FROM THE FORUM CHRONICLE

PenExchange

What the forum did for the brand · 1998–2026

I SUMMARY II PELIKAN III BRANDS IV SOURCES

For almost three decades, PenExchange was the meeting place for fountain pens, ink and paper on the German-speaking web: launched by Pelikan in 1998 as the “Plenum”, a forum of its own from 2003 and, until it was switched off on 2 November 2026, a large, helpful community. This excerpt from the chronicle brings together what the forum did for the Pelikan brand: how often Pelikan was mentioned and seen, how people wrote about the brand and how the brand and the community came together – compared with all other brands.

381,540
posts in the archive

22,847
topics

5,147
members who posted

186.7m
views of all topics, as of 1 November 2026

Management summary

For almost three decades, PenExchange was Pelikan’s **shop window, sounding board and meeting place**: no brand in the forum was mentioned as often, seen as often or discussed as warmly. Genuine customer voices like these are also today’s biggest lever for AI Visibility – worldwide, because AI models also use German-language content when answering in other languages.

1 The most-mentioned brand – every year.
41,776 posts mention Pelikan, more than Montblanc (19,216) and Lamy (20,519) combined. From 2004 to 2026, Pelikan ranked first year after year; in absolute numbers, interest grew from 470 posts in 2004 to over 3,100 in each of 2020 and 2021.

2 The largest brand forum.
With 33,709 posts and 18.2 million views, the Pelikan forum was the largest and most-read of all brand forums. werner’s “Family photo” (2,275 posts, over a million views) is the most-read thread of all brand forums.

3 Visibility far beyond those who posted.
Forum pages on which Pelikan appears had been viewed around 91 million times by the cut-off date of 1 November 2026 – almost half of all page views in the forum. Bought as banner advertising at the usual €2 to €5 per 1,000 impressions, this would have cost roughly €180,000 to €450,000. The figures show how often the pages were viewed in total, not when; younger pages naturally had less time to collect views. Visibility matters for two reasons:

There are more of us than it seems

In every brand community, a few people write and most only read along (the 90-9-1 rule). PenExchange was no exception: the most active one per cent of posters – 51 members – wrote 41 per cent of all posts, and half of all posters wrote four posts or fewer. 3,424 of the 8,571 registered members never posted, and guests could read without registering.

The 381,540 posts stand against 186.7 million page views (as of 1 November 2026). Even if part of these come from search engines and programs, the community was many times larger than the circle of those who posted.

AI Visibility: Earned Media is the biggest lever

Building AI Visibility is a real challenge for many companies. Three types of media play a role:

- **Owned Media** such as the company’s own website can be optimised, but their influence is often estimated at only around 20 per cent.
- **Paid Media** is simply not seen by most AI models – with a few exceptions such as Meta Muse Spark.
- **Earned Media** – genuine customer opinions and real feedback from people – is by far the biggest lever.

Brand communities like PenExchange thus become a strategic lever for staying visible when purchase decisions are supported by AI agents.

Global impact – not just in the DACH region. The forum is in German, but AI models use knowledge across languages: what they learn about Pelikan from German posts is also available to them when answering in English, French, Japanese or Chinese. The forum’s influence on Pelikan’s AI Visibility therefore reaches far beyond the German-speaking countries.

4 **A warm tone.**
77 per cent of the evaluative sentences about Pelikan were positive – more than in the forum as a whole (70 per cent) and more than for Montblanc and Lamy (68 per cent each); only Japanese brands were narrowly ahead (79 per cent), with far fewer sentences. The tone grew friendlier over the years: from just over half of the evaluative sentences at the start to around four in five from 2016 to 2023.

5 **Honest feedback.**
Service, quality and prices were discussed openly – around 2,300 critical sentences are outweighed by a good 7,600 positive ones. Loyal customers said here what they liked and what they didn't, and wish lists for Pelikan gathered hundreds of posts with ideas, such as 228 in "My wishes for Pelikan for 2020 and beyond".

6 **A brand you can meet in person.**
Factory tours, the Pen Wiki sponsored by Pelikan and, from 2014, the Pelikan Hubs – over 40 Hub topics with around 2,200 posts, from Hamburg to Vienna – brought the brand and the community together in person.

7 **Products at the centre.**
The most discussed were the M200 (4,051 posts), M800 (3,991), M400 (3,491) and M1000 (3,477), as well as the 4001 inks (4,282) and the Edelstein inks (4,165).

All figures come from the saved archive of 381,540 posts; views as of 1 November 2026. Estimates, methods and sources are explained at the end.

A gain for Pelikan

Pelikan founded PenExchange in 1998 and supported it for almost three decades. What the forum did for the brand cannot be put into exact figures, but the numbers are clear: no brand was mentioned as often, none seen as often, no brand forum read as much – and hardly any was written about so warmly. Many who wrote here about their Pelikans also met in person at the Pelikan Hubs.

41,776
posts mention Pelikan – more than Montblanc and Lamy combined

No. 1
among all brands, in every year from 2004 to 2026

≈ 91m
views of pages on which Pelikan appears – almost every second page viewed

18.2m
views in the Pelikan forum, the largest brand forum with 33,709 posts

Which Pelikans were discussed

Posts that mention the model or the ink, 2003–2026.

FOUNTAIN PENS

M200	4,051
M800	3,991
M400	3,491
M1000	3,477
M600	2,403
Souverän (series)	2,391
Pelikano	1,835
M605	1,444
M805	1,373
M205	1,368
400NN	908
100N	811
Toledo	668
M1005	625

INKS

4001 inks	4,282
Edelstein inks	4,165

Pelikan in the forum

How the brand and its fans came together.

1998 Pelikan launches the "Plenum" on pelikan.de; Ansgar from Pelikan looks after it until the shutdown.

2008 The admin and moderators meet in Hanover, with a factory tour in Peine.

2009 "Pelikan service – still good?": 639 posts and almost 400,000 views, praise and criticism voiced openly.

2010 The Edelstein inks arrive, and werner starts the "Family photo" – with over a million views by the cut-off date, the most-read thread of all brand forums.

2013 Pelikan sponsors the Pen Wiki.

2014 Invitation to the first Pelikan Hubs. By 2026 there are over 40 Hub topics with around 2,200 posts, from Hamburg to Vienna.

2014 Pelikan asks members how PenExchange could be improved.

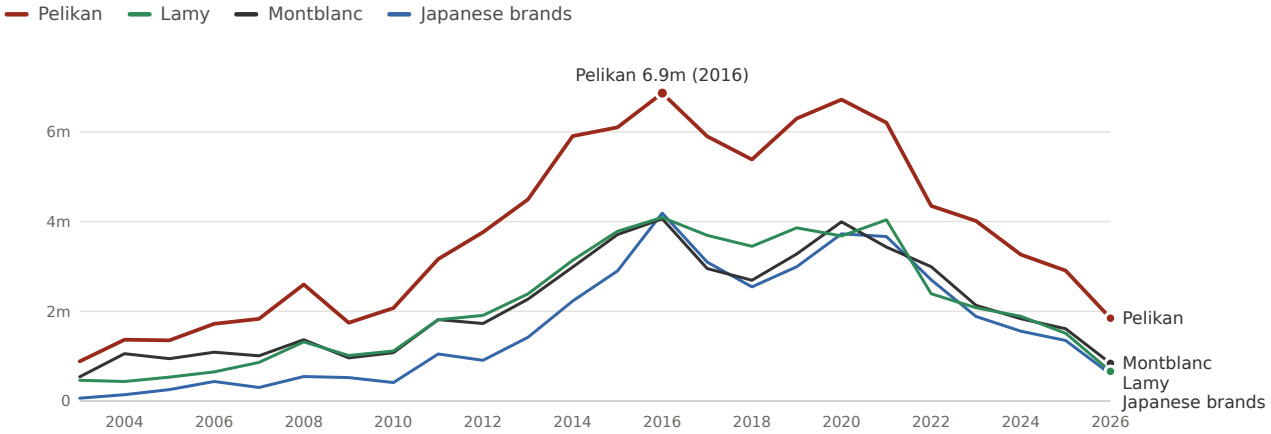
2019 "My wishes for Pelikan for 2020 and beyond": 228 posts with ideas for the "host company".

2020 After consulting Pelikan, the team introduces specialist moderation.

2026 "Pelikan 2026 // what can we look forward to?" (226 posts); in August, members share Pelikan's survey on "Fine Writing".

Impressions by the year the pages were written

Estimated views of forum pages on which the brand appears, by the year in which the page was written, as of 1 November 2026. The chart does not show when the views occurred, but how many views the pages from each year had collected by this cut-off date. That younger pages have fewer views is normal: they have not been online as long. There are fewer pages from the early years, and very old posts are easily lost in the sheer volume – if they were relevant to many people, search engines would still surface them; little-read old pages are therefore probably niche topics.



Estimate: a topic's views are spread evenly across its pages of 15 posts each; a page counts for every brand that appears on it. Counted are all page views up to the cut-off date of 1 November 2026, including those by guests and search engines; five conspicuous topics are excluded.

> For comparison: bought as banner advertising, around 91 million impressions at the usual €2 to €5 per 1,000 impressions would have cost roughly €180,000 to €450,000. On top of that comes what no banner can do: recommendations from connoisseurs, honest feedback and a community that felt connected to the brand.

> Not every mention was praise. Service, quality and prices were discussed openly, sometimes harshly – but around 2,300 critical sentences about Pelikan are outweighed by a good 7,600 positive ones, more than three to one. It was precisely this openness that made the forum valuable for Pelikan: here, loyal customers said what they liked and what they didn't, and many others read along.

Brands: who was talked about

Pelikan was the most-mentioned brand in every single year: in 2004 more than one post in four mentioned the name, and at the end still about one in ten. Behind it, the field changed. At first Montblanc and the American classics Parker, Waterman and Sheaffer followed, and from 2013 mostly Lamy. Japanese brands such as Pilot, Sailor and Platinum rose from eighth to third place, Italian makers lost weight, and from 2012 Chinese brands were added – from zero to several hundred posts a year.

How often the brands were mentioned

Posts that mention the brand at least once, 2003–2026.

Pelikan	41,776
Lamy	20,519
Montblanc	19,216
Parker, Waterman, Sheaffer	15,068
Japanese brands Pilot, Sailor, Platinum, Namiki, Nakaya	14,600
Italian brands Aurora, Omas, Visconti, Montegrappa, Delta, Leonardo	10,579
Kaweco	9,500
Graf von Faber-Castell	4,401
Chinese brands Jinhao, Moonman/Majohn, Wing Sung, PenBBS, Hongdian …	4,242
TWSBI from Taiwan	3,574

How often readers got to see them

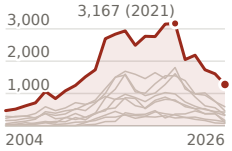
Estimated impressions: views of forum pages on which the brand appears, up to the cut-off date of 1 November 2026 – the counterpart of “ad impressions”.

Pelikan	90.8m
Lamy	50.8m
Montblanc	50.4m
Parker, Waterman, Sheaffer	43.8m
Japanese brands	39.5m
Italian brands	30.1m
Kaweco	25.8m
Graf von Faber-Castell	17.3m
TWSBI	11.2m
Chinese brands	10.6m

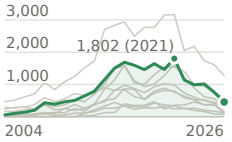
How many posts mentioned the brands – per year

Absolute numbers, all panels on the same scale; in grey in the background, the other brands. This shows how interest grew with the forum – for Pelikan from 470 posts in 2004 to over 3,100 in each of 2020 and 2021.

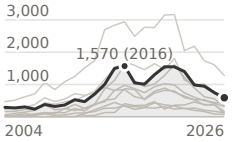
Pelikan 470 → 1,279



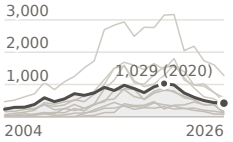
Lamy 60 → 458



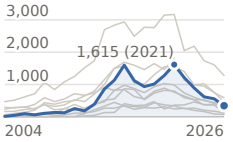
Montblanc 291 → 590



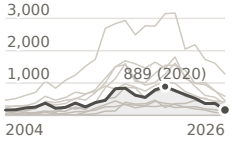
Parker, Waterman, Sheaffer 231 → 422



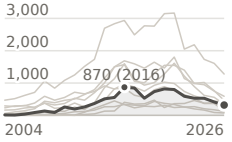
Japanese brands 15 → 343



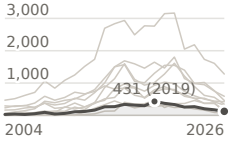
Italian brands 161 → 167



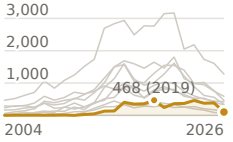
Kaweco 16 → 319



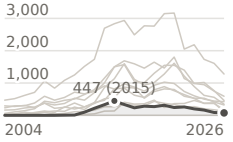
Graf von Faber-Castell 29 → 124



Chinese brands 0 → 103

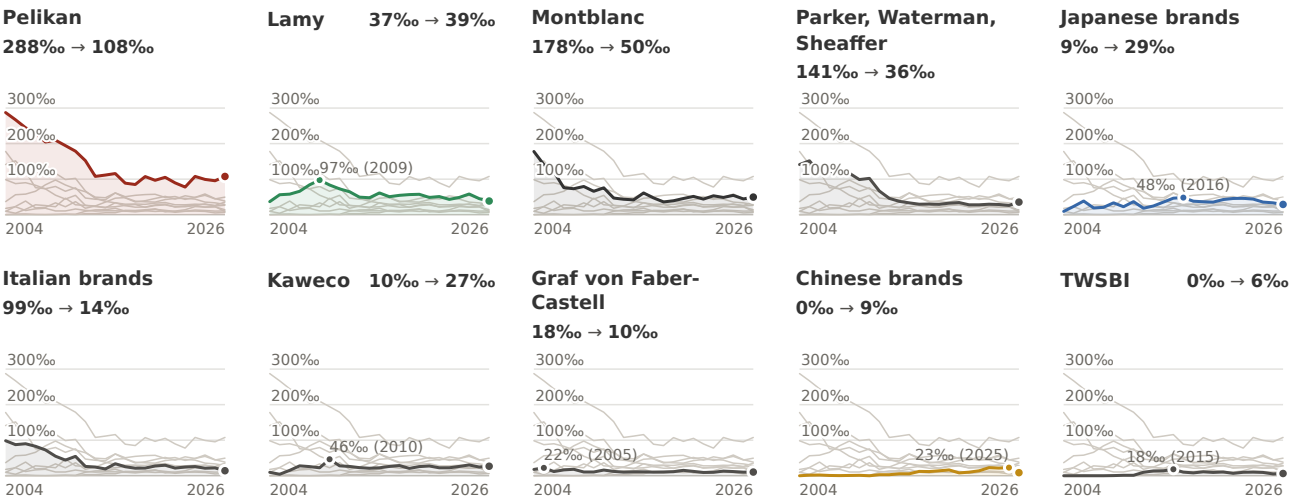


TWSBI 0 → 75



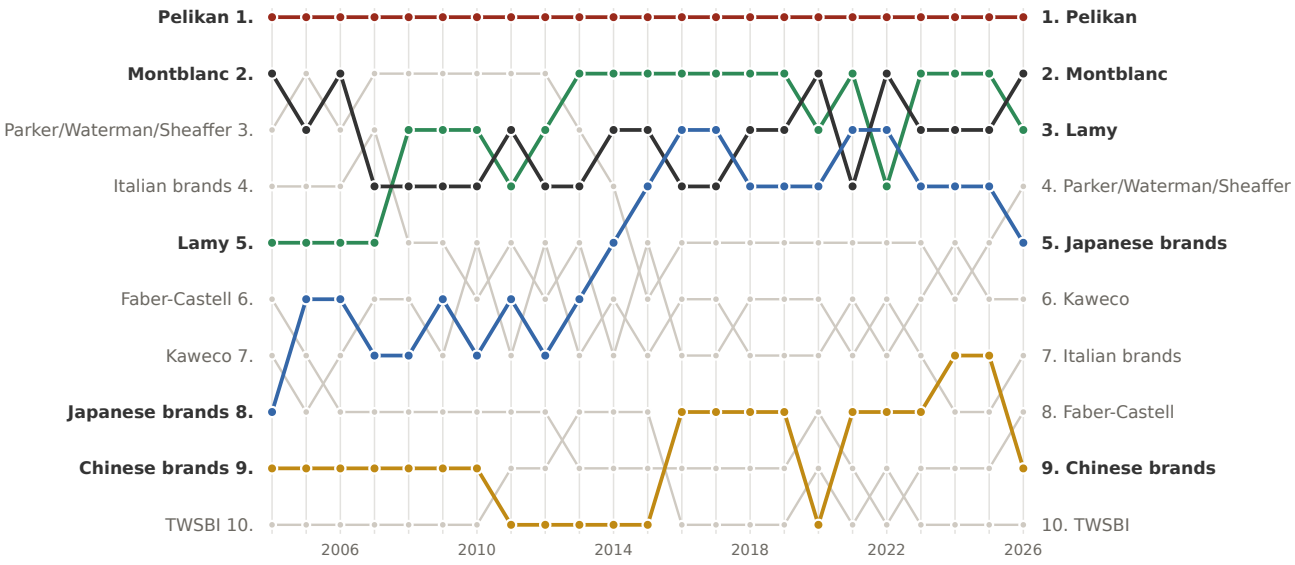
What share of the conversation they had – per 1,000 posts

The same mentions relative to all posts of the year. A falling share does not mean less interest here: the forum grew, and more and more other topics were added. Only both views together show the full picture.



The ranking, year by year

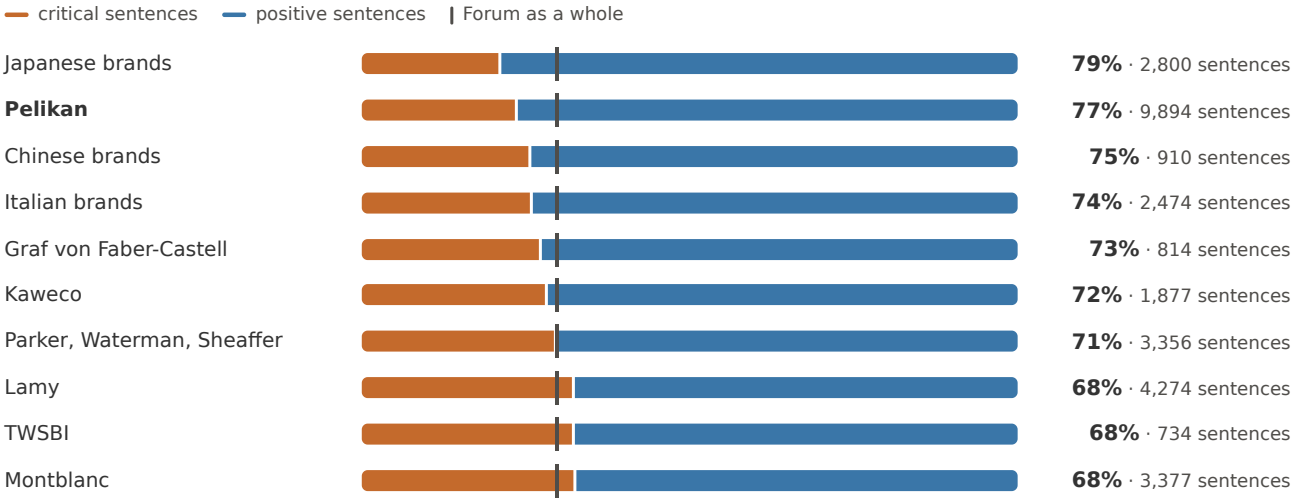
Rank by the number of posts mentioning a brand. Hover or tap to see a year's ranking; a name highlights its line.



Japanese brands: Pilot, Sailor, Platinum, Namiki, Nakaya. Italian: Aurora, Omas, Visconti, Montegrappa, Delta, Stipula, Leonardo and others. Chinese: Jinhao, Moonman/Majohn, Wing Sung, PenBBS, Hongdian, Asvine, Hero and others. TWSBI comes from Taiwan. In the event of a tie, the overall total decides.

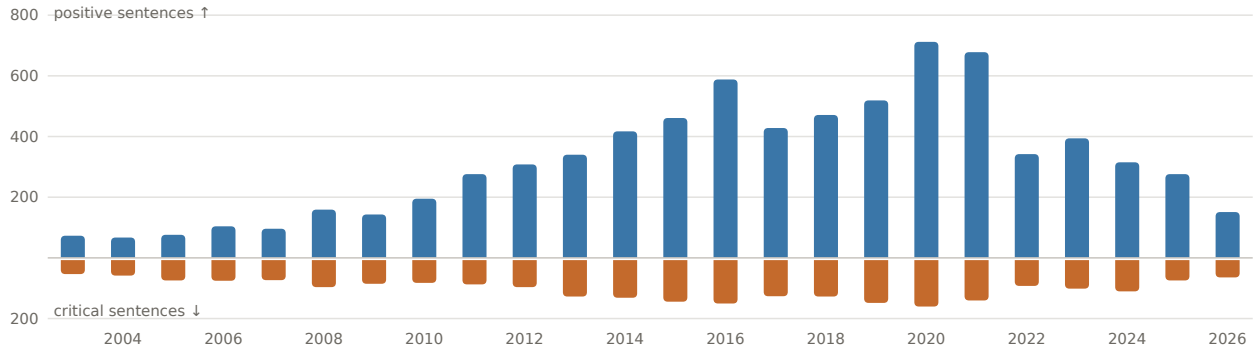
How people wrote about the brands

Mentioned often does not mean praised often. That is why every sentence mentioning a brand was checked for words of praise and criticism. Of the evaluative sentences about Pelikan, 77 per cent were positive – more than in the forum as a whole (70 per cent) and more than for Montblanc and Lamy (68 per cent each). Only Japanese brands were narrowly ahead at 79 per cent, with far fewer sentences.



The tone about Pelikan, year by year

Positive sentences upwards, critical ones downwards. Over the years the tone became ever friendlier: at first, just over half of the evaluative sentences were positive; from 2016 to 2023 it was around four in five.



Simple word lists, sentence by sentence: words of praise such as “schön” (beautiful), “zufrieden” (satisfied), “empfehlenswert” (recommended), “schreibt weich” (writes smoothly), critical ones such as “leider” (unfortunately), “kratzig” (scratchy), “Problem”, “enttäuscht” (disappointed); a “nicht” (not) or “kein” (no) in front reverses the meaning. Greetings and quotations do not count. The method does not recognise irony or technical jargon; the values show tendencies. 84 per cent of the sentences with brand names remained neutral: they describe, ask or compare.

How much was written in the brand forums

Posts in the brands' sub-forums, 2003–2026, with trend and views (as of 1 November 2026). The Pelikan forum was by far the largest and the most read.

Brand forum	Posts		Trend 2003–2026	Views	Topics
Pelikan		33,709		18.2m	2,151
Montblanc		22,140		11.4m	1,640
Lamy		12,943		7.7m	837
Other brands		11,708		6.6m	1,173
Asian brands		10,546		5.6m	729
Parker, Waterman, US brands		9,589		7.7m	930
Italian brands		6,290		4.2m	545
Kaweco		6,010		3.6m	378
Graf von Faber-Castell		3,089		2.6m	298

Trend for each forum on its own scale; the red column marks the strongest year. Views exclude one conspicuous topic each in the Montblanc, Asian and Pelikan forums. "Other brands" collects all makers without a sub-forum of their own.

Sources and method

How the figures were obtained

- All figures come from the 381,540 posts of the "Website-alles" backup (texte/forum_alle_beitraege.jsonl), last backup on the morning of 2 November 2026. Thread titles and quotations from the forum have been translated from German; the original titles of the key topics are given alongside.
- Brand mentions: posts that mention a brand at least once, found using search patterns for brand and model names; brand groups such as "Japanese brands" count a post only once.
- Impressions: a topic's views are spread evenly across its pages of 15 posts each; each page counts for all brands that appear on it. Banner prices for comparison: €2 to €5 per 1,000 impressions as a guide value for display advertising (rechner-portal.de, TKP (CPM) calculator, as of September 2026).
- Tone: every sentence with a brand name is checked against word lists for praise and criticism, and negations reverse the meaning; quotations and greetings are left out. For comparison, every fourth post in the whole forum was checked in the same way.
- Counted is what was still readable at the time of the backup. Deleted material is missing, such as the marketplace archive, which from 2020 was emptied after three months. The forum statistics last showed 408,616 posts and 24,232 topics.
- Views come from the forum's topic lists as of 1 November 2026. They state how often a topic had been viewed in total by then – not when. They count every page request, including those by guests, search engines and programs; five conspicuous topics have therefore been taken out of the rankings.
- Visibility: posts per member from the backup (381,540 posts by 5,147 posters), registered members according to the forum statistics (8,571). On the 90-9-1 rule: Jakob Nielsen, "Participation Inequality", Nielsen Norman Group, 2006 (nngroup.com). On Meta Muse Spark: TechWyse, April 2026 (techwyse.com). On the cross-language use of knowledge by AI models: Anthropic, "Tracing the thoughts of a large language model", March 2025 (anthropic.com). The assessments of Owned, Paid and Earned Media are practitioners' estimates, not measurements from this chronicle.

Key topics in the archive

- "Penexchange – History –" (*Penexchange – Historie –*) by werner, from 25 Oct 2015 t=13550
- "Family photo" (*Familienfoto*), 2010 t=4009 · "Pelikan Hubs" (*Pelikan-Hubs*), 2014 t=9330
- "My wishes for Pelikan for 2020 and beyond" (*Meine Wünsche an Pelikan für das Jahr 2020 und darüber hinaus*) t=25249 · "Pelikan 2026 // what can we look forward to?" (*Pelikan 2026 // worauf dürfen wir uns freuen?*) t=42816 · "Pelikan Fine Writing survey" (*Pelikan Fine Writing Umfrage*) t=43739
- "Specialist moderators" (*Fachmoderatoren*), 8 Sep 2020 t=28604
- "PenExchange will be switched off on 2 Nov 2026" (*PenExchange wird am 02.11.2026 abgeschaltet*), 30 Oct 2026 t=44036

Offline, every topic is stored under Website-alles/website-alles/www.penexchange.de/forum_neu/viewtopic.php@t=[number].html