

P R E S S R E L E A S E**Ars Electronica Futurelab Honored at the World Summit Award 05. "Gulliver's World" among the world's best multimedia products Titel der Presseinformation**

Bahrain, Salzburg (September 14, 2005) - AEC Futurelab wins in the e-Entertainment category with an innovative mixed-reality system. <http://www.wsis-award.org>

The Grand Jury of the World Summit Award (WSA) convened in the Kingdom of Bahrain to select the 40 best new media products from among 758 submissions from 168 countries. The prizewinners will be showcased as part of Austria's official contribution to the UN World Summit on the Information Society.

Among the 40 winners was the Ars Electronica Futurelab's "Gulliver's World," which had been nominated for the World Summit Award after being singled out for recognition with Austria's 2005 State Prize in Multimedia & e-Business. This computer application dispenses with a conventional mouse-and-keyboard interface; instead, it offers users—kids, young people and adults alike—a variety of modes of interaction in its narrative realms, whereby several users can join together to simultaneously embark on a playful journey of exploration through virtual worlds. Since September 2004, this installation has been a

featured attraction at Linz's Ars Electronica Center – Museum of the Future, where it has become a favorite of visitors young and old.

"With 'Gulliver's World,' the Ars Electronica Futurelab has pioneered new approaches—in the field of exhibition didactics, in the process of mediating users' encounters with content, as well as with respect to the technologies utilized in it. And in going about this for the last year or so, we've succeeded in our ongoing effort to transcend the boundaries between the real and the virtual, to enchant visitors to the Ars Electronica Center, and, obviously, to impress the international experts on the jury in Bahrain as well," commented Christopher Lindinger of the Ars Electronica Futurelab.

And indeed, jurors from 35 countries were effusive in their praise for this multi-user, mixed-reality system made in Linz that constitutes a multi-strata, interactive edutainment platform. Juror Salomao Manhica from Mozambique summed up their assessment:

"Bringing multimedia into a museum in this way is a visionary undertaking that points the way for the future. The creative application of new media doesn't just mean enhancing websites that a user ends up viewing alone on a computer. Here, people experience something together and collaboratively explore highly imaginative new worlds."

The creators of "Gulliver's World" will be honored at the WSA banquet that will be held in conjunction with the UN World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) on November 16, 2005 in Tunis.

On the intensive week-long deliberations of the WSA 05 jury, Vernon Joseph Fernandez, WSA juror from Malaysia, said: "This was an extremely enriching experience for me—working together with people from all over the world and getting to scrutinize many good products. I would like to have had more time to evaluate them all!"

About the World Summit Award

Made in Austria

The World Summit Award (WSA) is an Austrian initiative sponsored by the Office of the Chancellor and the Federal Ministry of Commerce and Labor, and is jointly supported by UNESCO, UNIDO and the ITU (International Telecommunication Union).

Sequence of Events: The UN Connection

The WSA is embedded within the WSIS - the UN World Summit on the Information Society, the initial phase of which took place in Geneva in December 2003. The WSA premiered that same year with participants from 136 countries.

In 2005, there are 168 nations taking part in the WSA. The winners will be honored on November 16 at a banquet being held in Tunis in conjunction with the second phase of the WSIS.

The Objective: New Media for a Better World

The WSA's mission is to honor and promote multimedia products that, as innovative applications and examples of outstanding e-content, can contribute to making a positive impact on the Information Society emerging worldwide—for instance, by bridging the so-called Digital Divide and Content Gap.

The WSA's organizational affairs are managed in Salzburg at the International Center for New Media (ICNM), an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to conducting programs and projects involved with analysis, support and training for the development of new media content and markets, as well as with best practice evaluation, promotion, showcasing and education.

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