

To all members

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Review of a visit to the 10th International Games and Toy Fair, St. Gallen, Switzerland, September 6 – 10, 2000

The Press called it the biggest playground in Switzerland – 45.000 visitors from at home and abroad, more than 220 exhibitors on about 23.000 sqm. But what is behind these figures? Not only an extremely colourful product show but also a programme which covers all requirements of children and young people. While, at other fairs, ordering and prices have priority, lectures deal with toy safety and standards conformity, here commerce and the pleasure of playing are harmoniously connected. For children and young people, the world presents itself in pictures which are animated by fun and the joy of life.

It was interesting to hear which basic requirements have to be observed to generate those feelings, so that the toys and games are accepted.

The opening speech by Mr. Christoph Blum, managing director of Eye Research (children, leisure and games in the light of new research) on the subject of „Spielend in die Zukunft“ (Playing for the future) shows the importance of the central target group, which has to be won over. Besides psychological and development related factors, Mr. Blum presented some basic facts of this target group:

- Its limited size
- The enormous financial means available to children today
- Children's big influence on their parents' spending habits
- How children spend their leisure time.

Finally, the lecturer drew up the following five theses with regard to the future of toys:

1. Only those who make this target group the centre of their efforts will survive.
2. The mixing of media and the toy world is both a threat and a chance.
3. Classic toys and electronic games complement each other perfectly.
4. Children are extremely demanding, so quality products are essential.
5. The separating lines in the toy field should disappear.

For children, the quality and class of the products are of the utmost importance.

The outstanding quality of the St. Gallen fair was reflected by the offer of products and events: Besides the product display, tournaments, champion-ships and other competitions, prizes for the public, workshops, etc., had been organized.

The „Jugend Elektronikzentrum St. Gallen (JEZ)“, impressed especially young people by the way it encourages to play with electronics.

Boys and girls of 14 years and older learn in courses how to work with electronics. The feeling of being successful, the fun of working with electrical machinery and electronics as a hobby can lead to a job. „Playing for the future“ means, that it is shown in practice what Mr. Blum was referring to in the opening speech.

Electronics and traditional toys do not exclude each other. All products, from the PC to wooden cubs, were offered for playing with at the Fair.



To make it quite clear: The chip and classical toys will complement each other more and more.

For the first time, a Fair area exclusively reserved for trade buyers, was available. Seminars, joint advertising activities of trade associations, Fair organizers and exhibitors want to attract the attention of these buyers.

The new Fair Hall made it possible to introduce organizational improvements. With this highlight we would like to emphasise the successful, comprehensive presentation of a commercial sector of the Fair.

One leaves this beautiful playground with the hope that all these initiatives will be put into practice.

The next Fair will take place from September 5 to 9, 2001.