

Happy birthday, Plus!



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News

## Happy birthday, *Plus*!



*Plus* turns 10 today!

The first issue of *Plus*, or *Pass Maths* as it was called then, hit computer screens in January 1997. It was the brain child of founding editor Robert Harding, and the *Plus* team Maura Bourdon and Steve Lay. Its aim, then and now, was to open a door to the wonderful world of maths with all its beauty and applications. Over the years, some of the best mathematicians and science writers have contributed articles exploring the maths behind subjects as diverse as cosmology, art, medicine and music, and the list goes on.

*Plus* does something that no other maths resource does: it presents big mathematical ideas and applications in a way that is accessible to anyone with a basic knowledge of maths, but it does so without glossing over the hard bits or shying away from complex ideas. Its rolling news desk is the only one there is for maths, bringing you news from the world of maths, as well as the maths behind other news.

"There is nothing else like *Plus*, anywhere," says Helen Joyce, former *Plus* editor and now Education Correspondent for *The Economist*. "Although there's a great argument to be made for mathematics as the underpinning of all science, philosophy, technology and indeed rational thought, too often it loses out in the media stakes to more photogenic or politically 'hot' subjects, such as stem-cell research in science, or, in social affairs, theories about crime that focus on political beliefs rather than statistical data."

John D Barrow, director of the [Millennium Mathematics Project](#) of which *Plus* is a part, agrees: "*Plus* is a treasure trove of mathematical riches. Like no other publication on paper or in the aether, it shows the new and novel applications of mathematics to the world around us applications that would otherwise miss being recognised as part of the legacy of mathematics."

*Plus*'s uniqueness is reflected in its success. Its readership has grown steadily over the years and it can now boast well over 200,000 readers a month. In 2001, *Plus* won a Webby, the Oscars of the Internet, for best science site on the web, alongside other winners including the BBC and *National Geographic*. "The growing success of *Plus* demonstrates very clearly that it meets needs that are strongly felt in the mathematics community as well as in the public at large," says Maura Bourdon, one of the original *Plus* team.

On its 10th birthday, *Plus* is going as strongly as ever. Last year saw the launch of our [maths writing competition](#) which attracted floods of entries from readers of all backgrounds. We have a new birthday logo, and future plans include the first *Plus* podcasts, guest bloggers and a few ideas we can't give away just yet.

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There are many people that have been instrumental in making *Plus* what it is today. *Plus* is made possible by funding received from a number of generous organisations and individuals, as well as the support of the University of Cambridge. Equally important are the people that have formed the *Plus* team over the years. Steve Lay suggested the magazine format and created the original layout. Past editors Robert Hunt (now executive editor of *Plus*) and Helen Joyce have expertly steered the ship, Mike Pearson and Charles Trevelyan have made *Plus* look beautiful, and past staff including Kona Andrews and Mark Wainwright have left their mark. *Plus* exists within the auspices of the Millennium Mathematics Project, a non-profit-making educational initiative based at Cambridge University under the direction of John D Barrow. Countless mathematicians, scientists and science writers have contributed their fascinating articles on all aspects of maths.

But the main reason why we're still here and hoping to be for at least another 10 years is the support of our readers and their desire to live mathematics. So a big thanks to all our readers and happy birthday, *Plus*!!!!

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*Plus* is part of the family of activities in the Millennium Mathematics Project, which also includes the NRICH and MOTIVATE sites.