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30 YEARS ON... and the RUBIK'S CUBE is as popular as ever



The Rubik's Cube reaches a landmark birthday in May 2010. It is 30 years since Hungarian university lecturer Erno Rubik unleashed his mind-boggling coloured cube on an unsuspecting public.

Within weeks of its launch in 1980, it went global - and today it remains the most popular puzzle in the world.

If you are under 30, you will never have known a time without the Rubik's Cube. There can be very few people in the world who have not heard of, seen or played with this amazing feat of toy engineering – a small (3x3x3) plastic cube with different coloured squares revolving around a central axis to produce around 43 quintillion different combinations....but only ONE solution.

It is truly a global phenomenon. More than **350 million** pieces have been sold during the Rubik's Cube's 30-year lifespan - around 100 million of those in the first two years following its launch, 1980 and 1981.



In those heady days, The Cube was *everywhere* – people could be seen in the playground, on buses and trains, at home, at work... twisting and twiddling the

puzzle to find the correct solution - that restored the coloured squares to their original position with all the faces of the same hue.



After the initial explosion of popularity, when it became (and has remained) one of the most readily identifiable icons of the century, the Rubik's Cube's star waned a little. But, throughout the world, it has remained steadfastly evident on the retail shelves. And now it's back big-time - just as popular, just as intriguing, compulsive or frustrating (depending on your point of view!).

The new century has brought a whole new generation of 'Cubers' into the Rubik's family. Whereas in the 1980s, the end-game was simply to solve the puzzle, now both solving and speed are the ultimate challenges. At national and international competitions, 'Speedcubers' (as they are now known) compete to solve the puzzle in the quickest possible time. At the first World Championship in 1982, the fastest average solve was 22.9 seconds. In 2008, the 'single solve' record was set at an incredible 7.08 seconds.

And if that wasn't challenging enough, Cubers also solve the puzzle with their feet, or blindfolded, or while riding a skateboard, under water or while abseiling or free-falling from an aircraft.

The worldwide Rubik's community

These days, for first timers or those looking to improve, there's no shortage of help and encouragement on the internet, YouTube and in books. Quite different from the early days when you struggled to solve it yourself, or got a friend to show you how.



What is the secret of this enduring international phenomenon? The Cube's inventor **Erno Rubik**, originally a designer and engineer by training – and now living and working in his home city of Budapest, sums up its infinite appeal: "*It's simple but it's complex; it's stable but it's flexible; it's easy to understand but it takes dedication and patience to work it out.*"



We ask Professor Rubik if, after 30 successful years, can The Cube last forever? "Emphatically, yes" he says. "Each decade or so, a new generation of Cube fans emerges, pushing the boundaries of the cubing and creating never-ending challenges."

David Hedley Jones, Senior Vice President, Rubik's brand, explains further: "The Cube is fun but it's also endlessly challenging. You have to keep trying until you solve it, and when you've mastered it, you want to solve it faster and faster. It is a puzzle that never ends - always different, always fascinating."

Since the turn of this century, the multitudes of cubing fans, situated on all five continents, have taken the multi-coloured plastic puzzle further than even Erno Rubik envisaged as he toiled in his studio to develop the original brain-teaser. No doubt the next 30 years - and beyond - will see The Cube's star still shining brightly.



For more information on all things Rubik's, log on to www.rubiks.com

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**The legendary Rubik's Cube:
perpetual design icon
and the world's best selling puzzle**



The fiendishly difficult, but entrancing Rubik's Cube (350 million have been sold since its launch in 1980) may have 43,252,003,274,489,856,000 possible combinations on its six coloured faces – but it has only ONE solution. Once it has been 'scrambled' you solve The Cube by twisting its fifty-four squares around the ingenious central axis - until all six faces consist of solid blocks of colour.

Now once again enjoying enormous popularity worldwide, the iconic Rubik's Cube's fascination and fun factor is undiminished. Rather, it is magnified by the power of the web's social networking possibilities, providing super-celebrity status for the 'wonder boy' Speedcubers – some of whom, in World Championships attracting hundreds of entries from all five continents, solve the puzzle in *less than 10 seconds* or just over a half a minute - *blindfold*.

The current **World Record Holder** for solving The Cube is Dutch teenager Erik Akkersdijk, who, in July 2008, achieved the incredible 'single solve' time of 7.08 seconds. The 2009/2010 World Champion Speedcuber is from Scotland, UK – another fast-fingered teenager, Breandan Vallance, won the title in October last year, with an average solving time of 10.74 seconds.

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For information on all things Rubik's, visit

www.rubiks.com

Please note that Erno Rubik does not give individual interviews

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