

P R E S S R E L E A S E

The FIRST LEGO League's nano-quest 2006 attracted a big turnout of youngsters to the Ars Electronica Center

This year's FIRST LEGO League robotics competition was dubbed nano quest. Kids showed up in big numbers for a showdown at the Ars Electronica Center Linz yesterday.

On November 21, the FIRST LEGO League regional competition was held at the Ars Electronica Center for the second year in a row. The teams of young people who took part in the competition faced an interesting assignment: using sensors, motors, a lot of colorful LEGO building blocks and some high-performance software to construct robots capable of independent actions, and to use them to carry out some pretty tricky missions. To complement this practical portion of the program, participants were also confronted by some theoretical research tasks involving the emerging scientific field of nanotechnology. They were asked to imagine and analyze the consequences that developments in this area could be expected to have—from medicine and computer technology all the way to facing pressing environmental issues.

The FIRST LEGO League is a program for youngsters age 10-16 that combines science with fun. The aim of the competition is to instill enthusiasm for science and technology in the generation of tomorrow. Young people learn to approach complex tasks, to work together in teams and to cooperate in creatively implementing solutions to problems.

Teams face off in an atmosphere of sporting competition and are thereby confronted by circumstances operational in workplaces in the real world. They perform research and do planning, programming and testing of an autonomous robot in order to master a specified task.

11 teams from Upper Austria and a group from Vienna took part. Right from the start—with the announcement of team names like the Traunsee Skywalkers—attendees knew they were in for an exciting competition! The entire Ars Electronica Center was the scene of the final preparations and fine-tuning; the competition itself was held in the Sky Media Loft.

The participating teams and the robots they constructed were evaluated by a jury in the following categories: best robot design, research presentation, and best teamwork and endurance.

The FIRST LEGO League Action Day organized by the Board of Education of the province of Upper Austria and education highway upper austria was held November 21, 2006 from 10 AM to 5 PM at the Ars Electronica Center.

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