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Notes to the Future

The Depth Spinner

The Depth spinner was a fun and interactive project for the Exploratorio. It attracted many little kids because of the rotating spiral and showed them a fun way to learn some physics.

For this project it was necessary to have back up rotators, whether it is a drill or an electric screwdriver. Back-up batteries are also needed because the spinner can run out of juice unexpectedly. Our drill had a rechargeable battery so we made sure we sat next to an outlet to keep it charging at all times. It can be embarrassing if the spinner runs out of batteries in the middle of a presentation. Also if you experience technical difficulties, kids become aggravated and don't want to wait for you to fix it.

Having extra spirals is recommended because one can break anytime. We even had two spirals spinning at once so we could attract twice as many people to our exhibit. In order for the after-effect of the spinning spiral to work, you must spin it for at least 30 seconds. Be prepared for it to not work on some people. It helps if you tell them to stare directly at the center and relax their eyes.

Little kids tend to be much more attracted and willing to stare at the rotating spiral for longer than 30 seconds. Adults on the other hand, have a tendency to have a shorter attention span and look away from the spiral. They seem to just glance at the exhibit rather than see the full effect of the depth spinner. So be prepared for adults to seem uninterested.

This project was fairly easy to put together and we received positive feedback from many kids and students. Have fun with this!