

## 37th Conference on the History of Technology "Products and Product Innovations"

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Date 14–15 November 2014  
Venue Klostergut Paradies, Schlatt, Switzerland  
Organizer Iron Library, Foundation of Georg Fischer Ltd  
Deadline 31 March 2014

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### Call for Papers

The 37th Conference on the History of Technology will be held at the Klostergut Paradies in Schlatt, Switzerland on 14 and 15 November 2014. The Conference has served as an outstanding platform for the exchange of ideas between research, teaching and industry since 1978. The speakers and the invited guests come from universities, libraries, collections and museums or contribute their business and industrial experience. The conferences are renowned for the breadth and topicality of the papers presented. You can find information on previous conferences at: [www.eisenbibliothek.ch](http://www.eisenbibliothek.ch).

This international and interdisciplinary event is organized by the Iron Library (Eisenbibliothek), Foundation of Georg Fischer Ltd. Responsibility for the content of the conference is in the hands of Kilian T. Elsasser (Museumsfabrik Lucerne), Prof. Reinhold Reith (University of Salzburg) and Prof. Friedrich Steinle (TU Berlin), and it is they who decide on the selection of the speakers.

We kindly invite interested persons involved in research, teaching and practice to apply to present a paper.

### Conference topic in 2014: "Products and Product Innovations"

Unlike process innovations, product innovations have attracted hardly any attention in the history of technology. Yet products and product refinements provide an interesting angle of approach from which to focus on the aspects of demand and consumption. During the past decade, historical consumer research has developed into a discipline capable of combining the study of cultural, economic and technological issues through time. Reflections on "innovation culture" can also be viewed in the context of (historical) innovation research. This includes the area of "failed innovations", though the reasons for failure are multifaceted and often unrelated to technology. The concept of the product line, which grew out of ecological considerations, that is to say, the evaluation of products and their life cycle, is yet another angle of approach. The expectations consumers have of products may change over time: price, design, durability, reparability, user friendliness and energy efficiency are only some of the parameters with which the historical change that products undergo can be defined. Sample or swatch books, catalogs or even product information directories offer an insight into product diversity. The museum sector provides the concept of "boundary objects", objects that represent entire product epochs and product cycles and symbolize changes in the way of life. The list of approaches to this open-ended topic can and should be explored from a variety of historical, social scientific and related disciplines.

**Format**

The papers may be delivered in German or English and should not be longer than 30 minutes (incl. the discussion time). Papers that have been prepared to scientific standards may be selected for publication in the specialized journal *Ferrum*, which is published annually by the Iron Library.

**Synopsis**

Interested applicants are kindly invited to submit a synopsis of their paper, electronically – no longer than two A4 pages – in German or English, along with an up-to-date resume, by 31 March 2014 to the Head of the Iron Library, lic. phil. Franziska Eggimann ([franziska.eggimann@georgfischer.com](mailto:franziska.eggimann@georgfischer.com)).

**Organizational matters**

The Iron Library, Foundation of Georg Fischer Ltd, will assume speakers' travel expenses and the cost of room and board during the Conference. We expect that speakers will attend the entire Conference.

**Timelines**

We request you to submit your synopsis by 31 March 2014.

The selection of the speakers will be completed by the end of May 2014 at the latest.

**Contact person**

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