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Press-Information No. 2

Board games are booming in these times of Corona - and this fall hundreds of new game releases will be presented to an international audience as part of the world's largest games event, which is going online this year. Virtual gaming will encourage visitors to play along and try things out.

SPIEL.digital from October 22 - 25, 2020

Thanks to free admission and an international program of events, SPIEL.digital expects tens of thousands of visitors from all over the world! Fans of board and card games can look forward to hundreds of new releases and world premieres, virtual gaming tables, shopping opportunities, countless online and offline events, promos, a streaming program in German, English, French, Spanish and Russian, panels and seminars, free premium access to the board game simulators Tabletopia and Board Game Arena and many other attractions.

In October, board gamers from all over the world will be able to enjoy "SPIEL.digital" for the first time, because the world's largest games event SPIEL will not be held at the Essen Exhibition Center this year, but online instead. This has proven extremely successful. Board game publishers from 36 nations have already confirmed their participation and have been preparing intensively for this important event over the past weeks. All well-known major players as well as countless medium-sized and smaller game publishers will present their new board and card games at SPIEL.digital, make them playable and, in addition, celebrate the world's largest board game festival with hundreds of events.

Virtual gaming tables offered in various languages await games fans, where they can test the new products extensively just like at the real games event. Also, nobody has to do without the beloved game explainers that introduce games and help with queries. All of this is made possible by the integration of online platforms such as Board Game Arena or Tabletopia, where board game enthusiasts can play just like at a real gaming table. Both platforms are providing free access for visitors to SPIEL.digital. Anyone looking for a suitable gift just before Christmas, can also buy the new releases immediately at the online event.

Thanks to free admission and official live streams in German, English, French, Spanish and Russian, which will inform interested parties from all over the world about the highlights of SPIEL.digital, this year's online edition of SPIEL will also be the most important gaming trade fair event anywhere in the world.

This year the range of games is as colorful and varied as ever. For example, among the hundreds of new releases you will find:

- Games with topical themes such as KYOTO (Deep Print Games + Pegasus Spiele), a real-time negotiation game in which players take on the role of representatives of six major countries to save the world from environmental collapse.
- Analog versions of popular PC games such as ANNO 1800 (Kosmos). Short game moves and a special trading mechanism determine the feel of the game in the latest work by successful designer Martin Wallace.
- Fast card games such as SILENCIO (Zoch Verlag), in which you are not allowed to speak.
- Challenging escape games such as BREAK IN by Schmidt Spiele, which is part of the first escape game series in which players aged 12 years and older do not break out but have to break in.
- HABA also serves the industry trend toward simultaneous puzzles with THE KEY - SABOTAGE IN LUCKY LAMA LAND. In this game, which will make you want to play again and again via constantly new game sequences, it is not necessarily the fastest, but the most efficient investigator who will win.

- Dice games such as MONSTER EXPEDITION (Amigo), in which players try to catch monsters by rolling dice.
- Connoisseur games like HALLERTAU by Uwe Rosenberg (Lookout Spiele). A classic worker placement game that offers an interesting historical background.
- Indoor movement games such as TAP IT! by HCM Kinzel, which in these times of Corona provides for movement within your own four walls, because the players have to sprint the whole time to reach the right buzzer.
- Cooperative family games like GHOST ADVENTURE (Pegasus Spiele), which is equipped with a real spinning top that always must be kept moving.
- Children's games like NOCH MAL! KIDS by Schmidt Spiele. In this child-friendly edition of the blockbuster NOCH MAL! - new-generation gamers try to combine the luck of the dice with tactical skill.
- Exciting communication games that take place in mystery worlds, like GREENVILLE 1989 (Kosmos), in which players try to escape from a dark parallel world. To do this, they have to put themselves in their teammates' shoes and tell each other what they experience in the mysterious environment.

The winning titles of this year's 30th Deutscher SpielePreis will also be presented in detail at SPIEL.digital and as part of the German live stream. The same applies to innoSPIEL, which has been awarded at the SPIEL event every year since 2017 and honors a particularly innovative game idea.

The SPIEL.digital program with its countless events is very impressive. Interviews with game designers and publishers provide insights behind the scenes of the industry. The classic CATAN is celebrating its 25th birthday. In addition to the numerous panels and seminars on offer, EDUCATORS' DAY, which was launched last year with lectures aimed at educators, teachers and those interested in using board games in school or adult education, will also be an important part of SPIEL.digital.

"The top priority during the planning phase was to give SPIEL.digital a high entertainment factor, guaranteeing both excellent usability and user experience to bring people together to play - as has been the case for the last 38 years," explains Maximilian Metzler from organizer Friedhelm Merz Verlag. "We have therefore created a wide variety of theme worlds in which newcomers can easily find information. Equally important to us was to provide integrated chat functions that allow visitors to interact with exhibitors, game explainers and game designers, creating a unique virtual experience. SPIEL.digital's media hub, which can be seen much like Netflix or Amazon Prime, is also unique and is where visitors can find all media reports on specific topics or games at a glance. We are also taking bloggers, YouTubers, podcasters & Co. on board, who can post their contributions on the platform to celebrate a worldwide unique games festival in October."

So that board game enthusiasts don't have to give up their haptic pleasure completely, SPIEL.digital will be offering the program item "SPIEL Lokal" - this will give board game shops, cafés and larger gaming groups the opportunity to organize their own mini-events during the main event period and in return showcase themselves for free on SPIEL.digital. Here, too, the response so far has been incredibly positive. There will be many smaller local gaming events in Germany, Argentina, Belgium, Iran, Canada, Austria, Sweden, Switzerland, and Spain, which will all be integrated into SPIEL.digital.

"Our concept for SPIEL.digital was from the outset to bring everyone on board: publishers, visitors, shops, board game cafés and media representatives", states Maximilian Metzler. "But we were simply overwhelmed by the positive response, the encouragement and the helpfulness from all over the globe. With SPIEL - and this year with SPIEL.digital - we are grateful that we are not just the organizers of the world's largest games event, but really are a part of this unique community."

As usual, we will continue to keep you up to date in subsequent press releases and provide information about game trends and event highlights.

Attached you will find the accreditation form. Accreditation gives you access to the business area of SPIEL.digital, where you can make appointments with the publishers. We believe that the demand will be high and therefore ask for an **early accreditation** if possible. For organizational reasons, we will for the first time be sending all accredited journalists their access code at the same time. Please do not be surprised if this takes a little time, as programming is still required on the platform.

At this point we would like to invite **YouTuber, bloggers, podcasters, and other content creators to actively participate in the event.** With an accreditation and the corresponding access code to SPIEL.digital, media representatives can post their own events and content on the platform. These can be

- live events and content in the form of game discussions, panels, interviews, streams and much more.
- Or pre-produced contributions, which can be planned as premieres on YouTube, for example.
- All content and events will be visible for visitors in the SPIEL.digital program directory.

- Pre-produced contributions and campaigns for **individual games from exhibitors** (videos, podcasts, and articles) can also be submitted for SPIEL.digital. These are then submitted to the exhibitors, who can then link the features to their booths and the respective game detail pages.

It is expected that all these functions will be available to you by October 1, 2020 at the latest.

Please note:

- **We can only allow contributions regarding games that relate to exhibitors at SPIEL.digital. A preliminary list of all exhibitors will be available from the second week of September.**
- **That all content is hosted on the channels of the respective media creators and will be additionally embedded on SPIEL.digital.**

We are looking forward to celebrating a unique games festival with you. If you have any queries, please contact Dominique Metzler by phone on +49 (0)228/342273, or by e-mail: info@merz-verlag.com.

Kindest Regards,

Yours

Friedhelm Merz Verlag (organizer of SPIEL.digital)

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