

A Computer P

"At first my 13-year-old didn't want to visit. Now he doesn't want to leave."

"We'll have to come back. I had no idea there was so much here."

Initial reaction to the new exhibit has been extremely positive, according to a July visitor survey by independent evaluator Kathryn O'Neill. "The gallery excites young people and groups especially," she reports. In fact, 85 percent of those surveyed visited in groups of two to five.

TOOLS & TOYS "captures their imagination," says O'Neill.

While many visitors saw the area as a "playroom for kids," almost 75 percent understood that the exhibit's purpose was educational and that it was designed as a hands-on exhibit to show the various uses of the computer.

The three most popular theme areas were: Making Sound, Making Pictures, and Playing Games. Almost 30 of the exhibit's 37 stations made visitors' lists of favorites. "It's unusual that so many different things appeal to so many different people," O'Neill noted. She was also surprised — given how much easier it is to criticize than be positive — that 64 percent of those surveyed had no response to "What do you like least?" Another surprise was how many grandparents and grandchildren visited together — 10 percent.



The **AMAZING**
Personal Computer

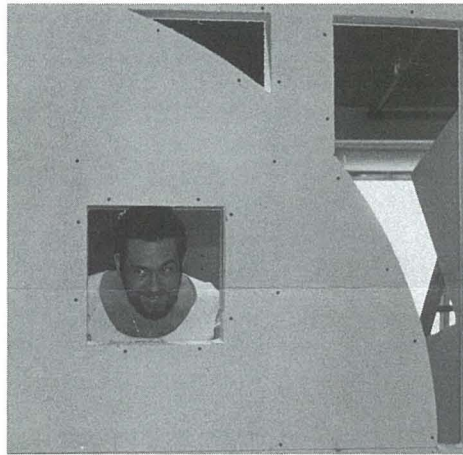
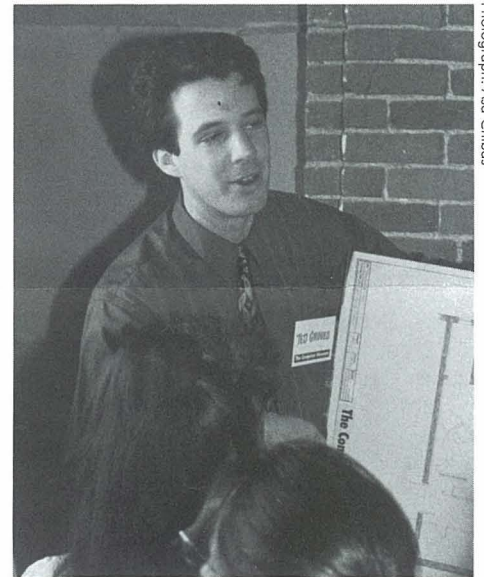


Exhibit carpenter Wayne Cookson takes a break from hammering and painting last spring.



Museum Designer Ted Groves shows volunteers the floor plan for TOOLS & TOYS: The Amazing Personal Computer in March 1992.



Some of the team who brought you TOOLS & TOYS stand near the entrance. They are from the left: Åsa Chibas, Dan Griscom, Greg Welch, Ted Groves, Lauren O'Neal, Natalie Rusk, Stina Cooke, Don Greene, and David Greschler.

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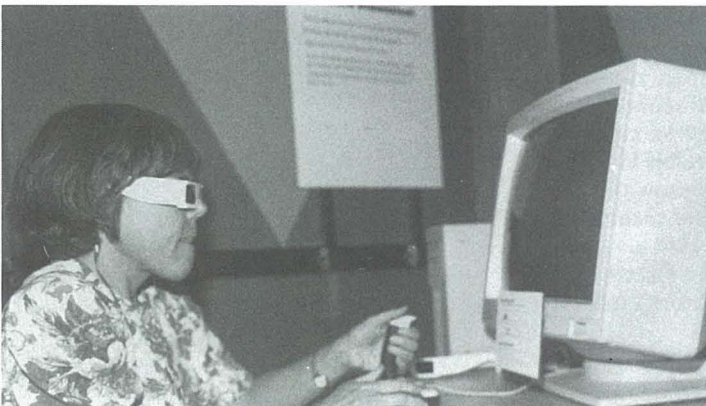
Boston Computer Society Chairman Jonathan Rotenberg (second from right), who initiated plans for the exhibit over 10 years ago, helps TOOLS & TOYS sponsor Mitchell Kapor, President, Electronic Frontier Foundation (far left), during the ribbon-cutting ceremony in June. Museum Executive Director Dr. Oliver Strimpel (second from left) and Gardner Hendrie, Chairman of the Museum's Board (far right), join in.

Photograph: FAYFOTO



In the Making Sound area, visitor Billy Brown, 10 (on left), reads a sentence into a computer and then plays it backwards. Sister Lisa, 12 (center), uses a voice recognition system to write a letter she can print out and take back with her to Kirkwood, Missouri. On the right, Beth Brown, 13, types a sentence which the computer says right back to her!

Photograph: FAYFOTO



Using 3D glasses, a Museum visitor explores the third dimension in the Playing Games area.

Top Five Interactive Stations (according to the visitor survey):

- **Be Your Own Band**
Use a MIDI system with drumstick and keyboard to compose, play and record everything from classical to salsa and rock music.
- **Alphabet Noodle Soup**
Choose a word in English or Spanish and use the letters to see how many words you can make.
- **Make Your Own Cartoon**
Find out how computer-assisted animation works by creating a short cartoon using digitized sounds of frogs, birds, and flies.
- **Entering the Third Dimension**
Use 3D glasses and zoom through a corridor while avoiding speeding objects.
- **Draw on the Wall**
Draw on a grand scale using a giant projection of a paint program.