

Pillards of the Community: The BrickFactory

By HispaBrick Magazine®

Pictures by The BrickFactory

Have you ever lost the instructions for one of the classic sets? Have you ever bought a second-hand set without instructions? Have you ever looked for the instructions of one of the favourite sets of your childhood? Then you have almost certainly looked for help on this page. Today we talk to Bert Giesen, the man behind The Brickfactory.

HBM: How did the idea of The Brickfactory come up and what was its original purpose?

BG: My son was born in 1994 and I re-discovered LEGO® in 1998 by showing my son the old LEGO I had. He was also interested in building with my old LEGO and so I tried to build the old sets I had, but I had lost the instructions. So I started looking online for the instructions. I found them on Peeron, however this was slow

HBM: To what degree has that goal been fulfilled?

BG: I think the site has proved it's use. I have even heard from some LEGO-support workers they send people the site's address if they have lost instructions which LEGO doesn't have anymore.

HBM: How many people are working on the site and how did you meet?

BG: At this moment I am the only one maintaining the site.

HBM: How many visits does the page receive?

BG: About 60,000 unique visitors every month and about 50.000 page views a day

HBM: Some time ago it was possible to download instructions as a batch using Bob Kojima's BSBackup. Are there any plans to re-enable that possibility?

BG: I am working on this, however the current Web-server doesn't support FTP. I hope to create some script to download the pages soon.

HBM: How do you get the instructions that appear on the site? Do you get a lot of collaboration from AFOLS?

BG: Most of the instructions I convert myself, some are sent by other users of the site. At the moment I am busy converting the 2012 instructions to put them online.

HBM: What criteria do you follow for publishing instructions?

BG: The instructions of the current year are not shown till next year.

HBM: How many instructions are available? How much space do they take up?

BG: At the moment 4653 Set instructions, 204 catalogs, 14 ISO-images of LEGO-Software, and some specials I built or other things I found. A total of about 20 GB of data.



HBM: Is there a model that is especially sought after that you don't have instructions for?

BG: At the moment I am looking for scans of stickers of sets. As I am myself more a MOC-builder, I usually buy bricks, not sets.

HBM: Which are the oldest instructions you have available?

BG: 1958 is the year of the oldest instructions I have.

HBM: Which are the most demanded instructions?

BG: There are no instructions which are viewed more than others.

HBM: How do you evaluate AFOL collaboration in this project?

BG: In the beginning I had a lot of support for finding old instructions. As I now have them nearly all, the support is less. However, there are AFOLS all over the world who send me scans of the newest instructions.

HBM: A website like The Brickfactory must cost money. How is it funded?

BG: At the moment there is advertising on the site to fund the website, this is enough to pay the webpackage from my provider.

HBM: What is your relationship with TLG?

BG: No relation to TLG at all. (other than me buying their product ;))

HBM: Have you had any complaints from LEGO®?

BG: None at all till today (All I know is the customerservice of TLG points people to the Brickfactory for old instructions)

HBM: Do you get any support from LEGO to find old instructions?

BG: Non till now, but I haven't asked for it either.

HBM: During these years of daily following the LEGO community, which do you think are the main changes that have occurred in the AFOL community?

BG: In the years I have seen people come and people go, however the communities I know are a steady group of people who like the product and the use of it.

HBM: How much time do you spend to keep The Brickfactory running?

BG: On average about 3 hours a week.

HBM: How do you see the future of The Brickfactory?

BG: I hope the site will be available for a long time and support the LEGO (not only the AFOL) community.

#



WWW.BRICKFACTORY.INFO