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## 1991–2011: 20 Years of SAZ

In 2011, the Game Designer Association (Spiele-Autoren-Zunft e.V., SAZ) celebrates its 20th anniversary. Since the beginning, the SAZ has actively been advocating for game designers' rights and interests. The promotion of nascent game designers and the efforts for a strengthening of the cultural asset of games in society have been part of this. The association developed from a relatively small group of founding members – among them, for instance, Hajo Bücken, Dirk Hanneforth, Max Kobbert, Wolfgang Kramer, Alex Randolph, Johann Rüttinger, Karl-Heinz Schmiel, Klaus Teuber and Detlef Wendt – into an organization of more than 400 national and international members today.

The increasing number of members is also an indication of the growing significance and recognition of the SAZ. In the beginning, the activities focused primarily on getting publishers to credit the designers, and on fair terms of contracts – and there is still need for optimization in this area. Today, the SAZ takes up also other central tasks; for instance, the discussion on intellectual property rights and the improvement of the social acceptance of games as a cultural asset. Another subject is the professional qualification of game designers, which becomes essential for the successful development of games because of the significant growth of the international market. In this context, the exchange of experience, the support of technical conferences as well as the members-only series of publications under the name "SAZ Points" play an important role.

The following events can be considered milestones in SAZ history:

in 2001, a special prize, awarded by the "Deutscher Spielepreis" jury for the commitment of the SAZ; in 2004, the start of the yearly ALEX Media Prize for outstanding media contributions on the subject of games and playing; in 2008, inclusion in the German Cultural Council; and, in Essen 2010, the start of the traveling exhibition "How is a game developed?"

Important subjects are on our agenda also in the anniversary year 2011:

1. **Fair "rules of play" between designers and publishers!** As much as the strong growth of the international game market overall can be welcomed, some accompanying effects are problematic, notably, in dealing with intellectual properties of original game mechanisms created by individual designers. Here, it is necessary to develop "rules of play" in order to ensure fair conditions and better communication.
2. **"Games also have authors!"** is the name of the campaign with the goal of strengthening the awareness in society that there is a creative mind behind every game. It is one of the particular goals of the campaign to sensitize media and journalists so that mentioning game designers by name in reviews and reports becomes a matter of course and thus the value of games as a cultural asset becomes more and more obvious.

The SAZ invites all those who are interested to join in the celebration of this anniversary at various events. The start will be the traditional SAZ party on the Saturday night of the International Toy Fair in Nuremberg.

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**The SAZ represents game designers' rights and interests,  
and advocates the strengthening of the cultural assets of games in society.**