

EMINENT & ENIGMATIC. 10 aspects of Alan Turing
Exhibition at the Heinz Nixdorf MuseumsForum from January to December 2012

The international scientific focus in 2012 will be firmly on Alan Turing. This legendary British mathematician and computer pioneer was born in London on 23 June 1912. His 100th birthday will be marked by numerous events, primarily in his native country, but also in the USA, Brazil, China and elsewhere.

Germany's Heinz Nixdorf MuseumsForum in Paderborn is to pay tribute to the achievements of this equally academic and awkward scientist with an ambitious exhibition entitled "EMINENT & ENIGMATIC. 10 aspects of Alan Turing". Its aim is to present Alan Turing's outstanding achievements to visitors in the form of original exhibits and innovative and artistic installations alike.

Turing's research made a huge contribution towards deciphering German radio messages encrypted using the Enigma machine during Word War II. Thus he played a vital role in the Battle of the Atlantic, as well as in other major theatres of war. His theoretical work, which still forms the basis of information technology to this day, is equally significant. While his contemporaries could not see beyond the pure calculating capabilities of the computer, Turing designed the model of a universal machine capable of solving every algorithmic problem.

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Turing, who died on 7 June 1954 under mysterious circumstances, has only been properly appreciated by the public at large during recent years, although experts have sung his praises for decades.

The exhibition at the Heinz Nixdorf MuseumsForum will focus on Turing's achievements in breaking the Enigma code and his basic work as a computer and computer science pioneer, while

also shedding light on his views on the subjects of artificial intelligence and spacial pattern formation, as well as on the tragedy of his untimely death and his legacy.

This marks the first time that an exhibition will be shown in stages, with the ten exhibition topics portrayed in successive monthly presentations. The exhibition will open on 10 January 2012 with the topic "Enigma and the Battle of the Atlantic". It will be followed as of 14 February with exhibits and presentations on "The code breakers of Bletchley Park", the UK's National Codes and Cipher Centre during World War II. The remaining topics will also be shown for a period of around one month until the exhibition closes on 16 December 2012.

"The multi-part exhibition format will allow us to provide our visitors with insights into aspects of Alan Turing's life and works all year long," said HNF managing director and project manager Norbert Ryska of this unusual approach in the first public presentation of EMINENT & ENIGMATIC. "This was the only way to attract significant and highly sought-after loans from at home and abroad, including exhibits from the US National Security Agency, the Science Museum in London, Bletchley Park and IBM. So regular visits to the HNF will be more worthwhile than ever in 2012."

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- The exhibition will be held in a specially constructed pavilion in the foyer. In addition to the technical and scientific exhibits, artistic installations are to shed light on Alan Turing's work and thinking. "We want to pay tribute to Alan Turing with a series of presentations because he was the mastermind of the digital age as well as an exceptional personality," said Ryska of the exhibition concept.
- Turing's achievements will open up several unusual avenues into the HNF permanent exhibition. It can be accessed via a special Turing tour and workshops for schools, making the special exhibition a great stepping stone into the world's biggest computer museum, in which a section in the Hall of Fame has been dedicated to Turing since its opening in 1996.

Alan Turing (1912-1954):

Alan Turing was born on 23 June 2012 in London. From 1931 to 1934 he studied mathematics at King's College, Cambridge, where he was elected a fellow in 1935. During World War II he worked at the Government Code and Cipher School at Bletchley Park, developing methods of deciphering German radio messages encrypted using the Enigma machine.

At the end of the war Turing turned his attention towards computer development, first at the National Physical Laboratory in Teddington (1945-47), where he developed the concept of the Automatic Computing Engine (ACE), and then (as of 1948) as deputy director of the computing laboratory at Manchester University.

In 1952 Alan Turing was sentenced to a degrading 12-month course of oestrogen treatment designed to combat his homosexuality. He took his own life by eating a cyanide-laced

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- apple one year after completion of the treatment, on 7 June 1954.

Although Alan Turing did not have too deep an impact on the invention of the first computers in the 1940s and 1950s, his theoretical concepts earned him a place in computer history: The Turing machine still provides an important basis for research into theoretical computer science today, and the

- Turing test proposed by him in 1950 in response to the question "Can machines think?" lent impetus to the development of artificial intelligence.

In 2009 British Prime Minister Gordon Brown expressed his regret at Turing's persecution on behalf of the British Government and paid tribute to his exceptional contribution during World War II. US President Barack Obama placed Turing on a par with Newton, Darwin and Einstein during his recent state visit to London.

Exhibition topics and selected exhibits:

10.1.-12.2.2012 Enigma and the Battle of the Atlantic (Enigma, submarine model, radio equipment)

14.2.-11.3.2012 The code breakers of Bletchley Park (Enigma, Bombe drums, Enigma rotor model)

11.3.-8.4.2012 The Turing test (model of the brain, Turing test terminal)

10.4.-6.5.2012 From Turbochamp to Deep Blue (Deep Blue Chip/Board, Turing chess engine)

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- 8.5.-8.7.2012 The history of intelligent machines (Robo Thespian)
- 31.7.-26.8.2012 The Turing machine (HNF functional model, historic Turing machine)
- 28.8.-23.9.2012 Pattern formation (Interactive Plant Growing)
- 25.9.-21.10.2012 The Pilot ACE computer (UNIVAC delay line memory, Pilot ACE component)
- 23.10.-18.11.2012 Love Letters/Mark I (installation by David Link)
- 20.11.-16.12.2012 Tragedy and legacy – Turing today (Turing Award)

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