

Facts & Figures

Ars Electronica: A Fine Performance in 2014

(Linz, February 4, 2015) Ars Electronica Linz GmbH ended 2014 in the black. Operating profit increased by approximately €650,000 over the previous year. “We’ve done a great job overcoming the difficult economic situation that we faced three years ago,” CFO Diethard Schwarzmaier and Artistic Director Gerfried Stocker noted in their summary of the consolidation measures implemented over the past two years. “In response, we developed a three-pronged strategy: one objective was to adjust our cost & operating structures, especially in our Museum and Festival divisions, to the changed framework conditions now prevailing; we aimed to expand our international partnerships and collaborations, and, above all, to further enhance the Festival’s status as a presentation platform; and we wanted to increase revenues in our for-profit divisions: the Ars Electronica Futurelab and Ars Electronica Solutions. Now, we’re pleased to report that this strategy has worked out very nicely.”

Total revenues of €13.1 million and a self-financing quotient of 60%

Ars Electronica Linz GmbH’s 2014 financial results showed a marked improvement over the prior year. Total revenues rose by about €200,000 to €13.1 million. The self-financing quotient was 60%. “In light of such a high self-financing quotient, we can credibly claim to have done our homework well and successfully concluded the consolidation of our business operations,” Diethard Schwarzmaier stated, before adding a proviso: “But at this point, we’re really not interested in much more growth in commercial assignments because the result would be disequilibrium within Ars Electronica Linz GmbH that would significantly change the character of this institution. After all, this is basically an artistic and cultural facility that, according to its corporate charter, is to be managed as a not-for-profit organization, whereby the sole purpose of its profit-oriented work is to provide funding for its public service activities—that is, the Center, Festival and Prix. Moreover, these activities must always be consistent with Ars Electronica’s overall mission.”

158,428 visitors to the Ars Electronica Center

With a total of 158,428 visitors in 2014, the Ars Electronica Center once again led all Upper Austrian museums in attendance. 4,192 guided tours were provided to 62,365 Museum guests, and more than 2,000 school classes enjoyed hands-on educational experiences. Tactical management of visitor flows, enhanced temporal and spatial coordination of tour offerings, and modifications to the design of exhibit content have made it possible to maintain the high quality of service and expert guidance the AEC provides to visitors while significantly reducing the personnel costs this entails.

160 co-producers contributed €1.2 million to the festival budget

The Ars Electronica Festival is one of the most time-honored and important media art events worldwide. One quite telling manifestation last year of the Ars brand’s attractiveness was the highly diverse array of artistic & cultural institutions, universities and private firms from

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all over the world that utilized the festival as a presentation platform and financed these appearances themselves. The value of the in-kind contributions to the Festival provided by these 160 partners and associates was about €1.2 million.

Commissioned assignments and R&D activities increased dramatically

“Growth leaders were our for-profit divisions: the Ars Electronica Futurelab and Ars Electronica Solutions,” Diethard Schwarzmaier noted. “Their staffers carried out 98 projects in 23 countries last year.” The list of commissioning clients includes such prestigious names as Daimler, BMW, Audi, Intel, VAI, SAP, Siemens, Toshiba and BASF. And the Ars Electronica Futurelab’s Spaxels were frequent flyers in 2014—the swarm of LED-equipped quadcopters made high-profile appearances at the opening festivities of both the European and Islamic Capitals of Culture, at this year’s Day of German Unity celebration in Hannover, and at the extravaganza marking National Day in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Also flying high are the Ars Electronica Futurelab’s R&D activities. Work-in-progress includes joint ventures with the MIT Medialab, Queensland University, Hong Kong Design Institute, Tsukuba University, Tokyo University, UNESCO and CERN.

Outlook for 2015

2015 also promises to be a busy year at Ars Electronica.

A completely new Deep Space is being implemented at the Ars Electronica Center. This upgrade to 8K high-definition will make the 16x9-meter projection surface sharper than ever. The Ars Electronica Futurelab is already at work on applications able to take full advantage of Deep Space’s new capabilities. Another point high on the Museum’s agenda is the School of the Future—here, the top priorities are setting up a science lab designed especially for kids age 4-8, and developing educational materials and pedagogical formats appropriate to it.

Running parallel to the submission of entries to the 2015 Prix Ars Electronica is an open call for applicants to a new Art & Science Residency Program. This collaborative effort with seven renowned artistic and cultural institutions throughout Europe as well as the European Southern Observatory is 50% financed by the EU. The results will premiere at the Festival.

Speaking of which—the 2015 Ars Electronica Festival will be held September 3-7 at an extraordinary location in Linz.

Futurelab staffers are currently hard at work on the next Spaxels appearances in Las Vegas and San Francisco, and their R&D work with Daimler is moving forward in high gear.

Meanwhile, Ars Electronica Solutions designers are laboring intensively on interactive installations for Styria Media Group’s headquarters in Graz and an exhibition for the Spy Museum in Berlin.

Ars Electronica Center: <http://www.aec.at/news/en/>

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