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## Investigation of the Exhibition "Im Takt der Maschine" (In Time with the Machine)

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This is a report on work in progress. Our investigation started in Spring 1995 at Exhibition Unit 3, "Im Takt der Maschine," of the Deutsche Arbeitsschutzausstellung (German Exhibition for Safety on the Job, abbr. DASA) run by the Bundesanstalt für Arbeitsschutz und Unfallforschung (Federal Institution for Worker Safety and Accident Research, BAU) in Dortmund. The exhibit under study is divided into eight rooms or zones, each with its own theme, which together form a textile factory from the early twentieth century.

The primary purpose of this exhibition unit is to graphically familiarize visitors with important problems of worker safety in industrial production. The visitors should be able to gain a concrete understanding of work conditions by viewing demonstrations of the machines.

An important question under investigation was to determine whether the visitors would recognize the safety problems or whether the historical and nostalgic aspects of the unit would overshadow them.

The second focus of the investigation concerned the use of media. For visitors not taking part in guided tours, DASA makes available a headphone tour. The principal question here was to what extent the headphones would harmonize with the other media employed, such as videos, touch screens, texts, and the machine demonstrations, or would compete with them.

A third area had to do with a basic aspect of the presentation, which included not only original and reproduced objects, but artistic objects as well. It was our goal to discover how the visitors received and dealt with these artistic objects.

The investigation was based upon guided group discussions following a 40-60 minute viewing of the exhibit. The groups consisted of 6-14 participants. Altogether 60 people took part in the discussions. Group members were selected either for anticipated prior knowledge in the area of worker safety or for belonging to visitor groups described by DASA as "typical" for its clientele.

The design of the study was conceived on a quasi-experimental basis, while the qualitative methods used left rather uncontrolled cognitive, emotional, and behavioral reactions and judgments on the part of the visitors. This

somewhat odd design was developed as a consequence of general problems in evaluation of museum exhibitions, namely, the lack of precise, finite, and unchanging goals of curators, and the researchers' need to include "unexpected" effects of a visit in their model.

As a result of the preliminary analysis we may note that the visitors fell into two rough groups, yet this did not correspond to their prior knowledge of worker safety but to their relationship to the contents. The crucial factor for understanding the exhibit was not prior theoretical knowledge but concrete practical experience working in industry.

Critical or disapproving remarks regarding the display of original machines were made both by laypersons in the area of worker safety and by experts who themselves had no experience with industrial work. In contrast, the impression of realism, comprehensibility, and comparability predominated among persons working in industry, whether they were apprentices or worker safety commissioners.

The visitors' perception of the artistic objects corresponded perfectly with the intentions of DASA in putting them on display.

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## A Comparative Study of European Health Promotion Exhibitions

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Planning and implementing a health promotion exhibit which effectively provides information on a specific topic that challenges public attitudes and achieves understanding is a formidable endeavor. We have planned a study to continue the momentum of the seminar "Traveling Exhibitions and Health Promotion" and build upon the issues raised by its participants. Capitalizing on the experience of several European countries gained on a national level, this European Commission sponsored project proposes to carry out a comparative study of four health exhibitions and assess their effectiveness as a method of health promotion.

The study will take the form of a summative evaluation. This kind of evaluation will be able to provide information about how the four exhibitions are working overall, how people use them, what they learn, and/or possibly how they are changed by them. The emphasis of the study will be on exploring the interplay of learning about health and the