



NEW! Register Now! | Benefits | Login



InformationWeek

BUSINESS INNOVATION POWERED BY TECHNOLOGY



Get News On Your Phone
Enter Phone #

Submit

Part of the **TechWeb** Business

SEARCH

- NEWS
- WINDOWS
- SECURITY
- OUTSOURCING
- INTERNET
- SOFTWARE
- HARDWARE
- MANAGEMENT
- RESEARCH & TO

News Center: • [Breaking News](#) • [Blog](#) • [Columns](#) • [Product Reviews](#) • [Current Print Issue](#) • [Read All Stories](#)

Z Corp. Unveils More Affordable 3-D Printer

Long used for prototyping, 3-D printing is increasingly being employed for manufacturing as well.

By [Thomas Claburn](#)
InformationWeek

March 5, 2007 09:00 AM

- » [E-Mail](#)
- » [Print](#)
- » [Discuss](#)
- » [Write To Editor](#)
- » [Digg](#)
- » [Slashdot](#)

CAREER CENTER

Work - right now, just another

Z Corp. on Monday plans to announce a new color 3-D printer, the \$39,900 ZPrinter 450, that the company says is the first such device to break the \$40,000 barrier.

Since the only other full-color 3-D printer on the market is Z Corp.'s \$49,900 Spectrum Z510, the company can fairly make that claim.

John Kawola, Z's executive VP of marketing, said the ZPrinter 450 represents his company's ongoing efforts to drive the price of 3-D printing down, which he believes is necessary to open up new markets.

3-D printing has long been used for rapid prototyping, but increasingly it's being employed for [rapid manufacturing](#), where the printed model represents the final product rather than a design sample.

Hearing aids represent one such product. "Every hearing aid in the world is made on a rapid prototyping machine because every hearing aid is different," said Kawola.

Align Technologies's Invisalign orthodontia -- mass customized braces -- represents another example. Z Corp. also is working with the makers of Cosmic Blobs 3-D software on [a Web site](#) where kids can buy 3-D "prints" of the models they create.

The ZPrinter 450 aims not only to make 3-D printing more affordable, but also easier and quicker. It features automated setup, powder loading, materials monitoring, and print status checks. It also automatically removes and recycles loose powder.

The 450 shouldn't need to be tended by someone with specialized training, a relatively common situation in workplaces with previous 3-D printer models. "In most situations, there's typically a nominated manager of the machine," explained Kawola.

Looking ahead, Kawola expects 3-D printing to become more commonplace as the popularity of applications like Google Earth and [Google SketchUp](#) leads to the creation of more 3-D data.