

RAPID PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2002

Introduction

The Rapid Product Development Association of South Africa (RAPDASA) was formally founded at the First Annual General Meeting of the Association on 8 November 2000, held in the CSIR Conference Centre in Pretoria. During the past two years the association has grown steadily, both regarding its national and international recognition through active participation by its members, and the scope of its activities. It can be confirmed that RAPDASA is increasingly being accepted as mouthpiece of the product development community in South Africa. It is therefore a pleasure to report on the activities of the past year.

Management Committee

The Management Committee elected by the Second Annual General Meeting was constituted as follows:

Chairperson:	Dr Willie du Preez
Vice Chairperson:	Dr Deon de Beer
Secretary:	Ms Debbie Leeson
Treasurer:	Mr Hellmut Bowles
Members:	Prof Dimitri Dimitrov
	Dr Johan Fourie
	Mr Bob Bond
	Mr Nasir Hassan
	Mr Thomas Abraham

Management Committee meetings were held on 14 November 2001, 31 May 2002, 23 July 2002 and 15 August 2002. A number of ad hoc informal one-on-one meetings of committee members also occurred during the course of the year to handle RAPDASA issues.

Progress with Projects

The Management Committee was involved in executing the following projects as specialist focus areas of RAPDASA:

- Rapid Prototyping – promotion of the optimal utilisation and coordination of existing RP facilities in South Africa.

It was decided that a handbook highlighting or showing the facilities available in SA should be developed, firstly in electronic format. This will be done by expanding the existing information on the product development portal, www.productdevelopment.co.za and thereafter packaging it in various formats, depending on the need.

- Education – supporting the establishment of relevant training syllabi in Design and Product Development at educational institutions.

Deon de Beer and Willie du Preez presented papers at the Design Education Forum of South Africa DEFSA 2002 Conference from 22 to 24 September 2002. Neels Babst, Petunia Maswanganye and Willie du Preez are actively involved in a project to introduce Computer-Aided Design (CAD) in secondary schools across South Africa. The project is

a partnership between AIDC (Pty) Ltd, TriCAD (Pty) Ltd and the NPDC and has been endorsed by the Minister of Education, Prof Kader Asmal.

- Workshop Funding for Students – to enable more students to attend the workshops presented by RAPDASA. No success has been achieved to date.
- Student Design Fund – provision of funding to enhance the use of RP in design education.

It was established that this should be sourced through regular funding of projects with student involvement, such as NRF and THRIP funding.

- Tooling Design and Toolmaking

Four RAPDASA members, i.e. Nawaz Mahomed, Bob Bond, Dimitri Dimitrov and Willie du Preez, serve as members of the Stakeholders Forum of the South African Tooling Industry Support Initiative (SATISI). This is a national initiative to improve the global competitiveness of the local tooling industry, led by the National Product Development Centre (NPDC) and supported by the Automotive Industry Development Centre (AIDC).

Advanced Manufacturing and Logistics Technology Strategy

A number of RAPDASA members participated in the development of an Advanced Product Technologies strategy as part of the process to develop an Advanced Manufacturing and Logistics Technology Strategy for South Africa under the auspices of the National Advisory Council on innovation (NACI).

Composites Africa 2002

RAPDASA was represented through an exhibition stand at the international composites conference, Composites Africa 2002, held in Caesars Gauteng on 12 August 2002. A paper describing the services of RAPDASA and its members was presented at this conference by Willie du Preez and RAPDASA folders and brochures were distributed on the stand.

Website

A website for RAPDASA has been established at the web address <http://www.rapdasa.org.za> This site will have to be further populated and RAPDASA members are invited to make contributions.

GARPA

Deon de Beer continued to act as RAPDASA representative in the Global Alliance of Rapid Prototyping Associations (GARPA), to which RAPDASA is affiliated. Dimitri Dimitrov represented RAPDASA at the GARPA Summit in Beijing, China, on 18 August 2002.

Third Annual Conference

Dr Deon de Beer and his colleagues of the Centre for Rapid Prototyping and Manufacturing and the Science Park at the Technikon Free State organised the Third Annual Conference of RAPDASA, which took place in Bloemfontein on 6 and 7 November 2002. Led by Deon de Beer, the Organising Committee, supported by a very competent Conference Secretariat, consisting of Elma Viljoen, Jenny van Rensburg and Rhona Saayman, have succeeded in drawing to the conference keynote addresses by Terry Wohlers and Prof Walter Eversheim,

as well as 23 other papers, of which 4 were by international presenters. Representatives of four countries came to South Africa to attend the third RAPDASA conference, despite unfavourable international economic circumstances. A special word of appreciation is expressed to our international keynote speakers, Terry Wohlers and Prof Walter Eversheim, who contributed significantly to the standard of the RAPDASA Conference 2002 through their high quality presentations.

The conference was preceded by a workshop on *Rapid Product Development & Prototyping – Including a special overview on Rapid Tooling by Industry Consultant Terry Wohlers* presented by the team of the Centre for Rapid Prototyping and Manufacturing and by Terry Wohlers.

Logo and Brochure

The Management Committee completed a process that was started in 2001 to find a suitable logo for RAPDASA and to generate a RAPDASA folder and brochures. Through the leadership of Dimitri Dimitrov, a logo and brochure were designed by a graphic designer of Cape Town, while the production of the brochures was sponsored by Sasol Polymers. The logo has been extensively used on all RAPDASA documentation since, including the production of a banner displaying the logo, by students of the Technikon Free State. The brochures were made available to all participants at the RAPDASA Conference 2002.

Finances

RAPDASA has maintained a healthy financial status throughout its second year and I want to express my appreciation to our Treasurer, Hellmut Bowles, for his work in this regard.

Sponsorship

On behalf of all our members, I acknowledge with sincere appreciation the financial support that we have received from our sponsors for 2002, i.e. Technikon Free State Science Park, SASOL Polymers, the National Research Foundation, the Tshumisano Technology Station for Metals Value Adding and Product Development, Centre for Rapid Prototyping and Manufacture, Technimark, FABCO, SANLAM, Nu Era Tool & Die and EDM Shop. Your support has enabled us to proceed with the pioneering work of our association in contributing to the improved global competitiveness of the South African manufacturing industry.

Conclusion

It has indeed been a privilege to lead RAPDASA in the second year of its existence and to experience the support of our members, stakeholders in industry and other collaborators. A special word of thanks goes to my very competent and committed colleagues on the Management Committee for their support and enthusiastic collaboration throughout the year. With sustained commitment such as this an exciting and very awarding future of contributing to the growth of South Africa awaits us all!

Willie du Preez

Bloemfontein
6 November 2002