

On its 100th Anniversary, IBM Wants You to THINK

Written by Bob Snyder
23. 11. 2011



THINK. It was 100 years ago that IBM founder Thomas J. Watson, Sr. put this one-word slogan on a nameplate on his own desk to remind his executives what IBM culture required of its executives. Soon signs appeared in IBM offices and factories. By the 1920s and in the early 1930s, THINK began to take precedence over other slogans in IBM.

You can still find echoes of Watson's motto in the brand name of IBM's popular notebook computers (now sold-off to Lenovo): the **ThinkPad**.

For IBM's 100 anniversary, the centennial iteration is IBM's THINK Exhibit at Lincoln Center in New York City, an ambitious exhibit that combined live data visualization, a first-of-a-kind immersive film, and giant interactive stations to explore how we live and work.

Live data-visualization wall: A 37.5 meter digital wall visualizes, in real time, the live data streaming from the systems surrounding the exhibit, from automobile traffic on adjacent Broadway avenue, to solar energy, to air quality. Visitors discovered how we can now "see" change, waste and opportunities in the world's systems.

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Immersive film: Inside the exhibit space, visitors stepped into a media field composed of 40 screens, each 2.13 meters high. As the screens come to life, visitors watched a 12-minute immersive film. A kaleidoscope of images and sound surrounded them in a rich narrative about the pattern of progress, told through stories of the past and present. IBM wanted to inspire people **to think** about humankind's quest for progress, and about making our world work better..

Interactive experience: At the conclusion of the film, these 40 media panels become interactive touchscreens. Visitors could explore our human quest to think and see more—from clocks and scales to microscopes and telescopes, RFID chips and biomedical sensors. They learned how maps have been used to track data, from early geographical maps to the most recent databases and data visualization platforms. They interacted with the models used to understand the complex behaviors of our world—from weather prediction algorithms to virus spread simulations. They heard from leaders of world-changing initiatives about how they built belief. And they read about some of the most inspiring examples of systemic progress around the world. Each touchscreen also gave visitors the opportunity to provide their own point of view and learn what others were thinking.

100 years later, IBM still has the best advice for corporate executives everywhere: THINK.

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