

ITRA NEWSLETTER

International Toy Research Association

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<http://www.toyresearch.org>



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PROLOGUE

The International Toy Research Association Newsletter is designed to keep members up to date with research in the fields of toys and play. In this issue, readers will find the Members' Forum, information on various publications, conference previews and reviews. The Newsletter has been formatted to allow the document to be read in either printed form or as a soft copy, which can be found on the ITRA website: www.toyresearch.org.

Please make special note of the forthcoming **6th World Congress of the International Toy Researchers Association**, to be held 27th - 30th July 2011, in Bursa, Turkey.

Those of you who promised material that never arrived... send it again. For those who made contributions, without which there would be many more blank spaces, a massive thank you.

Enjoy the Newsletter.

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Greetings from the President of ITRA

Dear ITRA friends and colleagues,



I wish to thank our fabulous editorial team - Mark Allen, Helena Kling and Suzy Seriff - both for putting together this issue and for keeping their promise of launching two issues of the ITRA Newsletter per year. It is important to keep the biannual character of the Newsletter, as the interest of new and old members in news on toy research is growing especially in light of ITRA's upcoming 6th World Conference.

The conference preparation process is progressing well. Our conference hosts at the University of Uludag and their collaborators at Burkon Travel and Tourism have set up a functional and aesthetically pleasing website which contains all necessary information for the conference, including how to get to Bursa from all parts of the world. On behalf of ITRA I would like to thank Handan Asûde Basal, the organizing committee and the University of Uludag for their generosity in offering free transport to conference participants from the two Istanbul international airports to the conference venue, the Kervansaray Thermal Hotel in Bursa, and back.

Make sure you register early and bear in mind the important deadlines for the submission of abstracts and entries for the ITRA_BTHA prize. Do visit the conference site www.toyscongress2011.org and the ITRA website www.toyresearch.org regularly to keep in touch with updates, especially regarding deadline extensions. Please note that the deadline for submitting a proposal for this year's conference has been extended to 15th January 2011. You may download the call for papers from both aforementioned sites.

I am happy to announce that the ITRA website has been rejuvenated thanks to the generosity of Iman Moradi and his team at the design company *Running in the Halls* who have undertaken the task of managing www.toyresearch.org free of charge. The ITRA Board reached an agreement with *Running in the Halls* last September and our site is up-to-date and ready for the Bursa conference. Mark Allen, Helena Kling and Suzy Seriff agreed to undertake the task of editing the website in addition to the Newsletter.

I hope to see you in Bursa. Until then, stay playful and enjoy the holiday season!

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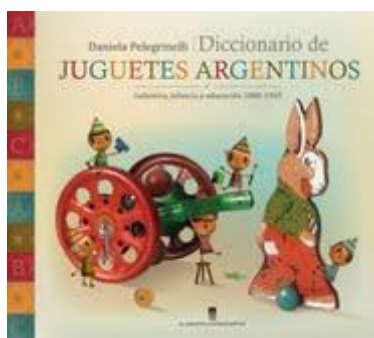
MEMBERS' FORUM

Please remember when you do send items for inclusion in the Newsletter to send them in a downloadable form.

ARGENTINA

Daniela Pelegrinelli wrote:

First, I would like to announce the occasion, in October 2010, of the First International Seminar on Childhood, Play and Toys, organized by FLACSO ARGENTINA. Gilles Brougere, Sudarshan Khanna and Jean-Pierre Rossie were our honoured guests. It was a very important event in Argentina because play, games and toys are topics in which educators and childhood specialists are beginning to be very interested and to which they have begun to devote scholarly attention. For more information, please visit <http://www.semjuegosyjuguetes.com.ar>



Second, I am happy to announce the November release of a new publication on childhood and the toy industry. This publication is the result of ten years of research on the Argentinean toy industry. It is a Dictionary (entitled, "*Dictionary of Argentinean Toys: Industry, Childhood and Education. 1880-1965*") in which all brands and trades established before 1965 are listed, and contextualized through scholarly references to the social, educational, cultural and daily life of the Argentinean child.

BELGIUM

Jean-Pierre Rossie is happy to announce the web-based publication of his latest work, entitled, "*Saharan and North African Toy and Play Cultures.*"

To facilitate a large distribution of the information on Saharan and North African games and toys the volumes of the collection, "*Saharan and North African Toy and Play Cultures*" (published in both English and French, under the title, "*Culture Ludiques Sahariennes et Nord-Africaines*") are freely available on the website:

www.sanatoyplay.org (see Publications). The volumes of the collection include:

- Children's dolls and doll play, 2005, 328 p., 163 ill.
- The animal world in play, games and toys, 2005, 219 p., 107 ill.
- Domestic life in play, games and toys, 2008, 438 p., 410 ill.
- Commented bibliography on play, games and toys, 2009, 70 p.
- Technical activities in play, games and toys, in progress.

GREECE

Michalis Meimaris and **Dimitris Gouscos** are pleased to report on a workshop, this past summer, on “Games, Storytelling and Technology” at the University of Athens, Athens, Greece. The University Research Institute of Applied Communication (URIAC) and the Laboratory of New Technologies in Communication, Education and the Mass Media (NTLab) of the University of Athens organised a Workshop on “Games, Storytelling, and Technology – In Quest of the Digital Counterpart of Human Solace” that took place on Thursday, 17 June 2010 in Athens, Greece.

The aim of this workshop was to bring forward a broad and interdisciplinary agenda of issues such as

- the ways in which various forms of storytelling processes, in a broad sense, cross-cut and interact with the realm of play;
- the exploration of the scope of social play and its role in the embedding of players into the mosaic of a collective memory and conscience;
- the trajectories of the ludic, from forms of everyday entertainment to inner needs such as the solace of human existence;
- and the ways in which the above issues are reflected in what is nowadays called digital storytelling and digital games.



The above topics were discussed by more than 20 invited academics and experts in storytelling, art, toys, games and digital media, while the all-day event was attended by more than 160 participants.

The workshop and initiatives of URIAC and NTLab were addressed, among others, by Professor Ioannis Karakostas, Vice-Rector of Student Care, Culture and International Relations of the University of Athens, Associate Professor George Pleios, Deputy Chairman of the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies of the University of Athens, Mr. Dinos Giotis, President of the Greek Scriptwriters Guild, and Professor Michalis Meimaris, Director of URIAC and NTLab.

At the workshop opening, Mr. Michalis Meraklis, Professor Emeritus of Folkloristics at the University of Athens, delivered a plenary speech entitled, “The Difficult Agon of a Co- existence.” In his speech, Prof. Meraklis made reference to the antinomies characterizing the encounter of different generations with the intensity of current technological advancements. He further emphasized the fundamentally analogue and playful character of human action, which cannot be ignored by any technological application.

The opening speech of the workshop was followed by four thematic sessions. The first session, “Play, Toys, and Toying: Playing with Anything, Playing with Everything,” hosted presentations by Cleo Gougoulis, Marianna Vildiridi, Alexandros Psychoulis and Giorgos Papaconstantinou. The speakers approached subjects such as the parody and reversal of the world of adults in children’s play, the transformations of ludic forms and rules, from traditional handmade toys to modern digital games, the potential of contemporary digital games viz-a-viz the creation of an environment where the limits of technology and imagination are constantly tested, and the spatial properties of narration, in board and digital games.

In the second session, under the heading of “Playing at Roles, Playing with Roles: Play, Storytelling and Performance,” Anta Katsiki-Givalou, Vangelis Eliopoulos, Vicky Theodoropoulou and Giorgos Evgenikos discussed the ways in which the production and reception of narratives relates to play processes and technological implementations, the contribution of new technologies to creative approaches to children’s literature, and the adventurous relationship between printed and digital editions of children’s books. The speakers further presented some playful and experimental approaches to writing, and also addressed some unresolved issues concerning the possibilities of reconciling oral popular tradition with technology.

The third session of the workshop, entitled “Play, Learning and Reflection – To be Continued (also) On Screen,” was devoted to the potential for learning through digital games and digital storytelling. Presentations by Ioanna Christou, Maria Saridaki and Constantinos Mourlas, Patricia Gerakopoulou and Nicholas Christakis, Haris

Rizopoulos, Katerina Diamantaki and Dimitris Charitos, Symeon Retalis, Petros Georgiakakis et al., and Dimitris Charalambis covered issues such as storytelling techniques in different digital games genres, the use of digital games as a means for the diffusion of ideas and attitudes, the use of role-playing games on Facebook with respect to the consumption and simulation of psycho-social reality, interactive digital comics and their applications in learning, design of multi-user playful activities in hybrid urban environments, as well as the Comenius Edumedia Awards, with particular reference to the Comenius Edumedia Medal distinction awarded to “The Magic Potion” digital adventure tale for learning which has been created by UoA NTLab.

The last session of the event, under the heading “Art and Technology, Play and Storytelling: Mediations and Transmedialities,” focused on the possibilities and challenges created by the new digital mediations of the – transmedial, by definition - concepts of gameplay and storytelling. Dimitris Gouscos, Manthos Santorineos and Yannis Maroudas explored the potential of digital games-based learning platforms in terms of enhancing cultural repositories and registering cultural memory, the challenge of using an “applied ontology” approach in digital art education, and the relationship between the drama writer and the so-called digital challenge. The session concluded with two presentations by Prof. Michalis Meimaris on new UoA NTLab activities on intergenerational learning and digital storytelling, and Alexandros Douros, Electra Galani, Nicholas Perdikaris and Dimitris Gouscos on the “Apple Tree,” an open digital platform used to deposit, present and collectively create narratives of any kind.

The workshop ended with an open discussion on “The Quest for More Analogue Digital Game play,” facilitated by Prof. Michalis Meimaris. A number of issues were raised with respect to recent developments in games, storytelling and technology, emphasising the need to bridge the digital implementations of these notions with their analogue origins. An important conclusion, shared by all participants, was the fundamental importance of events like this workshop, and the ever-growing need for developing an interdisciplinary dialogue and setting up collaborative communities.

The detailed workshop programme, presentation summaries and CV notes of the speakers (in Greek) can be found on the EPINOISI project site see: <http://www.media.uoa.gr/epinoisi>.

The authors would like to acknowledge the contribution of Mrs. Persa Iakovidou, URIAC, and Dr. Cleo Gougoulis, Peloponnesian Folklore Foundation, in translating and editing this text in English.

INDIA

In an article in the Wall Street Journal, entitled, “*Toying with Ideas*,” **Sudarshan Khanna** is said to be a Professor-turned-entrepreneur.” You can read the article at www.livemint.com/gogostop.htm. The original article was published in the Hindustan Times, under the headline, “Toying with an Idea.” Here is an extract from that article:

For many years now, Khanna has been one of India’s most thoughtful, innovative toy designers, obsessed with discovering what appeals to children and why. He has pursued this interest through his years on the faculty of the National Institute of Design (NID), Ahmedabad, through three books and multiple television programs, through his establishment of a toy design course and a Toy Innovation Centre at NID in the early 2000s, and through his workshops across the world.



His toys, syntheses of traditional Indian designs and his own emphasis on learning, are not innovative in the sense of being cutting-edge. Rather, Khanna sees himself as part of an effort to prepare the soil for toy design in India, from which a really landscape-changing toy — like Lego, say — can emerge. “People think innovation is only about technology,” he says. “It’s not. It’s just about doing something better than it has been done before, and doing something that is socially relevant.”

USA

Dr. Suzanne Seriff, folklorist and museum curator, is currently working on an exhibition for the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico, on the ways in which folk artists respond to natural disaster in their midst. She is focusing on looking at traditional artists—and toymakers!—who have survived the earthquake in Haiti, the floods of Pakistan, the hurricanes on the US gulf coast, and the brush fires of Australia. If you know of any toymakers who have been affected by such natural disaster in their midst, or have depicted such disaster in their work, please contact Suzy at seriff@aol.com.

Dr. Toy, a.k.a. **Stevanne Auerbuch**, has sent us her list for 2010 of the toys she considers the best. <http://drtoy.com/documents/Dr-Toy-Press-Release-Best-100-2010.doc> . Many readers may remember the keynote speech she gave at our Congress in Alicante.

CONFERENCES & EXHIBITIONS

This section has been spilt into two sections covering both up-coming and past conferences and exhibitions. Hopefully mentioning past events will not induce depression as to what you may have missed, while we trust previews of future events will whet your appetite to attend. Previews and reviews of conferences are sought for the next edition of the ITRA Newsletter.

ANNOUNCEMENT of 6th ITRA CONFERENCE

6th World Congress of the International Toy Researchers Association will be held 27th - 30th July 2011. Information on the conference hosts (Faculty of Education, University of Uludag) can be found at <http://www.uludag.edu.tr/uludagunien.php?kat=1177>
You may also wish to visit the conference venue site at <http://www.kervansarayhotels.com/eng/termal/index.html>

WELCOME MESSAGE from Prof. Dr. Handan Asûde Başal, Chair of the 6th ITRA World Congress Organizing Committee

Bursa, Turkey welcomes toy enthusiasts from around the world to *The 6th World Congress of the International Toy Research Association* from 27th - 30th July 2011. The theme of the conference is "Toys and Learning in Different Cultures." The conference will be hosted by Uludag University in downtown Bursa, one of the largest and most historical cities in Turkey. We are looking forward to meeting educators, researchers, toy designers and manufacturers, students, and other participants interested in toys as a means for learning. We are excited to host the conference which is a great opportunity to learn and share experiences with one another. The three day event offers lectures, poster presentations, cultural visits to downtown and the surrounding area, and other social events. A visit to the Toy Museum in Istanbul is planned for 30th July 2011.

FUTURE CONFERENCES

February 2011

The Value of Play, US Coalition for Play, will be held at Clemson University, USA, 6th - 9th February 2011.

For further information see their website: <http://usplaycoalition.clemson.edu/index.php>

March 2011

Sticks and Boxes have been elevated to the Toy Hall of Fame. **Now Rain** is on their heels making its bid for recognition in, of all places, Toffee Park. To find out about **Playing with the Rain** in Toffee Park, 3rd March 2011, please email Alan Sutton, London Play: alan@londonplay.org.uk

April 2011

Play and Health: 37th TASP Annual International Conference 27th - 30th April 2011, Rochester, NY.

For more information, please see: <http://tasplay.org/conference.html>

May 2011

Board Game Studies XIVth Colloquium, will be held at KHBO-Spellenarchief, Campus KHBO, 4th - 7th May 2011.

The International Society for Board Game Studies holds yearly colloquia in which scholars, university professors, museum curators, historians, archaeologists, psychologists, mathematicians, game inventors, collectors and others share their research results on board games.

Contact Piet Notebaert.

brugge2011@khbo.be

www.khbo.be/BoardGameStudies



July 2011

Playing into the Future – Surviving and Thriving: The 50th Anniversary World Conference of the International Play Association (IPA), will be held in Cardiff, Wales, 4th - 7th July 2011.

For further information see their websites:

<http://www.ipaworld.org>

<http://www.playwales.org.uk>

PAST CONFERENCES

June 2010

Frode Svane organised two more of his popular study trips in 2010:

June 17 -19, Nordic Study trip - København/Malmö/Lund

June 23 - 26, Berlin Study trip

For further information, visit the website:

<http://www.barnaslandskap.blogspot.com/>

25th International Conference of ICCP (International Council of Children's Play) – “Children's Play: New Goals for the Future,” was held in Lisbon, Portugal, 17th - 19th June 2010.

For further information see their website: <http://www.iccp-play.org/>

July 2010

6th Global Conference - “Creative Engagements - Thinking with Children,” was held at the Mansfield College, Oxford, UK, 3rd - 5th July 2010.

The conference was part of the 'At the Interface' series of research projects run by ID.Net. It aimed to bring together people from different areas and interests to share ideas and explore various discussions which are innovative and challenging.

Web: <http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/at-the-interface/education/creative-engagements-thinking-with-children/>

August 2010

The theme of Great Britain's **Playday 2010** was “**Our Place**,” 4th August 2010.

“Our Place” puts children at the heart of our communities, and asks everyone, young and old, to help create better places for all of us to live and play.

Web: <http://www.playday.org.uk>

September 2010

IPA Sweden and IPA World Conference, “Create Inspiring Playgrounds:,” was held in Karlstad, Sweden, 29th September - 1st October 2010.

For further information see their website: <http://www.ipakarlstad.se>

Play Scotland Annual Conference, was held in Edinburgh, Scotland, 30th September 2010

For further information see their website: <http://www.playscotland.org>

December 2010

“Childhood and Cultures: Social and Human Sciences Perspectives,” was held in Paris, 15th - 17th December 2010.

The Research Committee, Sociologie de l'enfance of the International Association of French-speaking sociologists in partnership with The Department for Research, Foresight and Statistics (French Ministry of Culture and Communication) organized a joint international colloquium, on the occasion of the annual meeting of sociology of childhood organised by the AISLF. The conference lasted for 3 days (one day of plenary sessions, 2 days of working groups).



ITRA-BTHA PRIZES

The 2011 ITRA-BTHA Prize

The ITRA-BTHA Prize was established with generous support from the British Toy and Hobby Association www.btha.co.uk. ITRA expects to give two awards at each ITRA World Congress, the next one in Bursa, Turkey, July 2011. One award of £500 will be given for the best student research on toys and one award of £1,000 to a senior scholar or practitioner on the uses, design and effects of toys. Recipients also receive a travel stipend of £500 toward the ITRA Congress to present their research.

Purpose

The purpose of the ITRA – BTHA Prize is to recognise outstanding research in the field of toy research. To qualify for the prize, the work must have been conducted or published since the previous ITRA World Congress (July 2008) and be submitted by the researcher or nominated by a member of ITRA.

Eligibility

Papers, either published or unpublished, in any area of toy research, are eligible. Research on the uses, design, and effects of toys in child development, education, science, and medicine will be considered for the awards. Theoretical and historical papers will also be considered so long as these are linked to potential research.

Submissions to: cleogougoulis@yahoo.gr. The Awards Committee consists of Gilles Brougere (France), Jeffrey Goldstein (Netherlands), Cleo Gougoulis (Greece), Sudarshan Khanna (India), and Stephen Kline (Canada).

The deadline for submission is 15th January 2011.

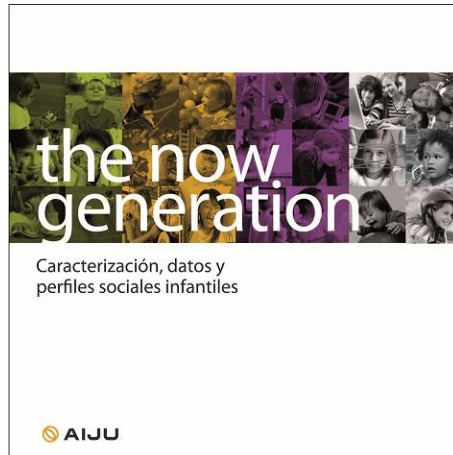
Evaluation

The Awards Committee of ITRA will evaluate applications on the basis of originality, the significance of the work, creativity, methodology, clarity of presentation, and importance.

The 2011 prizes will be awarded during the 2011 ITRA meeting, in Bursa Turkey, 27th - 30th July 2011.

PUBLICATIONS & BOOKS

Morante, Miriam. The Toy Research Institute (AIJU) has published '*The Now Generation*,' an investigation in which experts from Europe and the USA have contributed, to define the characteristics and social profiles of today's children. The publication does not only address the nature of childhood in today's world, but also provides a practical guide to developing products and strategies that are more appropriate to, and less harmful to, today's youth .



The research was conducted over a period of two years and shows how today's kids are very different from other times, especially in 3 aspects: consumption, technology and health. The age range corresponds to children aged 4 to 12 years.

Specifically in Spain, AIJU defined the Spanish children's profiles based on an investigation with more than 1,500 families. The different profiles that are described in the publication are: "techies", princesses, feminine types, sports, naturals, TV, adventurers and tots.

The publication is called "The Now Generation," due to different general and common characteristics observed in the current generation of children. With the rapid growth of social trends surrounding them, and the immediacy that technology offers (for example the Messenger), today's children have been characterized by researchers as young folks with little patience. Things happen instantly, they expect quick answers, instant gratification. They want to have the things they want in the same instant as they feel that they want them (they want their problems to be solved now, to win games now, to buy now etc.). They need it now.

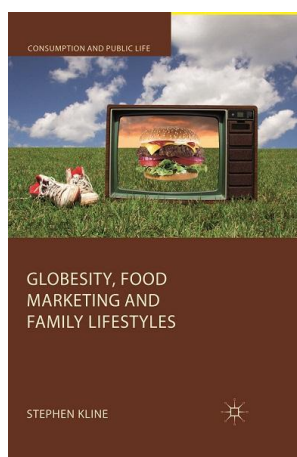
For further information please contact Miriam Morante:
mmorante@aiju.info
www.sicaiju.com

Stevanne Auerbach (a.k.a. Dr.Toy) recommends this article:

http://www.cleveland.com/living/index.ssf/2010/02/trendy_toys_come_and_go_but_cl.html

Stevanne is a member of the Advisory Committee (experts interested in making "greener" toys available for children) for the EcoLogo Toy Standard. The first draft of this standard will be released in March 2010 for public comment. A comment report has been compiled from the discussion document and is now available on the EcoLogo website: www.ecologo.org, under Standards in Development or Review.

Stephen Kline has published a new book (2010) with Palgrave MacMillan entitled “*Globesity Food Marketing and Family Life Styles*” which has a section on toys and play in the context of “the development of sedentary vs. active lifestyles in children and teens.”



Stephen Kline has also written a chapter in the book “*Understanding Children as Consumers.*”, edited by David Marshall and published by Sage Publications in April 2010. Ines De LaVille and Gary Cross are contributors to this volume as well. The chapters written by Steve, Ines and Gary respectively are entitled: “Children as ‘Competent’ Consumers” (Stephen Kline), “Developing as Consumers” (Inès de La Ville and Valérie Tartas), and “Children and the Market: An American Historical Perspective” (Gary Cross).

ITRA 2010 Fees Notice

Please note that according to the ITRA Board's decision in Alicante, August 8, 2005, conference fees cover ITRA membership fees for three years. This means that conference participants who paid full registration fees for the 5th ITRA conference in Nafplion Greece 2008 have been exempted from paying ITRA dues for the years 2008, 2009 and 2010.

Annual membership: 50 EUROS/ US Dollars
Retiree// Student membership: 25 EUROS/ US Dollars

Payments may be made in either of the following two forms:

a) through bank transfer to the following account number:

International Toy Research Association,
National Bank of Greece, Pal. Phaliro branch 175
Account number: 175/480074.53
IBAN Number: GR16 0110 1750 0000 1754 8007 453
SWIFT: ETHNGRAA

b) by sending an International Money Order, payable to ITRA, to the treasurer at the following address:

Cleo Gougoulis
54 Ag. Alexandrou St.
P. Phaleron, 175 61
Athens
Greece

Please notify me by sending an e-mail to: cleogou@yahoo.gr, when you send your fees to the bank. It is important to mention what amount and in which currency you paid.

Regards from,
Cleo Gougoulis
ITRA president and treasurer
cleogougoulis@yahoo.gr

EPILOGUE

The editors of the newsletter would like to thank everyone who contributed, and especially all those who will be contributing in the future. As editors we are the eternal optimists. We are planning to release another Newsletter shortly before the **6th World Congress of the International Toy Researchers Association**, so if you have attended any conferences, read a book - toy related preferably - have anything to say, whether about yourself, publications, events, research or to initiate debate, do not hesitate to contact either Helena, Suzy or Mark, via itrnewsletter@gmail.com.

Hopefully the arrival of another ITRA newsletter will continue to inspire members to share articles with the rest of the International Toy Research Association community.

The editorial team would like to wish all ITRA members a restful festive period and peaceful New Year.

Regards
Helena, Suzy & Mark

We do not stop playing because we grow old, we grow old because we stop playing.

Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790)