

The Emergence of Museums of Science and Technology since the beginning of the Eighties as a Consequence of the “Musealisierung” i.e. the Archiving of Industry and Technology in the Sense of a Heritage Culture

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Museums of science and technology have, in the last twenty years, experienced quite significant modifications. The reasons for these radical changes are due mainly to the economic and social upheaval since the beginning of the eighties. The aim of this thesis is to investigate and explain these reasons and to develop appropriate measures for future work and conceptions of museums of science and technology

Firstly the thesis will examine how technical progress – due to economic and social upheaval – has led to a “Musealisierung”-boom. This is not limited to museums but also includes its development as a widespread phenomenon, encompassing many social and cultural areas. The various phenomena of “Musealisierung” are often regarded as possibilities for compensation for the risks that are to be found in a highly technologically developed society. In this thesis, the new presentation forms in museums of science and technology are presented, where the “Inszenierung” (scenic production) plays a dominant role.

The increasing similarities between technology museums and the increasingly popular themeparks and recreational parks will also be examined. Museums can learn much from these parks, but creating overly strong similarities with such themeparks also brings its dangers. It often leads quantitatively – regarding the number of visitors – to success, however the quality of the museum work often suffers as a result.

The main focus of the investigation is the meaning of “museum education” for today’s museums of science and technology. Self-understanding, demand and reality of three museums are examined in detail: The *Heinz Nixdorf MuseumsForum* in Paderborn, Germany, the *Landesmuseum für Technik und Arbeit* (Federal State Museum for Technology and Work) in Mannheim, Germany, and the *Deutsche Arbeitsschutz-ausstellung* (German Industrial Safety Exhibition) in Dortmund, Germany. The media concepts of these institutions, particularly the role of the new digital media, are examined in detail. The dualism between exhibition subject and representation medium of the new technologies is also examined in this context. The development and meaning of visitor research and its importance for the work of museums are examined in detail and described with a practical example.

The results of the work show that the present museums of science and technology represent almost exclusively the time of the Industrial Revolution. In the future however, the main concern of the museums of science and technology will be to extend this time frame. If a museums of science and technology wants to represent the change from an industrial into an information society, it has to mediate and present the new technologies of the information society that it considers to be important.