

Media release

## **portal.bea-messe.ch: The spring trade fair BEA features clever use of artificial intelligence and pleasantly surprises visitors and exhibitors with an innovative online experience**

**Bern, 9 April 2020 – Due to the ban on large events imposed by Switzerland’s Federal Council, the BEA had to be cancelled this year. For this reason, the BERNEXPO GROUPE is responding with an innovative alternative: visitors can go online to discover what the exhibitors have to offer and experience their product and service ranges in a remarkable way thanks to artificial intelligence.**

For many visitors, cancellation of the spring trade fair BEA – which normally attracts some 300,000 visitors and 900 exhibitors each year – was a bitter pill to swallow. For the exhibitors, cancellation means they are losing an important channel for sales and contact with customers, leading to a significant drop in turnover.

The BERNEXPO GROUPE has quickly responded to this extraordinary situation with an innovative new offer: The organizer of BEA is making the online portal [portal.bea-messe.ch](https://portal.bea-messe.ch) available to all exhibitors free of charge, offering this site as a stage for presenting their products and services in a new way. “As a reliable partner, we want to stand by our customers and support them during the coronavirus crisis,” says Jennifer Somm, CEO of the BERNEXPO GROUPE. After all stand fees for 2020 were waived or refunded to the exhibitors, the company is now offering a fascinating extension to the real BEA in the form of an online portal based on artificial intelligence.

### **A new experience for visitors**

On the online portal, visitors can type into a box what they would like to see and experience on their visit to the fair: What products do they want to take a closer look at? What services do they need advice about? On the basis of the text they enter, each visitor will receive a line-up tailored to their wishes, including links to the websites or online shops of the BEA exhibitors. A sophisticated algorithm ensures that the results are continuously updated based on whatever new text each visitor enters.

### **A valuable channel for exhibitors**

This BERNEXPO GROUPE service is available to exhibitors at no charge. They can conveniently enter their products and services into the BEA exhibitor portal they are already familiar with. “This allows exhibitors to continue to benefit from the reach of the BEA and the BERNEXPO GROUPE despite cancellation of the BEA. The exhibitors can also use the new platform as an important point of contact to cultivate their relationship with their customer base,” says Jennifer Somm.

**Innovation for Switzerland**

As the first provider to do so, the BERNEXPO GROUPE is making use of the Text-Based Recommender System of Jaywalker Digital AG of Lucerne to power the new BEA online portal. The Recommender System is a software application that makes real-time decisions about what will interest users and recommends to them from a set of existing offers or objects precisely those that they would likely be most interested in. The algorithm, which is based on free text input, was developed jointly by the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts and Jaywalker Digital AG. Financial support for its development was provided by the Swiss Innovation Agency Innosuisse.

**About the BERNEXPO GROUPE**

Every year, the live marketing company BERNEXPO GROUPE stages more than 30 exhibitions and guest exhibitions, over 300 congresses, trade shows and other events of all sizes. Live communication enables the BERNEXPO GROUPE to deliver memorable moments, create spaces where people can come together and offer a wide variety of platforms. The BERNEXPO site is one of Switzerland's largest exhibition premises. Eight exhibition halls across two building complexes offer around 40,000 m<sup>2</sup> of event floor space and 100,000 m<sup>2</sup> of outdoor areas. The BERNEXPO GROUPE employs a team of around 140 people. Generating a gross added value of around CHF 260 million, it is a leading economic driving force for the city and region of Bern – with a nationwide impact.

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