

OAKLAND, CA, October 05, 2013 **/24-7PressRelease/** -- While 3D printing might seem like an obscure industry, Patrick Atkinson recognizes that bright possibilities lie ahead in its future. This form of printing, also known as "additive manufacturing," is the process of synthesizing three-dimensional objects one thin layer at a time, out of plastic, metal and glass. Many experts are just starting to realize the immense potential of 3D printing.

According an article in the Wall Street Journal, written by Citi analyst Kenneth Wong, the market for 3D printing and related services will triple by 2018. Patrick Atkinson recommends that everyone who is interested in the future of the printing industry read this very informative article. Wong cites top companies in the industry, like Stratasys and 3D Systems. Granted, this very rapid growth is partly due to how small the industry is right now, but nonetheless, the potential of 3D printing should not be underestimated.

Patrick Atkinson notes that it is estimated that 3D printing will skyrocket in 2014, due to the expiration of key patents. Once the key patents on 3D printing expire, we could see a massive drop in the price of these devices. This is not simply wishful thinking. When the key patents expired on a more primitive form of 3D printing, known as fused deposition modeling, there was an explosion of open-source FDM printers.

Soon enough, we will no longer have to master the challenging and tedious task of learning how to model things in 3D, because we will be copying them from the real world using cheap, effective 3D scanners. This technology will also allow for 3D faxing. The materials which can be 3D printed, and the ways in which you can print them, are also multiplying. Besides printer paper, one can also print human tissue. Even crane-operated 3D printers are being used to fabricate entire buildings.

Once used mostly for prototyping, Patrick Atkinson notes that 3D printed parts are more than ever becoming integral components of finished products, including such demanding applications as rocket engines. A sign of growing maturity in the 3D printing industry is the development of mergers and acquisitions, such as the acquisition of Makerbot, the leading producer of 3D printers for hobbyists, by Stratasys. Smaller companies in this industry may have to become increasingly innovative in order to survive, especially since a flood of cheap 3D printers is on its way from China.

Despite the open horizons of 3D printing, hype is one thing to keep in mind when evaluating the future of the industry, especially the idea that 3D printing will replace conventional manufacturing. While 3D printing allows for mass customization, there are many things for which the technology remains inappropriate. For example, only one material can be printed at a

time, while most things around you are made from multiple materials. Another drawback is that there are many applications of 3D printing that might never make it out of the lab, such as 3D-printed food. Another example is the fact that one expensive, highly specialized machine can print cars from carbon fiber filament does not necessarily mean that this is something all 3D printers will be enlisted to do.

ABOUT: Patrick Atkinson is the founder of God's Child Project, a nonpolitical international humanitarian organization. He is also the founder of La Asociacion Nuestros Ahijados, a Guatemala-registered nonprofit charity.