

By HispaBrick Magazine®
Pictures by Rebrick



HBM: Where did the idea for ReBrick come from?

RB: The ReBrick project started with one question: “What if we connected all the LEGO® enthusiasts, so there would be no lost LEGO souls out there?” The online LEGO community is very active, and many builds take on a life of their own via Social Media. However, this community is fragmented; leaving new fans lost and established fans needing to visit a variety of websites to find out what’s new in the community. The community needed a hub, a place to showcase what was new and direction newcomers to LEGO communities.

This is how the ReBrick project started. Once the concept was in place – a social bookmarking platform for LEGO fans – we started developing the website with the help of adult fan community.

HBM: How long have you been working on it?

RB: The project was in planning until early 2010, and began development in the summer of 2010. In fall of 2010 we launched a closed beta called “Octopus” and partnered with a variety of fan LEGO communities. Once we had worked out the details, “Octopus” was renamed “ReBrick”, given a face lift, and moved into an open beta in December of 2011.

HBM: Who are involved in the project?

RB: Of course there’s The LEGO Group, but we also have many partner sites, probably too many to mention here! We had a total of 500 beta users, consisting of fans, academia



Peter Espersen

from business schools around the world, and social media champions. The brain behind the project is Sr. Director Tormod Askildsen, who handed the project over to Online Community Lead Peter Espersen. Espersen’s team consists of Mads Mommsen, Sara Moore and Signe Lønholdt plus a team of developers and designers.

HBM: What is the objective of the site?

RB: Adult fans of LEGO create the most amazing and inspiring creations, but sadly most of this content isn’t reaching outside the established adult fan community. The LEGO Group has the weight to push the creations shared on ReBrick out to the rest of the world, so the incredible builds fans are creating can be enjoyed by people from outside the current AFOL (Adult Fan of LEGO) community. ReBrick’s reach has allowed the community to gain attention from various other online media news channels, which don’t usually feature LEGO content. We even gained an official honoree at the 2012 Webby Awards.

HBM: Is it oriented to kids or adults?

RB: ReBrick is designed for adult fans. Since the ReBrick team is in direct contact with a majority of members, we are able ensure that the community is adult based. We direct younger fans to the LEGO.com community.

HBM: What input have you sought from intended end-users?

RB: We are open to feedback through multiple channels, including conference calls with the beta users, direct emails, presence at larger AFOL events, and via the ReBrick blog. The beta users can also make feature requests by using a special feedback button on the site. These requests are put into a survey where all users can give input, allowing us to produce a prioritized list of what’s most important to the community.

HBM: How has that input changed the development of the site?

RB: One example of user feedback in action is the newly launched activity feed. One of our beta users, Igor Makarov, suggested a “who is online” tool, and the majority of beta testers agreed with him. From there we developed the activity feed on the right hand side of the front page, which provides community activity in real time.

The beta testers have also participated in focus groups for making the categories on ReBrick, reviewed the design of the site, and helped with our House Rules. Many of the administrations moderation tools are based off suggestions by beta users.

HBM: How long has the project been under development?



RB: ReBrick officially begun in early 2010, and came out of closed beta in December 2011. The community is still under development today, and improvements to ReBrick will never end. We believe in continuous development, and will continue to add new features and functionality to better serve the community.

HBM: Why so long?

RB: Before we launched ReBrick, we wanted to make sure we had the backing of the fan community and were going the right way with the content. We didn't want to "rush" the project!

HBM: What's in it for LEGO®?

RB: As a hub for fan created content, ReBrick shows what fans can do with LEGO bricks, which helps promote brand awareness around LEGO products. It engages fans to keep them building, and encourages new fans to start building.

HBM: Are you not afraid that, since there are other (older) sites with similar functions, you will be accused of trying to take control?

RB: We have no desire to take control, that's why we decided to make it a social bookmarking platform where users cannot upload content. Users don't need to abandon other platforms to use ReBrick; instead they can use the site to promote builds on other platforms to a wider audience.

HBM: How do you decide what content is adequate?

RB: We have a set House Rules, which were created along with users. Basically these rules ask that members be respectful of others, refrain from spamming the community, avoid adding offensive content, and do not plagiarize. Please read the complete House Rules available in the footer on any page on ReBrick for further information.

HBM: What are the general guidelines for moderation?

Not all of the content shared on ReBrick is suitable for children. In order to see all bookmarks on ReBrick, users must first sign in (members must be at least 13 to hold an account, but shh, don't tell the kids). That being said, users should know that any bookmarks which violate the House Rules will be removed.

HBM: Do you think someone may try to take advantage of your efforts (for covert publicity)?

RB: We haven't really seen this yet, although it is a possibility. ReBrick has a self-moderation tool which users can use to report any kind of inappropriate bookmarks or activity, so we rely on the community to let us know if this does happen. As stated in the previous question, we also reserve the right to ban any users that don't behave properly.

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Sara Moore