

**Swiss Museum of
Computer Science
Digital Culture
and Video Games**



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Musée Bolo

Swiss Museum of Computer Science,
Digital Culture and Video Games

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A new museum

During the 20th century, we entered the digital age. The rise of new technologies such as computers and the Internet has caused a profound upheaval in our societies, our homes and our professional lives. The global networking of individuals and modern means of communication are breaking down geographical and cultural barriers. Our goal, as a cultural institution linked to the history of computing, is to shed light on the issues at stake.

Thanks to a unique collection in Europe, built up over the last 25 years, the Musée Bolo fulfills this primordial role of decoding digital technology.

Our ambitions are high, but they are currently limited by our modest means. The tireless work of the association Les Amis du Musée Bolo and the current premises are no substitute for the immense potential that could be deployed in a museum project.

We would like to exhibit our collections in a larger space, to better highlight them. To offer temporary exhibitions that will decipher the present and the future of digital technology. To achieve these goals, we need to professionalize the museum by hiring permanent and qualified staff to ensure cultural mediation, repair, inventory, conservation and maintenance of our pieces.

Currently, our priority is to ensure the financing of the storage facilities necessary to safeguard and store this digital heritage. Each year, the museum's collections are enriched by donations from individuals or companies who entrust us with their pieces with the hope of one day seeing them exhibited in a major national museum.

This heritage, thanks to the innovative concept adopted by our institution and to its unique pole of competence, fully justifies that Musée Bolo, Swiss Museum of Computer Science, Digital Culture and Video Games, becomes the Swiss reference in this field.

Let's build this project together



"To perpetuate Musée Bolo is a great challenge. But the many achievements of the past (exhibitions, projects, events) and the quality of the collections highlight the potential of the project."

Yves Bolognini, founder of Musée Bolo



The Musée Bolo project

An unprecedented project in Switzerland

The museum's ambition is to tell the story and preserve the history of computers, digital technology and video games in Switzerland and elsewhere, from 1950 to the present day, as these fields have completely revolutionised society and our daily lives.

A space in keeping with the scale of the museum's collection would make it possible to continue conserving, archiving, researching and exhibiting. A suitable place would be a showcase for the technical, scientific, contemporary and artistic heritage that is Musée Bolo's collection.

Musée Bolo currently provides a permanent exhibition within the EPFL and accessible to the public during the opening hours of the university buildings. As the exhibition can only present a tiny part of the collections, this precious heritage is stored in depots around Lausanne.

Our project plans to create a museum that would bring together the exhibition and the entire collection on the same site.

The Mémoires Informatiques foundation is planning to acquire a building to house the complete collection and present it to visitors in an innovative and user-friendly exhibition space.

Musée Bolo will be able to take visitors on a journey and act as a real bridge between the world of machines and the human world, not only to educate the public but also to prompt it to reflect and start a dialogue with it.

Based on a museographic sketch designed in collaboration with Marc Atallah, the director of the Maison d'Ailleurs in Yverdon-les-Bains, Musée Bolo would present itself in an innovative and modern form, combining interactivity, time travel and contemplation.

A suitable space in keeping with the scale of the museum's collection will allow conservation, archiving, research and development activities to be carried out properly



Through interactive exhibits and digital workshops, the Musée Bolo will take the visitors on a journey and act as a real bridge between the world of machines and the world of humans



A modern museography

Fixed and semi-permanent areas

The museum tour will begin with an introductory zone in which supercomputers, the precursors of computing, will be exhibited. Then, through semi-permanent zones, which the furniture and lighting will allow to modulate according to the themes of the exhibitions, the public will be able to follow a narrative path in which each space will be an element of the storyline.

A cafeteria, a multipurpose room for conferences, a library and a boutique will complete the museum space.

Permanent exhibitions

[The <Start> room]

The exploration will begin with an introductory room that will act as a trigger for the story that will be told by the exhibition, highlighting the precursors.

[The <Helvetica> room]

The visit will continue with a "Helvetica" room, highlighting Swiss creative innovation in the fields of IT, technology and videogames.

[The <Media library> room]

In this zone, the visitor can watch educational films (interviews, documentaries) or explore, through multimedia terminals, documents related to the exhibition.

[The <Informatik> room]

Through the computers, peripherals and software that form the heart of Musée Bolo's collections, together with an interactive section, visitors will be able to experience the exhibition's theme in a concrete way. A static section will allow the presentation of rare or fragile pieces, highlighting the design or exceptionality of the objects.

[The <Games> room]

This area will present the second core of Musée Bolo's collections: video games, the largest entertainment industry in the world. It will contain an area allowing visitors to play a selection of works and a "Discovery" area that will let them reflect on the phenomena specific to games.

Artwork created by Manfred Mohr, one of the pioneers of digital art (collection of Musée Bolo)



Interactive digital installation *Amphibolis* by Miguel Chevalier presented in the personal exhibition *Digital Abysses* at Aqua Planet on Jeju Island (South Korea) from November 8, 2021 to November 6, 2022. www.miguel-chevalier.com



Temporary exhibitions

[The <Lab> room]

Here, the public will be invited to get moving and experiment. This area will have an important role in cultural mediation with young audiences or school visits. Workshops will be held there.

[The <Alt> room]

Flagship themes will be explored in greater depth, such as: Computer science and science fiction; Supercomputers and the brain; Digital culture in today's society; Interfaces as artefacts of the five senses; Computers and the environment.

[The <Escape> space]

A room entirely dedicated to digital art will highlight artistic installations and artists' visions that will complete the discourse of the exhibition, and open it up to aesthetic and plastic perspectives.

Take part in the adventure

Become our VIP

You are a private individual nostalgic for the machines you have used, you are enthusiastic about today's digital technologies, you are a collector.

Become our sponsor

You are a public administration, an organization dedicated to education and teaching. You are a company active in computer science, in digital technology or in various other economic areas and wish to enhance your image.

Sponsors, your advantages

Musée Bolo creates an image of dynamism and education. By taking part in its projects, you make your company stand out among your customers, potential clients and employees.

Image and visibility

The museum's exhibitions are currently located in the heart of the EPFL. They are visited by more than 6,000 people (excluding students) per year. Your presence through individual plaques or an inscription on the sponsors' wall gives you excellent visibility. The museum's website has 10,000 visitors per year and offers several spaces where your logos can be displayed. The museum takes part in four major events each year, including the Night of the Museums of Lausanne and Pully. The museum's partners appear on all the printed material produced for each occasion.

Guided tours

We organise guided tours of the museum and temporary exhibitions for your employees, customers and prospects. Alternatively, you can visit the museum's computer storage rooms, a veritable Aladdin's cave!

Exhibition on your premises

Our team can also organise, on your company's premises, a mini exhibition of vintage computers.

Sponsorships

Temporary exhibitions can be sponsored. We also have the skills to restore and restart rare and unique computers. Sponsorship of an exhibition or of a restored machine are rare privileges because they are widely publicised in the media.

VIP, vos avantages

You take an active part in the life of the museum by benefiting from the various counterparts according to your desires. The BoloCoins that you have accumulated offer you, for example, the possibility to take a guided tour of the storage rooms, to receive the exhibition book "Programmed Disappearance" or to obtain a VIP entrance to a museum event.

Certain forms of partnership are tax deductible





Musée Bolo today

A unique collection

Musée Bolo has one of Europe's largest IT legacies, including historical computers, peripherals (printers, readers and monitors), game consoles and calculators. They are complemented by a very large quantity of software, documentation and numerous publications, several thousand books, magazines, newspapers and personal archives, not forgetting video games (games, consoles and peripherals). The fame of the Musée Bolo extends far beyond the borders of Switzerland.

The collections of Musée Bolo continue to grow. Some of the acquisitions are rare, such as the Cray or IBM's Blue Gene supercomputers, the only survivors in a mad race for ultimate performance. Collectors offer new or almost new computers in their original boxes. Sometimes, it is a unique collection that joins the museum, such as the Bruno Bonnell collection, which illustrates 24 years of the life of Infogrames, a French video game company.

A Swiss heritage

Historical evidence of the development of IT in Switzerland since the 1950s has an important place in the collection. For example, Musée Bolo exhibits the first commercially available Swiss computer, the Cora 1 (1963), used notably at Expo 64 in Lausanne, the complete family of Smaky microcomputers, designed at the EPFL, the first mice behind the success of the Logitech company, as well as the Lilith workstation created in 1977 by Niklaus Wirth, the inventor of the Pascal programming language.

Jean-Daniel Nicoud, the inventor of smaky®, microcomputers in French-speaking Switzerland



Contraves Cora 1, 1963



Diser Lilith, 1982



Dépraz Mouse, 1981

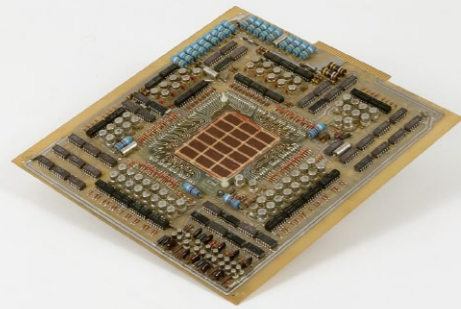


SCS Gigabooster, 1992



Smaky 1, 1975

Books and magazines



Ferrite core memory



Atari 400, 1979



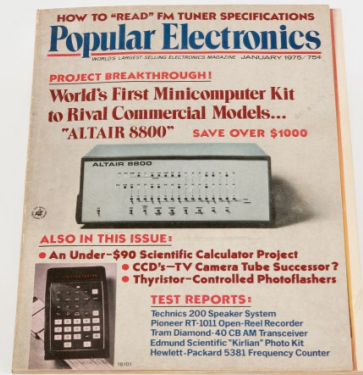
Apple Macintosh, 1984



Disappeared media



Teletype Model 33, 1963



Popular Electronics Magazine, 1975



Video games, Bruno Bonnell fund

Softwares



Nintendo VirtualBoy, 1995



Commodore 64, 1982



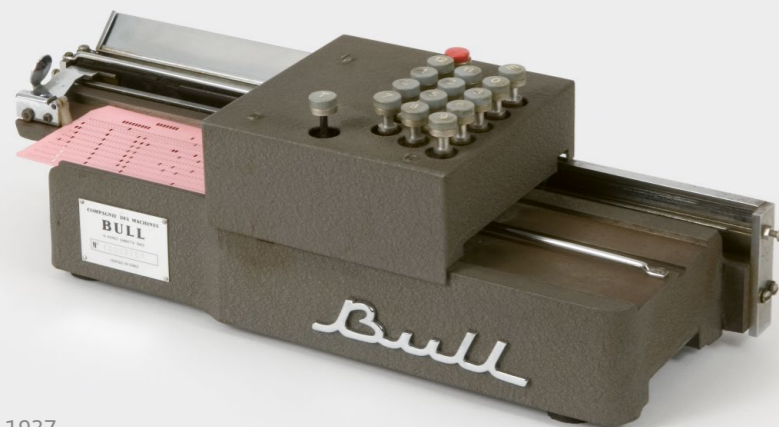
Commodore 8296, 1977



Atari 2600, 1977



Bobst Graphic Scrib, 1978



Bull P80, 1937



Digital PDP-11/20, 1970



Moore-Reed Acoustic Coupler, 1980

Computers and video game consoles

A skill center

The Mémoires Informatiques foundation that runs the Museum is supported by the association Les Amis du Musée Bolo. This association brings together a dynamic team of computer enthusiasts and professionals. The association supervises several areas of expertise in order to ensure the tangible and intangible conservation of this heritage, its technical know-how and its presentation to the public.

The voluntary members of the association catalogue, restore and restart machines and software. Their know-how is unique in Switzerland, whether it is recovering data from obsolete media or operating a giant computer whose once prosperous manufacturer has fallen into oblivion. They also organize demonstrations, museum tours and animate several annual events in order to make the digital heritage accessible and alive.

Companies, museums and other institutions in Switzerland and abroad call upon the association. Recently, the museum collaborated with the National Museum in Zurich on the temporary exhibition Games, which retraces the history of video games, by lending two of its flagship pieces from Switzerland and the United States respectively: a Smaky 6 microcomputer (1976) and a NeXT computer (1985).

"To understand the digital shift affecting our societies today, it is essential to situate it within a narrative of technical and cultural practices spanning many years. In this context, French-speaking Switzerland is fortunate to have an institution like Musée Bolo, which understood the issues relating to the patrimonialization of computing devices before many others. Within their collection of national significance can be found the bases of computer games which have no equivalent elsewhere, and which constitute invaluable material for researchers from Switzerland and abroad."

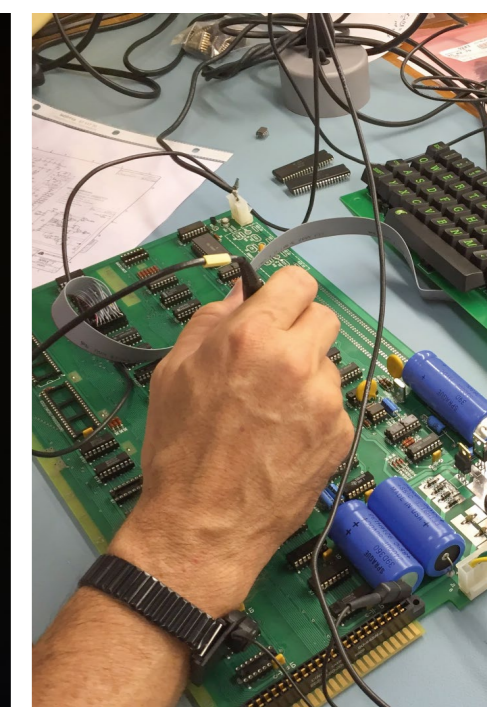
UNIL Gamelab, Lausanne

Through technical feats, the association Les Amis du Musée Bolo has put prestigious machines back into operation, such as the Blue Gene/P supercomputer donated to the museum by the IBM company. An IBM RS/6000 computer was also refurbished and then loaned to the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) as part of a heritage conservation project linked to the World Wide Web. The association's team also built a replica of the Apple 1 microcomputer, a legendary machine of which only a few copies remain in the world.

Students in conservation-restoration at the Haute-Ecole Arc de Neuchâtel are also involved in the conservation of computer heritage and carry out research projects in collaboration with the museum. These are just a few examples of what the museum can achieve thanks to the unique skills of those who run it.



A unique
center of
expertise



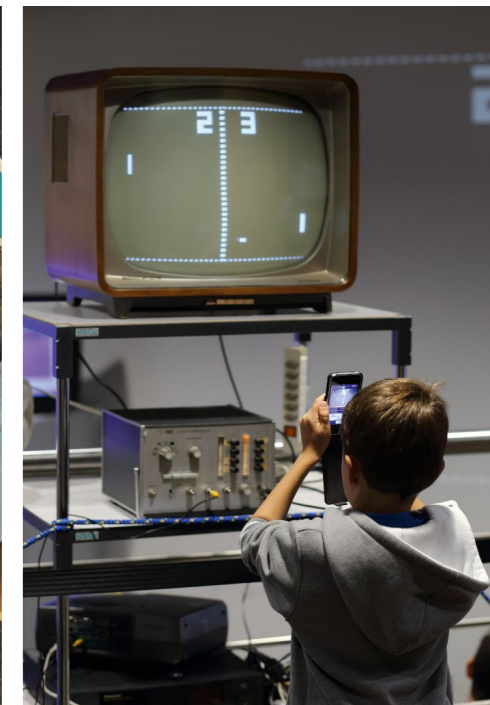
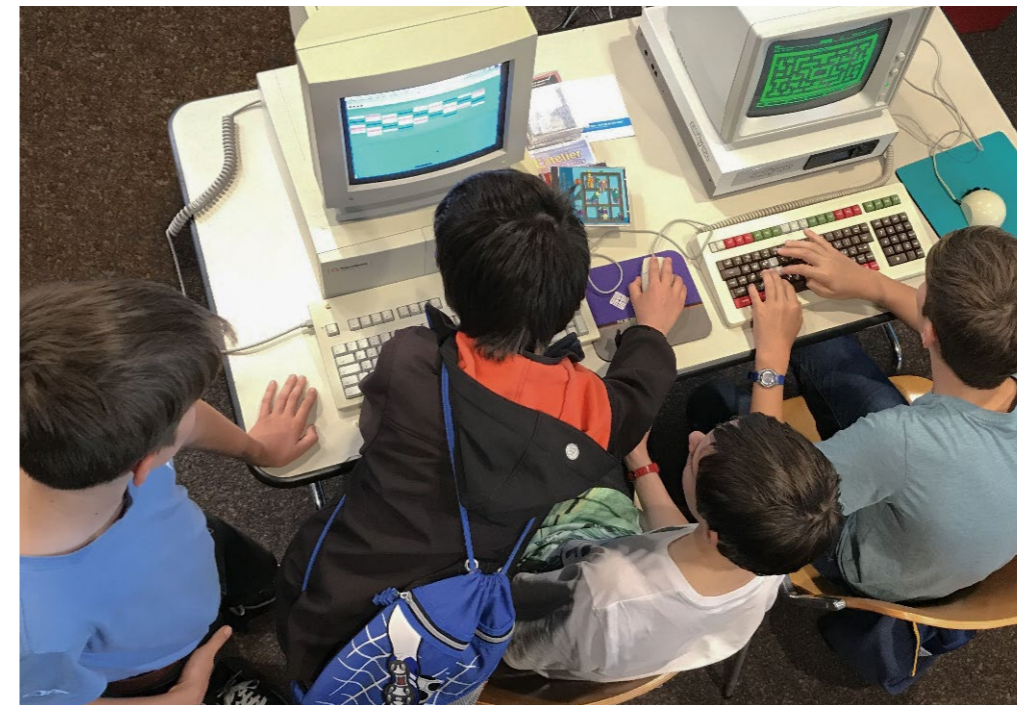
Historical background

The history of Musée Bolo begins in 1995 with a young computer science student who picks up an Apple II in the street. The first item in a collection that quickly became a passion for Yves Bolognini. With the help of his friends, he creates an association and sets up a first exhibition in the School of Computer and Communication Sciences at the EPFL. This is the beginning of the adventure for Musée Bolo.

In 2007, the Mémoires Informatiques foundation is created with the aim of safeguarding and displaying this computer heritage in its best light. The founding members are chosen among the pioneers of the discipline. Their mission is the management of the museum and the preparation of various museum projects.

In 2011, Programmed Disappearance renews the museum's image. With its provocative title, this exhibition approaches the history of computer science from a playful angle, without being reduced to a simple chronology. The five investigative strands detail why and how the computer is becoming progressively smaller, camouflaging itself, passing unnoticed, dematerializing in the cloud, and competing with man. Paradoxically, it has never been so present in a world where computing is everywhere and nowhere. An eponymous bilingual French-English book, Programmed Disappearance, perpetuates the exhibition.

The exhibition inaugurates a series of projects developed along the lines of the same concept: deciphering the digital revolution and its present and future technological prowess in the light of objects from the past.



Yves Bolognini
founder of
Musée Bolo

Guided tour of
the Programmed
Disappearance
exhibition

"In 2009, for the 20th anniversary of the WWW, CERN called on the association Les Amis du Musée Bolo to overhaul the first web server. Without the skills of their team we would not have been able to boot up this historic machine. Knowledge preservation and a stock of totally irreplaceable and impossible to manufacture parts are key. The museum therefore plays an essential role in this area, not only for Switzerland but for all of Europe and the world."

Robert Cailliau, Word Wide Web pioneer

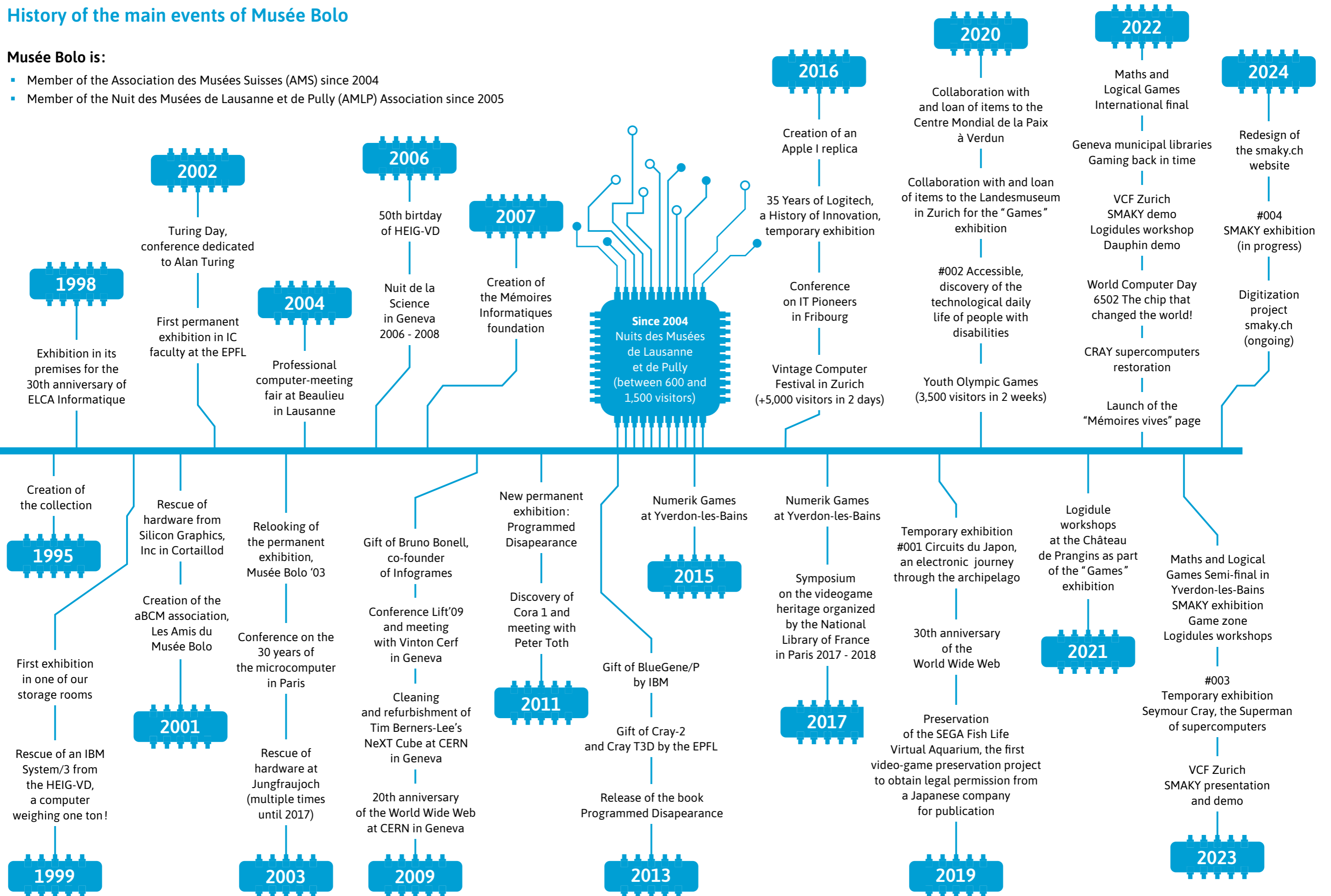
Main reserve
of Musée Bolo
800 m²



History of the main events of Musée Bolo

Musée Bolo is:

- Member of the Association des Musées Suisses (AMS) since 2004
- Member of the Nuit des Musées de Lausanne et de Pully (AMLPL) Association since 2005





Your support is precious!

Main partners



sponsor projects



Sponsors



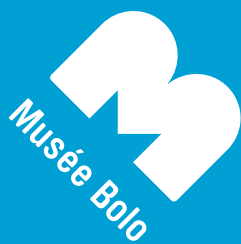
Partenaire média



Take a look at
our partners
and sponsors

"The field of computer science being relatively young, the conservation of its heritage has not yet received the attention it deserves. Musée Bolo became aware long before any of us of the need to work towards this preservation and has been able, for more than 20 years, to gather together a collection that is unique in Switzerland and with world wide exposure."

Patrick Amaru, Head of the IT Department, Canton de Vaud



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Photos: © Sébastien Monachon
Project Pomme One - Programmed Disappearance - The items of the museum