

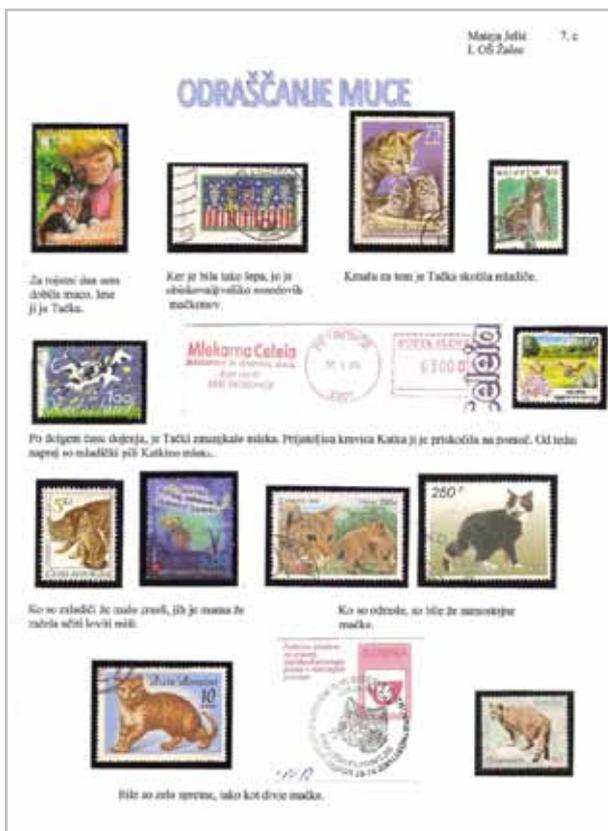
## How to introduce youth to Philately?

Lack of youth between philatelists is a problem of few last decades. But when youngsters show an interest for philately, the next problem appears: What to tell them, how to teach them. Different opinion exists about this question and separate "philatelic schools" have different educational programs. But which is correct, which way is the best to convert youngsters to serious philatelists at the end?



As I mentioned in previous number of FEPA News, ten years ago we started a successful way which has been confirmed in practice. The essence of this system is, very early to teach the young philatelists what to do with the collected philatelic material – to teach them how to create their own story.

*Young members of the philatelic group from the Primary School Žalec at their work; they study and fulfil the Philatelic exercise book prepared by author of this article.*



The beginners have always the same problem, shortage of philatelic material. This problem solved very nice in philatelic group in the Primary School in Žalec, Slovenia. Few members of this group with assistance of their mentor Mr. Toni Četina made philatelic stories on one page only. With these stories they showed their creativity and on the other hand they got the first basic knowledge about creating philatelic stories. Small exhibits were then put into the school's showcase. Philatelic group showed with them to other pupils in school what they do and with this action stimulate more pupils to joint their group.

This very simple action is a nice example on how also young philatelists can promote philately.

*Bojan Bračič*

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## Experience with Virtual Pre-Judging using EXPONET

### The 1st Common Czech-Slovak Philatelic Exhibition VYSOKÉ MÝTO 2011

#### 1. ČESKO – SLOVENSKÁ FILATELISTICKÁ VÝSTAVA



VYSOKÉ MÝTO 12. – 16.10.2011

The 1st common Czech-Slovak philatelic exhibition VYSOKÉ MÝTO 2011 held in October in Vysoké Mýto, Czech Republic was not only one of many. In addition to be a regular national bilateral stamp show, organisers have brought some innovative steps of national but we hope also of international importance. In this article we focus on the most important and probably the most innovative one.

#### Virtual Pre-Judging Using EXPONET

The most important attempt to increase the reliability of exhibits judging (and improve relations among jurors and exhibitors) is so called **virtual pre-judging** of scanned exhibits prior to the "live" exhibition. Jury of the exhibition experienced this approach using the well-known Virtual Philatelic Exhibition EXPONET.

The idea is simple, but meets with some obstacles and conservative opinions we have to take in mind and discuss. Let's first list the procedure, summarise our experience and then discuss pros and cons, and finally propose some way how to proceed.

#### Basic Virtual Pre-Judging Procedure

The proposed **virtual pre-judging** procedure is as follows:

1. Exhibitors scan their exhibits (each page into separate image with satisfactory resolution) and send scanned versions to organisational committee several months (at least one) before exhibition begins.
2. Organisational committee, having received scanned exhibits, deliver them to virtual exhibition administrator who process each virtual exhibit and put into a restricted part of virtual exhibition space (accessible only by appointed jurors)

and creates access login and password data for each juror.

3. Organisational committee address jurors with internet address (link) of the virtual exhibition and access login and password data.
4. Jurors without any time pressure may log into the virtual exhibition space anytime they need and deeply research and evaluate all relevant exhibits and such a way get better overall impression about the whole exhibit and its philatelic quality.
5. Within the process of pre-judging jurors may communicate with other jurors and share their ideas and opinions, carry on disputes on questionable items and exhibits and such a way prepare preliminary evaluation for each exhibit.
6. At the exhibition venue jurors' work – after virtual pre-judging – may start immediately with the first reading. That really significantly improves jurors' work and makes it simpler and shorter but still more reliable. Of course, they have to check whether mounted exhibits differ from those judged virtually, but it is much simpler work than to go through the whole exhibit as a new (previously unknown) one.

As any new approach we have found many advantages but also some problems, we have to cope with. Let's list the most important ones.

#### Virtual Pre-Judging Positives

- Virtual pre-evaluation gives jurors enough time to get deeply acquainted with each particular exhibit, study relevant topics if necessary, read and check all texts, investigate presented materials, their quality, value, rarity, postal-history aspects, proper use and franking, etc., focus attention on rare and questionable materials, and compare them with their resources or discuss with experts and other colleagues.
- Virtual pre-evaluation allows mutual cooperation of international jury team regardless their actual location using obvious communication means as email and phone, or more sophisticated as chats or internet blogs.
- Virtual pre-evaluation allows jurors to become more prepared and educated for "live" judging. Jurors are more relaxed because their "live" work at the exhibition is simpler and shorter.

- Virtual pre-evaluation allows that exhibitors may receive more professional in-depth comments to their exhibits because jurors are well prepared for the jury critic session.

### Problems with Virtual Pre-Judging

In order to evaluate this procedure properly we list some problems we encounter and attach our comments:

- Not all exhibitors are positive on sending scanned version of their exhibits and some refused to participate if sending scanned exhibit is obligatory.  
Comments: This is a mayor issue responsible commissions have to deal with. Some personal opinions are attached at the end of this report.
- Scanned version of exhibit slightly (or even significantly) differs from the "live" one presented at the exhibition.  
Comments: Only further experience will show whether to allow such changes or not. More simple would be to deny them, but will be complicate to check it. We would vote for possibility to allow making changes. However, it has to be fully an exhibitors' risk whether jurors will notice their changes in live exhibit or not. Realising that exhibitors will do changes only if really significant (and clearly visible) and needed for their exhibit improvement.
- Technical problems and not very convenient way of virtual exhibit presentation.  
Comments: This point was listed by almost all jurors involved. In testing stage the proposed technical solution was quite simple allowing only the viewing of exhibit pages without any advanced user interface support. However, it is still only technical issue to be solved by a more precise definition of procedure for virtual pre-judging and collection relevant requirements from jurors with virtual pre-judging experience. However, it will require some investments and technical skills.
- Low quality of scanned exhibits (low image resolution used in scanning) not allowing detailed inspection of important details (e.g. dates on postmarks).  
Comments: We see this only as a minor problem which will be easily solved by definition of proper scanning procedure including desirable image formats and proper scanning resolution (JPEG format, full colour, 300 DPI).
- Scanned images might have been processed manually to improve the quality of items depicted to make their appearance more desirable and eye-catching.  
Comments: This is a big problem of

virtual exhibiting at all. However, we consider exhibitors entering public exhibitions decent enough not to improve appearance of their (virtual) philatelic materials.

- Scanned picture does not provide any means to inspect whether an item is genuine or even not forged.  
Comment: This is another big problem with virtual exhibiting. However, as in the previous one, we consider exhibitors would be quite decent in this matter. In addition, there is still possibility to check any questionable item at the "live" questionable item at the "live" exhibition by opening exhibition frame.

### General Problems with Virtual Pre-Judging

However, there are still some general problems to solve. The most important is the obligation to send scanned exhibit.

On one side, if virtual pre-judging has to have real use, all exhibits have to be virtually pre-judged. On the other side if exhibition organisation committee (IREX) will make this option obligatory, not all exhibits fulfilling required qualification might be accepted what is not in concordance with the existing exhibition rules (GREX). So we can proceed only if a special exhibition type with virtual re-judging will be accepted by FEPA/FIP responsible bodies. Until such option will not be listed in official exhibition rules (e.g. special type of exhibition), no organisation has right to deny exhibiting exhibit with proper qualification.

### Conclusions on Virtual Pre-Judging

We see this approach worth using at philatelic exhibitions, if those problems listed will be overcome. The main goal we expect to achieve is far more reliable and true exhibit evaluation than with actual simple on-site judging.

We have to realise that, in general, such an approach simplifies jurors' work and make evaluation more precise and reliable but on the other side forces exhibitors to prepare their exhibits even much more better, because jurors would have time to read (and understand) all(!) their texts, and check appropriate usage and value as well as postal-history aspects of all their philatelic materials. So we expect this approach will also lead to a significant improvement of presented philatelic exhibits.



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Author was a regular member of the international jury involved in the first experimental virtual pre-judging at the 1st Common Czech-Slovak Philatelic Exhibition VYSOKÉ MYTO 2011.