Context Analysis for Mego Museum

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**Introduction**

Megomuseum.com is an identity-based, online community for aficionados and collectors of Mego action figures (Kraut, Kiesler, & Resnick, 2012). Mego produced and sold millions of toys between the 1950’s and the early 1980’s (Harris, 2003). Exclusive licensing for its superhero action figures and comic book characters was the basis for Mego’s success (Solnik, 2013; The Action Figure Resource, 2013). When Mego lost the license for the Star Wars franchise in 1976, the company experienced a downturn and, consequently, filed for bankruptcy in 1982 (Solnik, 2013).

Today, Mego collections are pursued worldwide by roughly 5000 adults, who look to re-acquire the same action figures that they once played with as children (B. Heiler, personal communication, March 20, 2016). The Mego Museum supports this activity with “a rich inventory of content”, including picture galleries and descriptions of Megos products (Kraut, Kiesler, & Resnick, 2012, p. 10). In 1996, Mego Museum began as a small homepage consisting of a few pictures of action figures. It has grown into one of the best and most active collector communities on the Web (Hall of fame…, n.d.).

One indicator of the commitment of Mego collectors is the cost of the hobby. Plastic action figures that had a retail value of $1.97 in 1967 can now trade for amounts ranging from tens to thousands of dollars (ADL Group, 2012). In this marketplace, Mego Museum is an invaluable source for information about authenticity and pricing. It also facilitates collector access through on-site trading and links to external vendors and auctions.

Six volunteers manage Mego Museum, each one with a specific role. For this research, the authors interviewed the Curator (see Appendix A), the Webmaster (see Appendix B), and an active member of the Mego Museum (see Appendix C).

**Goals of the Community**

Kraut, Kiesler, and Resnick (2012) suggest “a name and tagline that indicate the shared interests of the community increases...commitment to the community” (p.84). The tagline of the Mego Museum, “Preserving Mego History Today, Making Mego History Tomorrow” (Megomuseum.com, 2016), identifies the two principal goals of the community, as well as offering a call to action for its members. The Mego Museum is an archive for information about the Mego Corporation and its products. The site is also a venue for participants to share their interest in ReMego, modern recreations of Mego figures, and CustoMego, custom figures developed by current day Mego fans.

Mego Museum has evolved into a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Members with different levels of knowledge and experience actively collaborate and learn from one another. Moreover, Mego Museum facilitates a strong interpersonal connection between its active members. Social media networking tools are instrumental in bringing out members’ intrinsic motivations to participate in and contribute to the community (Kraut, Kiesler, & Resnick, 2012), which, in turn, have helped strengthen and achieve the goals of the Mego Museum.

**Actions Taken Towards Achieving the Goals**

Recruitment and retention are critical for the viability, vibrancy, and survival of every online community (Kraut & Resnick, 2012, p. 179). The Mego Museum has taken active measures to ensure a slow, but steady increase in membership. Its web presence, including the website and ancillary communication and social networking tools, serve as effective means to encourage collaboration and increase “needs-based commitment” (Kraut & Resnick, 2012, p.105). In addition, Mego Museum sponsors an annual toy show that attracts 200 to 250 participants. Members value this opportunity to socialize with people they only know by their usernames (B. Heiler, personal communication, March 20, 2016).

Wenger, White, and Smith (2009) describe online communities as providing a collaborative space that allows people with similar interests to contribute and share different perspectives. One important locus of activity in the Mego Museum community is its forums, where participants share their collections and solicit information. This knowledge capital is the life-blood of the community and the the foundation of the identity-based affective commitment that enables Mego Museum to retain members (Kraut & Resnick, 2012).

The forum includes 28 categories for discussion, with roughly seventy-six thousand threads, and over one million posts (Megomuseum.com, 2016). Numerous sub-forums allow participants to easily identify and explore discussions related to their own interests. Wenger, White, and Smith (2009) suggest that allowing discussions to branch out into focused and in-depth conversations gives participants the opportunity to develop stronger connections based on affinity.

Incentives, rewards, and recognitions are ingredients that motivate contribution to online communities (Kraut & Resnick, 2012). Online members’ usernames are appear on the Mego Talk leaderboard and birthdays recognized there as well. Member-only giveaways, like the Mego Museum trading cards, also incentivize participation (M. Jimenez, personal communication, March 19, 2016).

Mego Museum has a low entry bar for newcomers and allows lurkers or guests, as long as they are interested in learning and observing, but not disrupting (M. Jimenez, personal communication, March 19, 2016). New members are welcomed by name on the Mego Talk leaderboard (Mego Museum, 2016).

**Metrics for Success**

 Mego Museum uses annual membership growth, membership longevity, and participation in forums as its primary metrics for success (M. Jimenez, personal communication, March 19 2016).. Their on-site statistics (Mego Museum, 2016) show that the site has 6514 registered members. Mego Museum claims 2,500 active members worldwide, with between 500 and 1000 that are regularly active (B. Heiler, personal communication, March 20, 2016). At any given time, the leaderboard shows the current number of members and guests online. The Webmaster estimates that Mego Museum enjoys a steady ten percent growth in membership annually (J. DeRouen, personal communication, March 19, 2016). At the same time, member loyalty is strong. Heiler states that “we have people that haven’t bought a Mego figure in 15-20 years... and they still come to hang out” (B. Heiler, personal communication, March 20, 2016).

Registration in Mego Museum requires a birth date. While they neither aggregate nor analyze this data, DeRouen asserts that the majority of Mego Museum members are men between the ages of 40 and 50 (J. DeRouen, personal communication, March 19, 2016). Heiler’s explanation is that the community attracts “like-minded 70’s kids” (B. Heiler personal communication, March 19, 2016). Even so, DeRouen noted that some younger people are beginning to join the community as Mego collectors (J. DeRouen, personal communication, March 19, 2016).

 The Mego Museum Facebook page displays 5600 likes, its Twitter account has 1800 followers, and the electronic newsletter has a high percentage of readers among the 800 subscribers (B. Heiler, personal communication, March 201, 2016). The use of diverse electronic tools helps to drive traffic to the website.

**Conclusion**

According to Festinger, Schachter, and Back 1950; Allen and Meyer 1990; Prentice, Miller, and Lightdale 1994 (as cited in Resnick, Kiesler, & Kraut, 2012) the commitment that drives the members of this online community is based in feelings of strong identification and obligation to the community as a whole. This community’s biggest values are access to expertise and information that is reliable and quick (Wenger, White & Smith, 2009). All this coupled with a list of injunctive norms clearly posted on the site (Resnick & Kraut, 2012) and the banning of trolls makes this community feel like a small town.

The metrics employed are simple but signal a community that is retaining its membership and growing at a steady pace. According to Wenger et.al. creating a community of practice requires engagement sustained over time (2009) and Mego Museum has achieved this. The level of commitment by Mego Museum’s active members is high and it sustains the community. Above all, passion for Mego drives this community. In the words of the Mego Museum Curator: “If you aren’t doing from love, you aren’t doing it at all” (B. Heiler, personal communication, March 20, 2016).

 **Recommendations**

Mego Museum was created by and for a very specific section of the population: children of the 70’s turned adult collectors. These children are now well into their 50s. This begs the question: “does an aging membership signal the beginning of the end for Mego Museum?” The researchers offer two recommendations to ensure continuity for Mego Museum: they can either actively recruit younger members or prepare an exit strategy.

 As a means of attracting new members, Mego Museum might employ what Kraut, Kiesler, and Resnick refer to as “bootstrapping”; leveraging members to get more members (2012, p.249). However, an influx of younger members could also bring unwanted change in an identity-based community such as this one. Heiler observed that the community has gotten older is and is beginning to be less flexible (B. Heiler, private communication, March 20, 2016).

With this in mind, Mego Museum’s stewards may prefer to create an exit strategy. This entails making decisions about what to archive, what to delete and what key artifacts to preserve in order to leave a legacy for future generations (Wenger et al, 2009, p. 138). An exit strategy would not entail a complete shutdown of the Mego Museum, but rather designing a plan for archiving galleries and information in a way that will make it accessible to future generations. Leaving other sites the ability to link back to the Mego Museum is one way to ensure Mego Museum’s immortality and that the quest for knowledge of future generations can be satisfied for years to come.

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**Appendix A**

A. Safanova, phone interview with Brian Heiler on 3/20/2016 at 9:00 pm EST from Ontario Canada

Interviewer: Hi Brian, thank you so much for speaking with me. Just so you know I’m doing a research paper on online communities and my group chose to do it on Mego Museum. Actually I’m so glad we did because I find this community so interesting. Is it ok if I record the interview so that I can provide a transcript in my paper?

Brian: Oh all right, yes that’s fine.

Interviewer: Ok so that beep means I’m recording

Interviewer: So Brian I read on the website that originally it was Scott who created the site but he handed it over to you so now you are the head guy of the community. Brian: (Laughs) Yea I guess so….. you can say I’m the chief cook and bottle washer over there.

Interviewer: Chief cook…. I like that.

Brian (Laughs) yea.

Interviewer: So Brian tell me a little bit about what this online community is seeking to accomplish from your perspective.

Brian: Ummmm… you know I think basically it’s just trying to be a comradery point for people with the same interest.

Interviewer: Ok

Brian: You know to buy, sell, trade. Of course there’s commerce involved but also to share in the mutual love of what really is just a point in time. This toy company was around for, a large group of us, our seminal years as children. People who grew up five or six years later don’t get it and people who grew up before don’t get it. It really is just a fixed point in time.

Interviewer: Yea it really is I remember my brother playing with the Planet of the Apes Megos as a kid…….. I never imagined he’d still be playing with them as an adult but here we are.

Brian: (Laughs loud) I’ve seen that!

Interviewer: It does give you a warm and fuzzy feeling inside when you see a toy you played with as a child. It kind of takes you back to that time.

Brian: Oh absolutely yea!

Interviewer: Brian as the Curator aka chief cook what steps have you taken to ensure success toward this goal of comradery?

Brian: Well we try to be a very inviting group and a friendly group so of course we promote whenever we can, in terms of joining groups. We even created trading cards.

Interviewer: Yes I heard about that, that's pretty cool that you do that!

Brain: Yea we give them away at toy shows and people say “oh there’s a whole group of people that collect these” you know. We also have an annual convention. It’s not the greatest convention in the world for toy shows but it is kind of a great get together. It’s a real community in that regard. Like, I look forward to seeing a lot of those people once a year and going for dinner and that sort of thing.

Interviewer: You know I do get that impression: that it really is a community.

Brain: Yea, yea because it’s not.…… You look at something like Star Wars and there’s about 100,000 people on their website (laughs) and you go: that’s a sea! That’s an ocean of people! Where we are….. there’s probably 2500 to 5000 Mego collectors worldwide!

Interviewer: Wow that’s not a lot!

Brian: No it’s not and so there are some people that dabble but they don’t call themselves a collector. So we get a show together and we’ll get 200 to 250 people but we know all the names. So you know, people come to the show and go “oh my God that was the greatest thing” (laughs) and it's really not that spectacular but it’s the fact that everybody in that room gets it.

Interviewer: And I guess when you’ve been interacting with people on line and then you finally get to see them face-to-face.

Brain: Oh yea!

Interviewer: That is kind of spectacular.

Brain: And weird because you don’t realize they have accents! (laughs).

Interviewer: Yea (laughs).

Interviewer: So what is your membership? Because if there’s only 2500-5000 collectors worldwide…

Brian: We have about 2500 members.

Interviewer: Ok, how many would you say are active?

Brian: I would say about 500 or 1000 are regularly active.

Interviewer: That’s a lot, that’s a big percentage!

Brian: oh yea! And you know what’s funny about this community? We have people that haven’t bought a Mego figure in 15-20 years. They stopped collecting or whatever and they still come to hang out.

Interviewer: Wow!

Brian: Cause they like the vibe, they like the energy. We’re all kinda like minded 70’s kids so…..

Interviewer: That’s pretty cool!

Brain: I’m also kinda noticing, and this is an aside, but we’re all starting to get old and cranky (laughs)

Interviewer (laughs) Well that’s bound to happen eventually!

Brain: Yea (laughs) I used to go on a Universal Monster’s website and the guys there were generally 60’s kids and I used to sit there and go “boy these guys don’t like anything new, they’re so set in their ways” and I’m starting to watch that happen to us!

Interviewer: But you’re right in the fact that they don’t make toys like they used to.

Brian: Oh no you’re right about that.

Interviewer: I remember the Megos back then had clothes, the outfits were better than the outfits I had. The outfits had hems and buttons; everything was immaculately done now all of the action figures have molded clothes. That’s just not the same.

Brain Yea, I have two kids and I’ve noticed that too, but you know they love them just as much as I loved Megos so….

Interviewer: Yes, but they don’t know anything else.

Brian: Yea…. you know somebody once said “the best time to be a kid was when you were eight” I love that expression because it’s absolutely true.

Interviewer: Yes it is absolutely true…..

Brain: Yea

Interviewer: So Brian my last question is regarding the metrics of the community. How do you measure your progress as you move toward these goals? How do you know you’re succeeding…. from your perspective?

Brain: You know we do a couple of things now….of course we spread across the social media and I watch the Facebook numbers, and we also have a newsletter. We have about 800 subscribers to the weekly newsletter. We talk about old toys and we talk about companies. You know there are still companies putting out Mego-like figures. We talk about auctions. Is almost like a newspaper for a small town, you know. Every week I….. you know, we work on this, it takes us a couple of hours every week and then I watch the numbers of who opens it and who reads it. It’s got a very high readership rate. I look at what they click on. The main goal of this thing is to push people back to the forums so we’ll say “here’s what we’re talking about on the forums this week, here’s the custom of the week, here’s this and here’s that” and you know it's certainly not a monetary thing (laughs). And I kinda watch that, that’s my thing and if we can keep the conversation going then I’m happy and I’m satisfied.

Interviewer: You know I think that whatever you’re doing is working because online communities tend to have easy entry but also easy exit. People come in and they are active and then it starts to dwindle but from what you told me you have close to 50% active members. That’s huge!

Brain: Yea we do some things right. I’ve noticed in the last couple of years forums tend to be dying, from what I can tell. I’m a member of several different forums and one of the biggest action figure sites on the Internet is Action Figure Insider, they have a forum and nobody posts there! I just couldn’t believe it and it’s because there is no real sense of community going on there. You know? It’s all about what’s new and what’s coming out and it's just all pilgriming over to Facebook.

Interviewer: And I think that’s what sets your community apart is that there really is a real sense of community in the traditional sense.

Brian: Well yea that what we’ve been trying for ages so I’m glad to hear you say that actually (laughs).

Interviewer: I mean it, I’m not an expert and I’m not a collector but it’s easy to see that what you have here is really a community in every sense of the word. What you have is what everyone is striving for.

Brian: You know we got told that by a toy company too, they said they couldn’t believe it and they tried to buy us!

Interviewer: Oh yea?

Brian: A couple of people have tried to buy us, but it doesn’t work you can’t make it corporate. If you’re not doing it out of love you’re not doing it at all.

Interviewer: Well and that’s what sets you guys apart. You’re doing this because you’re collectors so you really have your fingers on the pulse of collectors.

Brian: Yea well we certainly get it (laughs)

Interviewer: Brian I don’t want to take any more of your time, thank you so much this has been great.

Brian: Ok, No problem, I’m glad to do it. Take care.

**Appendix B**

A. Safanova, phone Interview with Joe DeRouen 3/19/2016 at 2:31 pm EST from Arkansas

Interviewer: Hi Joe, thanks so much for agreeing to be interviewed. The purpose of this interview is just to study the dynamics of an online community and get information about their goals and metrics. I picked Mego Museum, although I’m not a collector, I find it really interesting.

Joe: Ok, I’m happy to help. Great!

Interviewer: Joe just so you know I’m going to record this interview becasue I need to include a transcript of it in my paper is that ok with you?

Joe: Yea sure, I’m ok with it.

Interviewer: Great, so when you hear the beep that means its recording…..if I did this correctly, I hope I did this correctly….

Joe: (laughs) ok.

Interviewer: What is your position in this community, what do you do?

Joe: I’m the Webmaster so basically I keep things running.

Interviewer: How did you get involved with Mego Museum? Are you a collector?

Joe: Well I had Megos as a kid and I guess back in 96 I started looking into them and decided to collect them again and that’s when I found Mego Museum and I wasn’t a part of that then. It wasn’t until later that I became the Webmaster and did all that. So I was just buying and trading and selling with the people online. Mego Museum was a good resource for that.

Interview: Ok. Joe I’ve been on the website and I know the mission and the goal of the community but from your perspective what are you seeking to accomplish as a community from the perspective of the Webmaster?

Joe: Mainly to give everybody that is into this hobby a chance to get to together and get to know each other and you know on a subset of that to have people to trade with. You know if I have two Mego spider man and someone needs that and I need something else well then we can get together and make a trade, things like that. And from the Webmaster’s perspective it's nice to provide a place where people can get together and hang out and know that the other people are there for the same reason. They are collectors too.

Interviewer: You know Joe, out of curiosity, I looked on a site called Alexa.com, which analyzes traffic on sites and it, says that traffic on your site is mostly women. But when Mike was interviewed he said it was mostly men. What do you think?

Joe: (laughs) Yea I would say that’s wrong we are a good 75% men if not more.

Interviewer: What about age?

Joe: Yea, pretty much the people that had them (Mego) as a kid, I would say 40’s anywhere from 40-50.

Interviewer: Ok Joe, so as far as your goal to provide a place for like minded people to hang out and trade, what steps have you taken as the Webmaster to try to accomplish this goal?

Joe: Oh well, just making sure the website and the forums are out there and making sure people know about them and providing sub forum. For example we have “buy” and “trade” but we have general forums because, you know, once you get to know someone you want to talk to them about other things not just Megos. Also, listening to everyone and seeing what they want on there. We have quite a bit of different topics. As far as Mego Museum goes we try to have a lot of photos on there with all the different variations so people can come and identify what they have. Hopefully they’ll stay and get involved in the community.

Interviewer: I hope this record-a-call app is working. I don’t trust that I did this correctly

Joe: (laughs) Oh! Don’t worry you can always email me with any questions.

Interviewer: I appreciate that

Interviewer: So Joe, how do you measure that you are being successful as far as your goal of providing a place for people to hangout and getting like minded people together. You create forums and sub forums but how do you measure that it’s successful?

Joe: I guess first off retention. Do they come and stay there? Do they keep participating? We do have a high retention, we have people that have been there over ten years and I guess another way is to attract new people. We have younger people that for whatever reason have started collecting them. You know we want to make sure they know they’re welcome too and there are even much older collectors that have not been on the internet and recently decided to. So as long as we keep growing a little bit year-by-year I think we’re being successful.

Interviewer: How much would you say you grow?

Joe: How much do we?

Interviewer: Yes do you keep data on how much you’ve grown?

Joe: I don’t have exact numbers off the top of my head but I can figure it out and send it to you.

Interviewer: I don’t need an exact number just and estimate.

Joe: I would say we see a 5-10% increase in memberships each year. Slow but steady.

Interviewer: You’ve been around a long time, at a 5-10% increase each year…… How has your job, the job of a Webmaster change as the numbers grow?

Joe: Well we’ve had to, a various points, improve the server so it has the bandwidth, the capacity to handle everybody. With the forums, I would say, just provide many sub forums because people that come there collect Mego but also collect other toys, so we want to make sure there is at least a little bit of that there for them.

Joe: That’s pretty much all I collect, action figures not other stuff.

Interviewer: Yes I went on there and I did see people asking questions about toys that were not Mego. There was someone that was asking about a Barbie. So the site does attract other collectors, other than Mego collectors I mean.

Joe: Yea there is definitely crossover. There are people that collect newer stuff and some collect things from the 60’s but also collect Mego.

Joe: You know, I know its Meeego but I’ve always said Mehgo. I’ve said Mehgo all my life and I’ve never gotten used to saying Meeego (laughs).

Interviewer: (laughs) and throughout this interview I was wondering if I was saying it wrong! I say “Meeego.”

Joe: No that’s right. “Meeego” is the correct word (laughs) I’ve called them Mehgo all my life, it’s really hard to get over that.

Interviewer: I remember Megos when I was a kid.

Joe: Oh that’s cool, they used to be so cheap back in those days. You could go get one for $2.99.

Interview: What stuck with me were the outfits that they had. The buttons and the hems, there was so much detail in the clothes. They don’t make toys like that anymore.

Joe: Yea, well they are starting to but they are high end and they are not cheap. They make the reproduction Megos now.

Interviewer: Yes I’ve seen the reproductions.

Joe: Oh that’s cool, for the general populous they don’t make them like that anymore.

Interviewer: No they don’t

Interviewer: Thank you so much Joe.

Joe: If you need anything else just email me.

Interviewer: Thank you again.

**Appendix C**

A. Safanova, in person interview with Mike Jimenez on 3/19/2016 at 4:00 pm, Hoboken, NJ

Interviewer: I’m going to record this interview so that I can transcribe it and include it in the paper we’re writing ok?

Mike: Yea that’s fine. Why don’t you just use your phone to record it.

Interviewer: Yea, I can do that…..Ok then, what is your position with this online community?

Mike: Well I’m a member and I provide content. I’m an expert on Mego’s Planet of the Apes so I’m usually the go to guy when you have a Planet of the Apes question.

Interviewer: Would you say there is a low bar for entry into this community or would you need to be an expert in order to join this community.

Mike: No not at all anybody can join, you don’t even have to be active. The only way you’ll get thrown out or band if you start trouble by posting things to incite arguments. You know if you’re a troll.

Interviewer: Who are the members?

Mike the majority of the members are men ages 40-50 years of age. There are a few women but not too many.

Interviewer: What is the goal of this community?

Mike: The goal is to promote the hobby of collecting Megos

Interviewer: How is the online community accomplishing that goal?

Mike: Oh in so many ways! Anything you ever possibly want to know about Mego toys is on this website.

Interviewer: So if I was a collector and I wanted a certain toy could I go on there and find out where to get it?

Mike: Not any toy just Mego toys but yes, you could go on there and post what you’re looking for and members would let you know if they’ve seen it up for bid on another site or if they have it. I’ve gotten much of my collection like that.

Interviewer: How would you measure the success of the community?

Mike: I would say the increase in the number of members, by the convention they hold every year…….

Interviewer: They hold a convention every year….. Mego museum?

Mike: Yes they call it Mego meet and it’s held yearly. The first one was in New York City and then they started holding it in West Virginia. They had it there for 10 years and I think last year it was in Skokie. I’ve gone a few times.

Interviewer: What is the goal of the convention?

Mike: Mostly it's to meet each other and socialize. We talk online constantly, it's nice to physically meet each other. I bring my collection and show it. I talk about it all the time so people are excited to finally see it. Oh and I spoke on the Planet of the Apes….that's my specialty.

Interviewer: How big is the convention?

Mike: I would say the last one I went to ……. there was about 100 people there. I haven’t gone in 8 years.

Interviewer: Before this online community was created how did collector's exchange information and talk?

Mike: Before this there was a Yahoo group but it was nowhere near what this is. Collectors would talk to each other in the yahoo forum.

Interviewer: What is the need in the market that drives the success of this community?

Mike: There was just a need for information. Sometimes you’d have an action figure but you didn’t know anything about it. How much it was worth… if it’s real, or even its name. I would also say the need to socialize with other people that have the same interest….not everyone has that interest so finding like minded people.

Interviewer: Are there other communities out there like this one.

Mike: Right now there is no other site that does what Mego Museum does. There are sites for specific collectable toys like a site for He-man or something like that but no site has all the mego action figures on one site. Mego Museum is a great site if you’re a collector.

Interviewer: So I heard that you had the biggest Mego collection in the world. Is this accurate?

Mike: Yes, I had the most complete Planet of the Apes collection in the world (laughs)

Interviewer: How did this happen?

Mike: Ummmm by accident (laughs) No, seriously I’ve been collecting it for 14 years. Searching for stuff.

Interviewer: What role did the Mego Museum play in helping you to acquire this vast collection?

Mike: I would post that I was looking for certain items and guys would point me to an online auction that had it or I’d buy things from other members. We help each other out.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you think I should know about this online community?

Mike: Yea that even though the company closed about 40 years ago there are still things being discovered and the only way to know about these things is through the online museum….like new toys and things no one ever even knew existed. Oh, they created a set of trading cards, that’s interesting but you can’t buy them, they can only be given to you. There’s about a hundred of them. The Museum won’t sell them they’ll only give them away.

Interviewer: Whom do they give them to?

Mike: Anyone that joins and asks nicely, they’ll send you a few. Sometimes people send them to you and if you a have extras you can offer them up to people. I had a complete set but I lost it in the flood during hurricane Sandy.

Interviewer: Oh no! Did you lose anything else?

Mike: Yea! I lost a lot! I lost all of my catalogs

Interviewer: Ok well thank you, that concludes our …….

Mike: There are a lot of interesting things that this online community has done.

Interviewer: Tell me about some.

Mike: They put out this toy faire catalog of toys that Mego didn’t make but could have made.

Interviewer: I’m not sure what that means.

Mike: Like for example Scooby Doo action figures. Mego would have made that at some point but they didn’t, I thought those catalogs were really creative. Sometimes they make t-shirts and sell them.

Interviewer: Is this site for profit?

Mike: No not at all, what ever they make goes to hosting fees….. Customs is a big part of this community.

Interviewer: Customs? What is that?

Mike: People that make their own figures, figures that Mego didn’t make.

Interviewer: Are they allowed to sell them on the site?

Mike: Yea but there’s copyright laws because they are not creating original characters but characters that are already created, like in a movie or book. I think they’re allowed to make three before they are breaking the law or something like that, I’m not sure. Another way the site makes money is click–throughs to Amazon and other entertainment areas.

Interviewer: Well thank you.

Mike: I’d like to finish up with the Mego jingle or the Action Jackson song….. no not really (laughs) but just so you know I had every single figure variation of every single character and every single package variation for every country in the Mego Planet of the Apes collection except for one thing.

Interviewer: What was that one thing?

Mike: It was a Mexican horse and carriage set.

Interviewer: Really? Have you ever found it?

Mike: Yea about a month after I sold my entire collection I found it. (laughs)

Interviewer: Oh no! Why did you sell the collection?

Mike: My house flooded. I lost all of my toy dealers catalogues; I was the only one with a complete collection. I lost them all! I lost so much of my collection during Hurricane Sandy that I panicked and sold everything thinking it could be gone so easily. That’s when I found that one piece, one finally came up for sale! (laughs)