

## **LEARNTEC also 2021 platform of the digital education industry Four theme weeks starting in october enable virtual exchange**

### **Interview with Britta Wirtz, Managing Director of Messe Karlsruhe**

**Karlsruhe, 14 september 2020.** LEARNTEC - Europe's largest event for digital learning - will take place from 2 to 4 February 2021 at the Karlsruhe Exhibition Centre. Britta Wirtz, Managing Director of Messe Karlsruhe, talks in the interview about the importance of trade fairs and congresses for the industry right now and how the team is preparing for LEARNTEC in these dynamic times.

### **The Corona pandemic is hitting the trade fair industry particularly hard, with many events already cancelled or postponed. Will LEARNTEC take place?**

Wirtz: Trade fairs and congresses are not considered to be major events and, according to the Corona Ordinance, trade fairs of the state government of Baden-Württemberg may be held again since September 1. The special regulation for the organization of trade fairs, exhibitions and congresses creates the legal basis for LEARNTEC. We are currently planning to hold LEARNTEC in February 2021. Trade fairs are a source of information, economic motor and innovation hub in one. They consistently advance the industry in order to be able to react even faster to trends and developments. The crisis in particular has shown that many have a great need for personal exchange. We are also receiving great encouragement from our exhibitors. More than 90 percent of the floor space at LEARNTEC 2021 has already been booked.

### **What protective and hygiene measures will you take?**

We assume that the effects of the corona pandemic will continue to influence the trade fair next year. For each of our trade fairs, including LEARNTEC, we have developed an individual concept based on the current Corona Ordinance Trade Fairs, which fulfils all the requirements of hygiene, distance and tracing of infection chains that are known to us and can be implemented at our trade fairs. The safety and health of all participants is always our top priority. Distance regulations, the wearing of mouth-and-nose covers or the storage of data for contact tracing have already proven their worth in our everyday lives over the past few months. At our trade fairs and congresses, these regulations are also an important part of our hygiene concepts - in addition to the installation of numerous disinfection options, widespread corridors, instructions for coughing and sneezing labels and increased cleaning intervals. As far as the number of visitors is concerned, there is a clear guideline for us organizers, which is based on the event area. This access restriction allows for a comparable number of trade visitors to LEARNTEC as in the previous year. In order to ensure contact tracking, we will only offer online tickets.

**Will LEARNTEC look the same as the years before?**

Trade fairs have always changed from issue to issue. LEARNTEC has also changed every year. But the necessary change in times of Corona is more drastic than before. There will be no return to a time before Corona, that is clear. We also see the pandemic as a great opportunity. We are working on holistic concepts in all areas to ensure that we can continue to advance our events in the future. At LEARNTEC 2021, for example, we would like to integrate digital formats and enable interaction between the participants. For example, we will offer live streaming of the congress slots and virtual roundtables on a wide range of topics.

**Establishing contacts and personal exchange are the success factors of a trade fair. How can you guarantee this to your exhibitors and visitors despite the current restrictions?**

Trade fairs not only bring the industry together, but also advance it. They are especially important in these times to meet colleagues in person again, exchange knowledge, make contacts and gather ideas. This is also possible with distance or digitally. This is exactly what we would like to offer all participants at LEARNTEC and we are using more and more digital tools for this purpose. For example, we provide an extensive matchmaking service, which allows our visitors with similar interests to network with each other or to arrange video chats.

**Which highlights at LEARNTEC 2021 can you already tell us?**

As early as last fall - and thus well ahead of Corona - we decided to expand LEARNTEC 2021 by adding a third hall on the current mega-theme "digital school". There, our visitors will find all the offerings for the digital school in a focused manner. On the first day of the fair, we will also be offering "Salon21", a new, all-day specialist program on the school of the future. Our Future Lab will also be back at LEARNTEC 2021 and will present exciting perspectives on the digital future of learning. I am also very pleased that we will be offering our LEARNTEC theme weeks now, several months before the trade fair. From October to January, we will be holding webinars and digital discussion panels on our digital school, university and career areas.

**How exactly can these theme weeks be imagined?**

For one week, our channels will focus on a current topic - whether the digitization of schools, digital university teaching or New Work and New Learning. In free webinars with best-practice examples, a roundtable discussion with industry experts and a concluding summary session, participants can learn more and exchange ideas virtually. And we will also be networking with our community on our social media channels at the same time as the theme weeks.

*The first theme week on the digital school will take place from October 05 to 09, 2020. Further information about LEARNTEC 2021 and the theme weeks can be found at [www.learntec.de](http://www.learntec.de)*

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**About LEARNTEC**

LEARNTEC is Europe's largest event for digital education. Decision-makers from industry, the consulting sector, trade and distribution as well as from schools and universities come to Karlsruhe every year to exchange information on the possibilities of digital learning. The LEARNTEC congress provides concentrated, practical knowledge over three days. A total of more than 300 speakers will share their knowledge with the audience in lectures and workshops. Open-space sessions and open discussion rounds will promote the exchange between speakers and participants. The next LEARNTEC will take place from 2 to 4 February 2021 at the Karlsruhe Exhibition Center.

Further information about LEARNTEC is available at [www.learntec.de](http://www.learntec.de).

**LEARNTEC** 

International Trade Fair and Convention