

Curriculum Vitae Rainer Blatt

Department of Experimental Physics
University of Innsbruck and
Institute of Quantum Optics and Quantum Information
Austrian Academy of Sciences

Rainer Blatt (born 8 September 1952) is a German-Austrian experimental physicist. His research centers on the areas of quantum optics and quantum information. He and his team were the first to teleport atoms, to create a „quantum byte“ and a universal quantum simulator.



BIOGRAPHY Rainer Blatt graduated in physics from the University of Mainz in 1979. He finished his doctorate in 1981 and worked as research assistant in the team of Günter Werth. In 1982 Blatt received a research grant of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) to go to the Joint Institute for Laboratory Astrophysics (JILA), Boulder, and work with John L. Hall (Nobel Prize winner 2005) for a year. In 1983 he went on to the Freie Universität Berlin, and in the following year joined the working group of Peter E. Toschek at the University of Hamburg. After another stay in the US, Rainer Blatt applied to qualify as a professor by receiving the "venia docendi" in experimental physics in 1988. In the period from 1989 until 1994 he worked as a Heisenberg research fellow at the University of Hamburg and returned several times to JILA in Boulder. In 1994 he was appointed professor of physics at the University of Göttingen and in the following year he was offered a chair in experimental physics at the University of Innsbruck. Since 2003 Blatt has also held the position of Scientific Director at the Institute for Quantum Optics and Quantum Information (IQOQI) of the Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW). Rainer Blatt is married, with three children.

RESEARCH Experimental physicist Rainer Blatt has carried out trail-blazing experiments in the fields of precision spectroscopy, quantum metrology and quantum information processing. He works with atoms caught in ion traps, which he manipulates using laser beams. This work is based on joint work with, and suggestions made in the mid-1990s by theorists Ignacio Cirac and Peter Zoller. In 2003 Blatt's group was able to realize for the first time the proposed Cirac-Zoller entangling operation and in 2004, Blatt's working group succeeded for the first time in transferring the quantum information of one atom in a totally controlled manner onto another atom (teleportation). The science journal Nature reported the experiment and gave it pride of place on the cover. Two years later, Rainer Blatt's working group already managed to entangle up to eight atoms in a controlled manner. The creation of this first "quantum byte" (qubyte) was a further step on the way towards a quantum computer. 2011 the team managed to push this record to 14 entangled atoms and since 2018 they routinely work with 20 fully controlled ion qubits. Since 2011 Blatt's group has taken important steps towards successful quantum error correction and succeeded in encoding a logical qubit with seven physical qubits. Since then the group has also realized a universal quantum simulator, performed open systems quantum simulations and for the first time demonstrated a quantum simulation of a lattice gauge theory. Currently, Blatt's team routinely operates with two quantum computers, working towards the implementation of scalable quantum computation and quantum simulation. He is also known for his support of young scientists. Several of his assistants have received prestigious awards and have since been appointed professorships at universities abroad.

AWARDS Rainer Blatt has received numerous awards for his achievements in the fields of quantum optics and metrology. He was awarded the 2018 Micius Quantum Prize for his pioneering work on the realizations of quantum logic gates and fundamental elements of quantum computing with trapped ions. He received the International Quantum Communication Award 2016 for his pioneering experiments on quantum information processing. In 2015 he was awarded the John Stewart Bell Prize for Research on Fundamental Issues in Quantum Mechanics and Their Applications, and in 2014 the "Tiroler Landespreis for Science" by the Tyrolean Government. The Australian Academy of Science announced him as the 2013 Frew Fellow. In 2013 he also received the "Humboldt-Forschungspreis". In 2012 the German Physical Society awarded him the "Stern-Gerlach-Medal", in 2011 he was awarded the Science Award for Outstanding Achievements of the Stiftung Südtiroler Sparkasse. Together with Ignacio Cirac he won the Carl Zeiss Research Award (2009). In 2008 he received an „ERC Advanced Grant“ by the European Research Council and the Kardinal Innitzer Award. In 2007 Rainer Blatt and his European project partners were nominated by the European Commission for the Descartes Prize. In 2006 he received the Schrödinger Prize of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. Since 2008 Rainer Blatt is full member of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, in 2019 he was elected as foreign member of the US National Academy of Sciences and the Royal Spanish Academy of Sciences. In November 2021 he was awarded the TUM Distinguished Affiliated Professorship by TU Munich.

PERSONAL DATA SHEET

PERSONAL DETAILS Otto Rainer Blatt, born 8 September 1952 in Idar-Oberstein, Germany, married, three children, German and Austrian citizenship

EDUCATION 1959-1963 Primary school in Idar-Oberstein, Germany
1963-1971 High school in Idar-Oberstein, Germany
1971-1973 Military service in Germany
1973-1979 Studies of physics at Univ. of Mainz, Diploma degree 1979
1979-1981 Dissertation in physics at Univ. of Mainz, Doctoral degree 1981

ACADEMIC EDUCATION AND POSITIONS HELD 1981-1982 Univ. of Mainz (w/ Prof. G. Werth), Research Associate
1982-1983 Joint Institute of Laboratory Astrophysics (JILA), Boulder, CO, USA, Research fellowship of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) (Dr. J. L. Hall)
1983-1984 Freie Universität Berlin (w/ Prof. E. Matthias), Research Associate
1984-1987 University of Hamburg (w/ Prof. P. Toschek), Research Associate
1988 Habilitation thesis, Hamburg, Privatdozent at University of Hamburg
1989-1994 University of Hamburg, Heisenberg fellow
1991-1994 JILA, Boulder, CO, USA, several research visits
1994-1995 University of Göttingen, Professor of Physics at 3. Physikalisches Institut
1995-2020 University of Innsbruck, Full Professor of Physics (O. Univ. Prof.)
2000-2013 Director of Department of Experimental Physics, University of Innsbruck
since 2000 CEO of Institut für Quanteninformation Ges.m.b.H, Innsbruck
since 2001 member of the academic senate of University of Innsbruck
since 2003 Scientific Director of the newly founded Institute for Quantum Optics and Quantum Information (IQOQI) of the Austrian Academy of Sciences; from 2003-2009 and since 2015 he also has been Managing Director of the IQOQI
2003-2008 corresponding member of the Austrian Academy of Sciences
since 2008 full member of the Austrian Academy of Sciences
since 2020 Emeritus Professor (em. O. Univ. Prof.) at University of Innsbruck and Univ. Prof. (50%) at University of Innsbruck

AWARDS AND OFFERS 1989 Heisenberg fellowship award of Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG)
1995 Offer to become Full Professor of Physics at University of Jena (declined)
1997 Innovations-Preis by Tiroler Sparkasse
2006 Schrödinger-Preis of the Austrian Academy of Sciences
2007 Descartes prize finalist award for QGATES consortium
2008 ERC Advanced Investigator Grant
2008 Karl Innitzer Award
2009 Carl Zeiss Research Award (with Ignacio Cirac)
2011 Stiftung Südtiroler Sparkasse Science Award
2012 Stern Gerlach Medal, German Physical Society
2013 Order of merit by the Region of Tyrol
2013 Alexander von Humboldt Research Award of the Humboldt Foundation
2013 2013 Frew Fellow, Australian Academy of Science
2014 Tiroler Landespreis für Wissenschaft (Science award of the state of Tyrol)
2015 John Stewart Bell Prize
2016 Quantum Communication Award
2019 Micius Quantum Prize
2019 Foreign Member of the National Academy Science (US)
2019 Foreign Member of the Royal Spanish Academy of Sciences
2020 Dr. honoris causa of the Universidad Complutense Madrid
2021 TUM Distinguished Affiliated Professorship TU Munich
2021 External member of the Max Planck Institute of Quantum Optics, Garching
2022 Gutenberg Research Award, Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

1997-2003 coopted board member of QEOD of the EPS
1999 chairman of ICOLS99, International Conference on Laser Spectroscopy
1999-2003 editorial board member of Journal Phys. B: „Quantum and Semiclassical Optics“
2000 chairman of IQEC, Nice, International Quantum Electronics Conference
since 2003 regular board member of the QEOD of the EPS
2003-2009 board member of the ICQE, International Council of Quantum Electronics
since 2004 associate editor of “Quantum Information and Computation”
since 2004 editorial board member of “Quantum Information Processing”
since 2005 editorial board member of “Applied Physics B (Lasers and Optics)”
2005-2006 member and chairman (2006) of the Schawlow prize committee of APS
2006 chairman of 20th ICAP, International Conference on Atomic Physics Memberships
since 1979 member of the Deutsche Physikalische Gesellschaft (DPG)
since 1982 member of the American Physical Society (APS), fellow 2003
since 1996 member of the Austrian Physical Society (ÖPG)
since 1998 member of the European Physical Society (EPS)
since 2000 member of the Institute of Physics (IOP, chartered physicist)
since 2001 member of the Optical Society of America (OSA)
2004-2010 board member, Quantum Information Processing Interdisciplinary Research Collaboration (QIP IRC), Oxford
2006-2018 member (and chairman) of the Scientific Advisory Board MPQ, Garching
2009-2019 speaker FWF SFB project F40
2010-2018 member of the Austrian Science Board
since 2011 member of the Scientific Advisory Committee, ARC Centre of Excellence for Engineered Quantum Systems, Australia
since 2012 member of the Council for the Lindau Nobel Laureate Meetings
2013-2022 member of the scientific advisory board of the Russian Quantum Center (RQC)
since 2020 member of the Quantum Computing and Simulation Technical Advisory Board of the Oxford quantum hub
since 2021 coordinator and scientific head of the Munich Quantum Valley (MQV)

RESEARCH FUNDING

1982-1983 DFG research fellowship
1989-1994 DFG Heisenberg fellowship
1989-1995 multiple DFG projects on quantum optics and quantum information
1996-1999 multiple FWF projects on quantum optics with trapped ions
1996-2003 two EU network projects on quantum information processing
1999-2008 funding within FWF SFB project F15: “Control and measurement of coherent quantum systems”
since 2000 funding through Institut für Quanteninformation GmbH, Tirol, Austria
2000-2007 multiple EU network projects on quantum based information processing
2003-2009 two ARO (US) projects on scalable quantum information processing
2005-2009 EU IP project SCALA: “Scalable quantum computing with light and atoms”
2005-2007 EU ERA-pilot QIST: “Structuring European Research Area within QI ...”
2005-2006 Accion Integrada: “Quantum feedback with single ions”
2006-2009 EU STREP project MICROTRAP: “Development of pan-European technology ...”
2006-2009 EU NoE QUROPE: QIPC NoE
2008-2017 funding within FWF SFB project F40: “Foundations and Applications of Quantum Science”
since 2010 EU network AQUITE: „Atomic Quantum Technologies“
since 2010 ARO (US) project: „Multi-qubit coherent operations with trapped ions“
since 2011 FWF project: „Single Photon Interactions (SINPHONIA)“
since 2013 FWF project: „Complex Quantum Simulations (COMQUATS)“
since 2013 Commercial Applications for RF-Arrays of Traps (CARAT)
since 2013 Quantum Simulations in Arbitrary Ion Lattices (Q-Sail)
since 2013 Quantum Engineered states for optical clocks and atomic sensors
since 2013 Simulations and Interfaces with Quantum Systems (SIQS)
since 2014 Certified Topological quantum computation (CETO)
since 2016 Encoded Qubit Alive (eQual)
since 2018 Quantum Technologies for Lattice Gauge Theories (QTFLAG)
since 2018 Advanced quantum computing with trapped ions (AQTIION)
since 2019 Creation and control of large-scale entangled quantum matter (LASCEM)

SCIENTIFIC PROFILE After graduating in 1981 at the University of Mainz, Rainer Blatt joined the group of Dr. John L. Hall (Nobel-laureate of 2005) in 1982 where he started a project on the cooling of a beam of Sodium atoms. At that time this was a very hot topic, since first atomic beam cooling results were presented just in 1981 by the group of W. Phillips (Nobel laureate of 1998). Together with W. Ertmer (now Hannover) Blatt was successful in achieving atomic beam cooling with a frequency chirp technique that for the first time allowed them to stop atoms out of a beam. After returning to Germany he started to work at the University of Hamburg (w/ P. Toschek and W. Neuhauser) with single trapped ions and they were among the first to see quantum jumps in single atoms, a technique now routinely used in quantum information processing and for metrology purposes. With this work he did his Habilitation thesis in 1988 and continued there as a Heisenberg fellow, using the freedom that comes with this fellowship to further work with single trapped Ba⁺ and Yb⁺ ions on fundamental quantum optics experiments and for an implementation of a frequency standard.

Throughout his work, Rainer Blatt has learned from the very best experimentalists and thus has always tried to tackle hard experimental problems that seemed almost impossible at first. While experiments with single trapped ions take quite some time to be mastered, they provide some of the cleanest and most fundamental subjects for basic research, which has never ceased to fascinate him. Thus, when the discussions about quantum computers started around 1994, Blatt had the luck and the opportunity to work with his longstanding colleague P. Zoller (at that time with CU, Boulder, CO) and I. Cirac (then in Madrid, Innsbruck and Boulder) who proposed trapped ions for quantum computation. He immediately started the quantum computer project at his new position at the University of Göttingen, Germany. Therefore, they were among the first to start implementing experiments toward quantum information processing with trapped ions, ideas initially developed by P. Zoller and I. Cirac.

This work gained momentum with the new position at University of Innsbruck in 1995 where now P. Zoller and (in 1996) I. Cirac worked as the inventors of the ion trap quantum computer. While such experiments are quite demanding, together with a number of highly talented students and assistants they took on that challenge and developed the technology steadily in the 1990s, and achieved milestones as the sideband cooling (1999) and first quantum operations (2001-2002). Together with their colleagues P. Zoller, I. Cirac and A. Zeilinger (until 1999, then R. Grimm since 2000), they were able to create an environment and an atmosphere that enabled them to attract and inspire students, postdocs and visitors and in essence put Innsbruck on the quantum map. The hard experimental work paid off and ever since our quantum information group belongs to the finest and most experienced groups worldwide. Together with their competing group of David Wineland at NIST, Boulder, CO, they have been able to lead quantum information science with trapped ions worldwide.

Most remarkable milestones throughout the last years where the first implementation of the Deutsch-Jozsa algorithm, of the Cirac-Zoller gate operation (2003), teleportation of the state of an atom (2004), the creation of W and GHZ states on demand (2004), the first creation of a quantum byte (2005), the application of entanglement for precision quantum metrology (2006), a Mølmer-Sørensen-type gate operation entangling ions with a fidelity of 99% (2008), the realization of the quantum Toffoli gate and the state-independent experimental test of quantum contextuality (2009), the quantum simulation of the Dirac equation (2010), the creation of trapped-ion antennae for the transmission of quantum information, 14-qubit entanglement, repetitive quantum error correction, and the realization of an universal digital quantum simulator with trapped ions (2011), the construction of an efficient and tunable interface for quantum networks (2012), the simulation of quasiparticles and of a topologically encoded 7-qubit quantum register (2014), the first quantum simulation of lattice gauge theories and the realization of an efficient implementation of Shor's algorithm in an ion-trap based quantum computer (2016), observation of entangled states of a fully controlled 20-qubit system, quantum chemistry calculations on a trapped-ion quantum simulator (2018) and the implementation of a variational quantum simulator with a 20-qubit register (2019). More recently, determining the Rényi entropy from randomized measurements, error correction for qubit loss (2020) and the first entanglement of two logical qubits via lattice surgery (2021).

SCIENTIFIC PROFILE

All this led the Austrian Academy of Sciences to consider the joint application to establish an Academy Institute dedicated to doing research in the area of Quantum Optics and Quantum Information. Eventually, this institute was founded in November 2003 and a new building was planned and set up in record time. Most of the scientific planning for the building, the laboratories and the experimental work plan was done by Blatt and his colleague R. Grimm. They were able to get the required financial support from the federal and local governments and the city of Innsbruck. Thus, in 2005 the new laboratories were ready and since then they have been able to attract even more visitors, guests and long-term researchers to Innsbruck and to collaborate with them. All in all, in the field of quantum optics and quantum information, there are more than 100 scientists working at the university and the academy institute who, of course, collaborate very closely. Innsbruck has become a world-wide centre for quantum optics and in particular, for quantum information research.

Throughout the last years, about 40 PhD students and more than 50 diploma students have graduated from Blatt's group. He has had the pleasure to attract more than 30 postdocs in the past years and most important, some of the finest young scientists became assistants in his group where they have the chance to work similar to an assistant professor, leading sub-projects and supervising their own students. Already nine of the first assistants have accomplished their Habilitation work and hold now professorships in Germany, the US, Sweden and in Hongkong. Aside from several awards for PhD students, two of his former assistants received the prestigious Rudolf-Kaiser prize (about 25 k€ each) for their work. Four of the assistants have received an ERC Starting Grant (1.5 M€ each), one has received an ERC Advanced Grant, six assistants have won the prestigious START award of the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education and Culture (1.2 M€ each).

The scientific work of the entire group is highly appreciated and they receive routinely more than twenty invitations to international meetings every year. In 2006, Blatt was awarded the highest Austrian research prize, the Erwin-Schrödinger award of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, for quantum information research. Aside from the research activities, he teaches at the University of Innsbruck, mostly introductory courses on atomic physics, quantum physics as well as solid state physics and advanced courses on experimental quantum optics. Moreover, Blatt is involved in giving talks for the broader public, especially for teachers and high school students and together with his colleagues they are strongly interested in disseminating quantum information. For this, P. Zoller and R. Blatt are supported by the association of Tyrolean industrialists who finance a company (Institute for Quantum Information Ges.m.b.H.). With this support, they can hire staff and students, invite guests and quite generally foster the connections between university and industry. On the European stage, the IQOQI serves as centre for European Research Area (ERA) and other networking activities; they were especially involved in the formulation of the European "roadmap" towards Quantum Information Processing and Communication (QIPC) and a vital part of the €1 billion flagship initiative on quantum technologies (QT), which aims at putting Europe at the forefront of the second quantum revolution, bringing transformative advances to science, industry and society. Rainer Blatt was a member of the Commission Expert Group on QT. Currently, Blatt is a member of various scientific advisory boards of quantum centers worldwide.