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Global 3D printer shipments reach "nearly" 133000 units in 2014, Canalys reports-- a "substantial" 68% increase over 2013, with revenues from both printers and associated materials and services growing by 34% to $3.3 billion.

$1bn of such revenues were made in Q4 2014 alone, a quarterly first according to Canalys, while global shipments during the quarter reached 41000 with 24% Q-o-Q growth.

EMEA comes second in terms of market share, as it accounts for 31% 2014 share. On top are the Americas with 42% share, while APAC accounts for 27%.

"We've seen the 3D printing industry go from strength to strength in 2014," the analyst says. "As we expected, the holiday season saw the most significant growth, particularly in the consumer segment, with many users buying their first 3D printer. A combination of falling prices, a wider range of technologies on offer and improved printing speeds helped fuel this demand."

Canalys records "incredibly healthy" growth in the enterprise segment, with Voxeljet marked out for "impressive" Q4 2014 results. Currently the enterprise 3D printing industry is ramping up in preparation for HP's 2016 entry in the market, while Intel emerges as a surprise major player through the supply of i7 processors for the HP Multi Jet Fusion printer and its 3D RealSense cameras in smartphones and tablets.

However, perhaps predictably, the main drivers for such 3D printer growth are low-cost models aimed squarely at the consumer and prosumer markets-- 75% of printers shipped in Q4 2014

cost $10000 or less. Such printers come from dominant players such as MakerBot and Ultimaker, as well as Chinese offerings (from vendors such as XYZPrinting) and any number of Kickstarter-funded devices.

"As the cost of entry into this market has fallen, we've also consistently seen new entrants and new technologies emerge on a regular basis," Canalys concludes. "Companies such as Voxel8 and Carbon3D have differentiated themselves with unique material printing properties, innovative technical abilities and enhanced printing speeds. These firms have ignited press interest around the world with their groundbreaking work and may soon see themselves become acquisition targets. Canalys expects 2015 to see the largest number of acquisitions in the 3D printing space so far."

Go 3D Printing Market Surpasses $3.3bn WW in 2014 (Canalys)