, they need to make a switch in thinking in how to design for 3D printing to be able to take full advantage of the technique.

**Free workshops to have engineers experience added value for their own application**
Based on the research findings, Leapfrog 3D printers organizes free online and offline workshops during which engineers can experience how desktop 3D printing can add value for them. In the workshops we show how to design for 3D printing and illustrate the different engineering plastics for 3D printing. More information can be found at www.lpfrg.com/events .
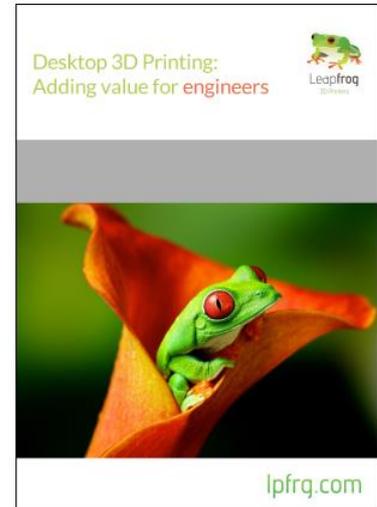
About Leapfrog 3D printers
Leapfrog 3D printers is a producer of desktop and professional 3D printers based in The Netherlands. Their aim is to help professionals and schools to uncover all the benefits 3D printing can offer for them. In order to do this, they work closely together with their customers, whom they treat as partners. Leapfrog 3D Printers therefore understands that 3D printing is about much more than just the 3D printer itself; It is about the printing materials, about software, about hardware add-ons, about services and about educating the market. This is called Leapfrog Solutions: which includes all the tools user groups need to add real value for their purpose. Their current solutions focus on schools, mechanical engineers and on 3D printer novices and more are on the way.

Keep an eye on Leapfrog 3D Printers, because, together with their clients, they Create the Future. Find out more through www.lpfrg.com.
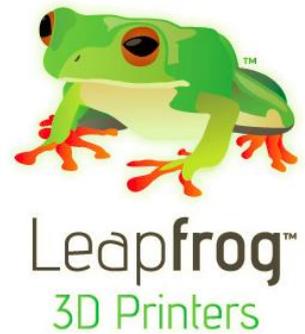
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For more information please visit our website: www.lpfrg.com
Or contact: Maarten de Jong, m.djong@lpfrg.com for background information and interview requests.

Other press releases from Leapfrog 3D printers published at CES on January 7th 2015:

1. *Leapfrog 3D Printers announces new partnerships at CES*
2. *Materialise and Leapfrog 3D Printers launch software partnership*
3. *Leapfrog 3D Printers Joins Ingram Micro's European Portfolio*