

EuroCIS in Düsseldorf celebrates anniversary:

25 years of the IT innovation platform specifically for retail – a brief historical excursion

From a Technology Forum to the leading trade fair for retail technology in Europe +++ Trend barometer relevant to practitioners, innovation driver and networking platform +++ The future of retail starts here

EuroCIS, The Leading Trade Fair for Retail Technology, will be held from 31 May to 2 June at Düsseldorf Exhibition Centre this year. And there is reason to celebrate because it will already be turning 25! As an “offspring” to EuroShop, The World’s No. 1 Retail Trade Fair, it is, of course, closely related to it. It was at EuroShop that not only the idea for a stand-alone trade fair for retail technology was born but also the need for it was understood early on.

Technology never sleeps! This became impressively clear at EuroShop 1996. Back then information, communication and security technologies developed into what became the eminent growth segment of retail. Messe Düsseldorf and EHI Retail Institute, the conceptual sponsor of EuroShop, quickly recognised the signs of the time: the 3-year EuroShop trade fair cycle was no longer living up to the dynamic innovations in this segment with its enormously short innovation cycles and its growing importance. And this is why the following year already saw the “Technology Forum 97” celebrate its premiere – the “birth” of today’s EuroCIS.

As a showcase for the latest IT developments, the Technology Forum was held in-between two EuroShop dates, to complement these and offer retailers everything they needed to be competitive with more efficient, innovative processes and a stronger customer focus.



EuroShop Trade Fairs

EuroCIS

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31 MAY – 2 JUNE 2022
DÜSSELDORF GERMANY
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Öffentliche Verkehrsmittel:
U78, U79: Messe Ost/Stockumer Kirchstr.
Bus 722: Messe-Center Verwaltung

Milestones of the trade fair

From 28 to 30 October 1997 the event kicked off as an exhibition cum congress at the Stadthalle as well as Congress Center Süd of Düsseldorf Exhibition Centre; and it exceeded all expectations right from the start: 105 exhibitors from seven countries presented solutions ranging from check-out systems to central merchandise management, from article to building surveillance – 1,821 trade visitors came to view them. The millennium was imminent and, hence, the worrying question of whether the changeover of the dates would work in all computer systems. Nearly all older equipment then still operated with two-digit annual figures and the apocalyptic fears were that the devices might fail or do irrational things due to this “Millennium Bug”. We then lived to see the changeover work without a hitch.

Another hotly disputed issue of the day addressed with foresight was the introduction of the Euro. What was a costly investment necessity for retailers, proved a new business opportunity for the IT sector. Changes to check-out and weighing systems, to pricing and administration all became necessary.

Highlights of the congress accompanying the first event included lectures by several online-shopping pioneers – we all know what has become of e-Commerce. Connected retail, the perfecting of omnichannel strategies and seamless integration of channels are the current mega theme.

In the year 2000 the event was renamed ‘Retail Technology’ and moved to one of the exhibition halls: just under 200 exhibitors, 5,000 sqm net exhibition space and more than 4,700 trade visitors meant figures doubled those of the premiere across the board.

When 2002 finally saw new structuring for big brother EuroShop, the name EuroCIS was launched to reflect the technology segment with this independent trade fair also changing its name. Retail Technology thus became EuroCIS and it went on to enjoy further successful growth. Since 2015 it has occupied not one but two exhibition halls (9 and 10). The latest EuroCIS 2019 registered 482 exhibitors from 39 nations on just under 14,000 sqm net exhibition space. Likewise, the origin of the over 13,000 visitors impressively underpinned the international relevance of EuroCIS: 51% of the trade fair guests travelled from abroad, from 94 countries, to be precise. No other trade fair covers the rapid technological



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progress especially in retail so comprehensively and topically featuring all facets of retail technology.

Looking at some of the past innovations you do wonder how fast some dreams of the future found their way into our everyday lives. In 2006 one statement by EHI on EuroCIS read: “One topic at EuroCIS will also be RFID, a technology that might fundamentally revolutionise shopping.” Today, Radio Frequency Identification forms an integral part of a wide range of retail areas: it was RFID that accelerated logistics processes or made goods movements seamlessly traceable. It is RFID that brings today’s Smart Fitting Rooms to life and makes it possible to supply online orders from physical stores thanks to transparent inventories. It also contributes to the transparency of supply chains that is increasingly called for – the buzzword here being: sustainability.

Cheerful robot Paul, introduced for dialogue with shoppers at EuroCIS 2018, is but one example of the speedy developments occurring in the background that frequently go unnoticed by shoppers. Robotics are accelerating the automation of logistics, warehousing and processes in general, where artificial intelligence and big-data analyses are also making more and more inroads. This way developments can be foreseen at an earlier stage and shoppers can be better addressed.

Shopping of the future

EuroCIS, which started out as a rather sober technical event, has now become a multi-sensorial one where IT experts in retail discover just as many purposeful tools as do display professionals. Technology has now revolutionised all areas and contributes to the customer journey. In just a few years digital signage, for example, has become the standard. Monitors with atmospheric imagery, videos, news and advertising can also long be found with smaller companies and are part and parcel of modern communication with shoppers. Be it in shop windows or in the store, as free-standing steles, LED backwalls or digital guidance systems.

Finally, the pandemic has given digitalisation a huge boost. Many experts even expect completely digitalised outlets in future. 24/7 stores – already presented in the EuroCIS segment at EuroShop 2020 – are booming. They work entirely autonomously without any sales or check-out staff. Shoppers gain access by smartphone-based authentication



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and also pay contactless in accordance with a self-check-out principle. In general, smartphones are increasingly becoming key touchpoints.

It makes you smile remembering at EuroCIS 2013 visitors still marvelled at digital receipts immediately popping up on their smartphone display or saw mini digital signage solutions wearable on the wrist to address shoppers as science fiction. This is not even 10 years ago and yet it has become so normal. Rightly so, the motto at this year's EuroCIS is "Tomorrow is the New Today".

It is not only the trade fair itself but also the side events at EuroCIS that have been constantly finetuned over time. They started as a congress but it quickly transpired that live forums inside the halls were the right avenue to offer trade fair visitors genuine added value. This was not only due to ease of access but also because here retail technology specialists along with their retail customers can report directly from practice. And those losing the overview in the jungle of technological possibilities are helped by free Guided Innovation Tours, which have been regularly offered to retailers as a bookable service at EuroCIS since 2015.

The coming EuroCIS will be open from Tuesday, 31 May, to Thursday, 2 June 2022, from 10.00 am to 8.00 pm daily. Tickets are only available online. 1-day tickets cost EUR 25, 3-day tickets are EUR 45. www.eurocis-tradefair.com

Be sure to also visit our online magazine EuroShop/EuroCIS.mag featuring hot topics revolving around retail technology.

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