

## **EXPONET - VIRTUAL INTERNATIONAL PHILATELIC EXHIBITION**

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Philatelists have always used technological tools, such as photographic enlargement and various lights, to compare watermarks, to evaluate their stamps, and for fundamental examination of their items. Before the advent of the internet, enthusiasts had to travel hundreds, sometimes thousands, of kilometers to attend postage stamp exhibitions to study particular stamps or excellent exhibits.

In the past ten years philately too has been caught up in the massive information boom. Daily philatelic life now includes the computer and the internet. While the early enthusiasts started philately on-line, stamp dealers and philatelic magazines have increased everyone's awareness of on-line philately. A most ambitious on-line project, EXPONET ([www.exponet.info](http://www.exponet.info)) began in 2004.

EXPONET replaced the Japhila site where one could see Mr. Milan Cerniks (one of the original founder's of EXPONET) website exhibit Double Post Cards in use from 1918 to 1939. From their beginning came the idea to construct an internet project with tens, perhaps hundreds, of exhibits free for all to view. Mr. Bretislav Janik and Mr. Milan Cernik founded a project no one had ever dared to try. Eventually, Mr. Vít Vaníček joined them. Today he is EXPONET's official international representative.

The idea behind EXPONET is to offer digital versions of the best philatelic exhibits and collections, and to insure their future preservation. The exhibits offer a great range of study material of interest to many collectors. In the real world, an exhibit's lifetime is limited. Thanks to EXPONET, exhibits will now survive their owners.

Initially, an organizing board was formed which eventually became a non-profit society bearing the same name. This was done to enhance virtual philatelic exhibits, to make them interesting for visitors, and to prepare for future expansion. In any event, with the cooperation of a few collectors from the US, EXPONET soon earned an international reputation.

When PRAGA 2008 opens, EXPONET will house nearly 2000 exhibit frames. Today, EXPONET offers more than 32,000 different pages of content. EXPONET has already received permission from more than 200 exhibitors from 37 countries to show their exhibits and more than 20 exhibitors utilize the possibility to show their stamps anonymously. Thanks to EXPONET's non-traditional venue, an unlimited number of similar exhibits can be compared. EXPONET also offers an historical record of an exhibit's progress. One may compare the successive development from an exhibit's earlier versions.

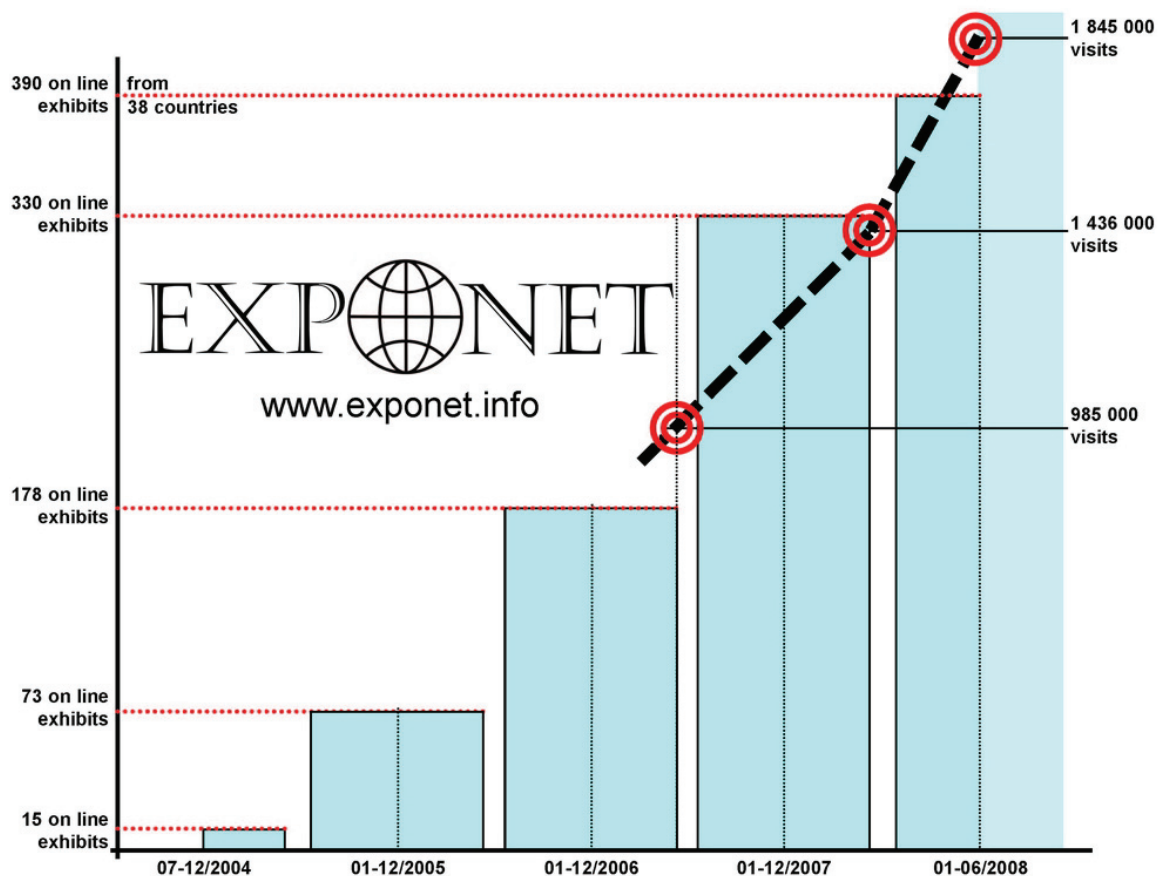
EXPONET has become today's largest philatelic database. Visitors, jurists, and stamp dealers are all served by EXPONET. Unfortunately, an effective searching mechanism still needs to be developed.

Not every philatelist has an opportunity to visit large exhibitions. One may visit EXPONET as frequently as one wishes without undergoing the expense of travel, and one may compare one's own collection with those on-line.

And we need to repeat an outstanding advantage of virtual exhibits. Many of us can remember famous exhibits that took decades to build, yet disappeared forever at their owner's death. EXPONET promises to preserve such exhibits for coming generations.

Because of this, EXPONET has received from different auction houses exhibits in great demand. EXPONET can present a number of excellent exhibits which have been sold or changed ownership. Such exhibits can be seen on EXPONET intact. Thanks to a growing population of internet users, EXPONET may handle as many as 30,000 visitors each day. One of the more popular items is its on-

line catalog of Czechoslovak entires. Its philatelic literature section houses rare materials most collectors will not even find an a postage stamp exhibition.



Many collectors do have their own collection preserved on personal computers, but have no means of sharing them with internet visitors, some because of cost, others simply do not know how to do it. The solution is simple, just send us a link.

EXPONET's purpose is not to replace classical stamp exhibitions and the social contacts they engender. Rather, EXPONET offers a many-faceted philatelic mosaic, an internet meeting place for collectors and exhibitors. EXPONET's digital exhibits can expand your knowledge, something valuable to take with you to a commercial exhibition.

The founders of EXPONET welcome the cooperation of international federations and philatelic societies. They are prepared to enter into agreements with them, just as they did with the Czech philatelic societies. EXPONET can offer for free inexhaustible on-line storage capacity, know-how, time, and good will. Plans are in the making to redesign the site with new functionality.

EXPONET was founded by philatelists for philatelists. Its goal is to grow to satisfy every visitor's desire for exhibits and information. Everyone should feel invited to join the EXPONET project. Perhaps you may become your country's next EXPONET representative.

We look forward to your cooperation and your next visit to [www.exponet.info](http://www.exponet.info)

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