



Nanosurf AG

Grammetstrasse 14
4410 Liestal
Switzerland

Tel +41-61-927 56 46
Fax +41-61-927 56 47
E-Mail info@nanosurf.com

www.nanosurf.com

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1000th Nanosurf STM goes to high school

Friedrichshafen, Germany — Nanosurf delivers its 1000th Scanning Tunneling Microscope (STM) to the Claude-Dornier-Schule, a technical high school in Friedrichshafen, Germany, near the Bodensee (Lake Constance). The STM was demonstrated during an official event that attracted a large number of interested students, teachers, and representatives of the local press.

The event was organized by Dr. Heinz Beister as grand finale to a teaching course in “Specialty Technologies: Micro- and Nanotechnology”. Beister — who teaches Physics, Chemistry, Microsystem Technologies, as well as Aerospace Technology and Astronomy at the Claude-Dornier-Schule — is also strongly involved in the school’s “Jugend forscht” (a national contest that motivated high school students can enter with their own science projects) activities. Beister initiated the purchase of the STM out of school funding with full support of the school’s principal, Mr. Alfred Greis.

“As Nanotechnology advances more and more into our daily lives”, Beister says, “it is important to keep the school curriculum up-to-date with such technologies; otherwise our teaching no longer has any relevance to our students, nor does it stimulate their interest in science and technology. We have a real responsibility to introduce current equipment into the classroom if our young people are to be prepared for developments to come”.

It is estimated that global revenues from products incorporating Nanotechnology could exceed 2.78 trillion US-Dollar by end of the year 2015, corresponding to an amazing 15 percent of the global production of goods. “Teaching Nanotechnology should begin now, at all levels of education, if we are not to miss the boat here”, Beister stresses. His sentiments were echoed by students that took part in the Nanotechnology course and are in agreement with a recently published report by the German Ministry for Education and Research.

Beister’s students showed the results of their work on posters describing different fields of Nanotechnology and in live demonstrations of advanced practical assignment projects. The enthusiastic audience was then introduced to STM technology through a lecture by Dr. Paul Werten from Nanosurf. Directly afterwards, Dr. Marcus Weth, representative of Schaefer Technologie GmbH (Nanosurf’s German distribution partner), amazed all present by showing atoms and quantum-mechanical phenomena on a test sample within minutes of unpacking the nano-microscope. “Nanosurf’s well-known ease of use makes the STM an ideal teaching instrument that students can actually handle themselves”, Weth says.

The Claude-Dornier-Schule is the second German high school to come into possession of the Nanosurf STM, the first being the Hans-Thoma-Gymnasium in Lörrach. Dr. Bernd Kretschmer from this school founded the “Phaenovum” student research center: an institution set out to kindle high school students’ engagement in science and technology projects that bring together high schools, universities and companies in the so-called “Dreiländereck” (the area between Basel, Freiburg and Mulhouse). Kretschmer was recently awarded an honorable doctorate degree for his efforts by the University of Basel, Switzerland.

Beister hopes to create a similar center in the Bodensee area, which is Germany’s high-tech region number two after Stuttgart, to further the cooperation between the educational system and local industry, and to generate an attractive effect for the Bodensee area that will open up occupational perspectives for his students. “This is an investment in our most talented students”, Beister and Greis agree, “that will not only ensure their future, but that of the entire region as well”.

That the 1000th Nanosurf STM should go to a high school seems only fitting, as it was a similar demand back in 1996 that actually led to the founding of Nanosurf and to its first product, the easyScan STM. Heinrich Schenkel, Physics teacher at a high school in Oberwil, Switzerland, was the first to express his wish to make the nanoworld of atoms and molecules available to his students. From that original request to the present day, Nanosurf developed into a leading manufacturer of atomic force microscopes (AFM), scanning tunneling microscopes (STM) and their accessories. The company supplies and supports professionals in education, research and industry alike, with approximately 2000 systems operational worldwide. Nanosurf has its headquarters in Liestal, Switzerland, a subsidiary in Boston (Saugus), USA, and distribution partners all around the globe.

Images:



Assembly hall of the Claude-Dornier-Schule: engaged students perform their part in the demonstrations.



The entire audience tries to catch a glimpse of the STM at work.



Dr. Marcus Weth congratulates Dr. Heinz Beister on his purchase.