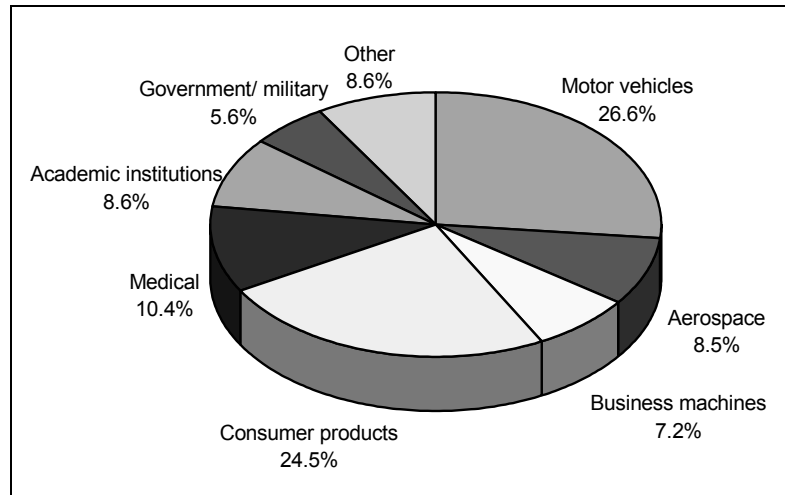


based 3D printers. The product replaces the Z400 product. Also in February, EOS announced that it had sold its first two EOSINT laser sintering machines in the U.S.

Several technologies and companies have appeared and disappeared over the years. QuadraX introduced its Mark 1000 stereolithography system in 1990. Legal conflicts led to the absorption of the technology by 3D Systems in 1992. Companies such as Light Sculpting (U.S.), Sparx AB (Sweden), and Laser 3D (France) have developed and introduced versions of RP, but they have not had a commercial impact. Few of the machines from Europe or Asia are available for sale in the U.S. at the present time. Exceptions are the machines from EOS and Arcam. In 2003, Sony is expected to begin to sell the Sony/D-MEC machines in the U.S. Kira Corporation sold its paper lamination machines in the U.S. for a relatively short period beginning in January 2001.

Industries being served

Most manufacturing industries are among the companies that use rapid prototyping. The following chart reflects the major industrial sectors that are taking advantage of the technology. Motor vehicles and consumer products continue to dominate the industries being served. Combined, they represent more than half of the total. Meanwhile, academic institutions grew by nearly two percentage points over the past year.



Source: Wohlers Associates, Inc.

The “Other” category includes industries such as professional sporting goods, non-consumer and non-military marine products, and various other industries that do not fit into the named categories.

Twenty-two RP system manufacturers and 40 RP service providers provided the data used to produce the previous chart and the two that follow. These 62 companies provided estimates based on knowledge of their customers.

How RP models are being used

The following chart shows how companies are using RP models. More than 37% of all RP models are being used for fit and function applications, an estimate derived by adding together the “functional models” and “fit/assembly” segments. Nearly 26% of all RP models are used as visual aids—for engineering, toolmaking, quote requests, and proposals. More than