About Protolabs

Protolabs, a 20-year industry veteran, is the world's fastest digital manufacturing source for rapid prototyping and on-demand production. The technology-enabled company produces custom parts and assemblies in as fast as 1 day with industrial 3D printing, CNC machining, sheet metal fabrication, and injection molding processes. Its digital approach to manufacturing enables accelerated time to market, reduces development and production costs, and minimizes risk throughout the product life cycle.

Website: protolabs.com
Blog: www.protolabs.com/resources/blog
Social:

- Twitter: @Protolabs
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Fast Facts

- Founded: May 5, 1999
- Founder: Larry Lukis
- President & CEO: Vicki Holt
- Employees: More than 2400
- NYSE: PRLB
- Global revenue (2018): $445.6 million
- Unique product developers served (2018): 46,000
- Number of facilities: 12 globally, 8 in United States
    - Maple Plain, MN (HQ); Plymouth, MN; Brooklyn Park, MN; Rosemount, MN; Cary, NC; Nashua, NH (3 facilities); Telford, UK; Feldkirchen, Germany; Eschenlohe, Germany; Zama, Kanagawa, Japan
- Countries served: 60
- Manufacturing floor space: 1 million sq. ft.
- Number of machines: More than 1,000
- Number of parts manufactured per month: 3.9 million
- Industries served: medical device, automotive, lighting, aerospace, technology, consumer product, electronic, and more
- At 77,000 square feet, Protolabs' 3D printing facility in Cary, North Carolina, is one of the largest 3D printing facilities in the world

Suite of Services

3D Printing

Protolabs' 3D printing technology includes direct metal laser sintering (DMLS), stereolithography (SLA), PolyJet, Multi Jet Fusion (MJF) and selective laser sintering (SLS) processes, which offer customers precise and repeatable custom prototypes and end-use production parts. These processes create high-quality parts with strength and durability. Industrial 3D printing is best suited for functional prototypes, complex designs, and end-use applications.

CNC Machining
Protolabs uses computer numerically controlled (CNC) milling and turning technologies to machine functional prototypes and end-use parts. CNC machining is well-suited for prototyping, form and fit testing, jigs and fixtures and functional components for end-use applications.

Injection Molding
Protolabs' injection molding product line uses proprietary 3D CAD-to-CNC machining technology for the automated design and manufacture of molds, which are then used to produce custom plastic and liquid silicone rubber injection-molded parts and over-molded and insert-molded injection-molded parts. Injection molding works best for functional prototyping, on-demand production, bridge tooling and pilot runs. The affordable aluminum molds and quick turnaround times help reduce design risk and limit overall production costs for product developers and engineers.

Sheet Metal Fabrication
Protolabs uses laser cutting and forming processes to produce quick-turn sheet metal prototypes and production parts. The rapid prototype sheet metal process is most often used when form, fit and function are all a priority. Customers can choose from common sheet metal materials and take advantage of finishing options like hardware insertion, component assembly, powder coating, and plating.

History and Path to Success

Protolabs was founded in 1999 by Larry Lukis, a successful entrepreneur and self-described computer geek who wanted to radically reduce the time it took to get injection molded plastic parts. His solution was to automate the traditional manufacturing process by developing complex software that communicated with a network of mills and presses. As a result, plastic and metal parts could be produced in a fraction of the time it had ever taken before, making Protolabs a digital manufacturing pioneer.

Over the next decade, Protolabs continued to expand its injection molding envelope, introduced quick-turn CNC machining, and opened facilities in Europe and Japan. In 2014, the company introduced its industrial 3D printing service to allow product developers, designers, and engineers an easier path to move from early prototyping to low-volume production. In 2017, the company acquired Rapid Manufacturing to further expand its machining capabilities and introduced sheet metal fabrication into its suite of services.

At the heart of the company's manufacturing speed is its proprietary software, web-based quoting system, and automated processes. It all starts with a customer uploading a 3D CAD model online and receiving an interactive quote within hours. Each quote contains design feedback and real-time pricing—so customers can adjust material, lead times, quantities, and more and instantly see the impact on pricing. Once an order is placed, digital manufacturing instructions are sent to the factory floor for production.

Today, Protolabs is a leading source of custom prototypes and on-demand production parts due to the company's commitment to manufacturing speed and quality. Protolabs' services and processes are continually expanding in order to meet the ever-changing needs of product developers and engineers around the world.