

Open Schools Journal for Open Science

Τόμ. 9, Αρ. 1 (2026)

Open Schools Journal for Open Science



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doi: [10.12681/osj.43961](https://doi.org/10.12681/osj.43961)

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Βιβλιογραφική αναφορά:

Folina (Guest Author), H. (2026). Τα logistics του Άγιου Βασίλη: Ανάλυση ενός παγκόσμιου δικτύου διανομής κατά τη διάρκεια της νύχτας. *Open Schools Journal for Open Science*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.12681/osj.43961>

The logistics of Santa Claus

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Summary

Making toys is not magic, even at the North Pole. Toys are made from real materials like wood, fabric, paint and small electronic parts. These materials must travel safely from all around the world to Santa's workshop, so nothing breaks or goes wrong. This story looks at a systemic analysis of a global overnight distribution network, explained through Santa's busy Christmas operation (National Geographic Kids, 2025). We first introduce how planning and organizing materials helps Santa prepare gifts for every child. We then explain why speed, safety, and good teamwork are important for the elves and the reindeer. Here we show that even the biggest Christmas miracle depends on careful planning, smart storage, and fast delivery. In a wider sense, Santa's case study helps us understand how everyday products move from factories to people's homes. It shows that good logistics make both Christmas and real-life run smoothly (National Geographic Kids, 2025).

Inside Santa's logistics operation

What to make?

Every Christmas means another year passing, we all grow a year older and begin adapting to needs that correspond with our age, consequently adopting new items and concepts to add to our wish lists. Santa understands this while reading through each letter and seeing the differences from last year's list to the one he reads through once he sits down to go through each and every one of them. But Santa cannot wait for when the letters arrive to North Pole to begin the preparations for his big day, it will be far too late once he has checked his list twice. Which brings us to the estimations of the number and the genre of gifts that must be made, based on the comparison between previous years till now. His estimations must on spot and done a long time before Christmas day so that he knows the quantity of materials that will be needed previous to getting the elves to work. If Santa's calculations are correct, no child will be left without a gift and no materials will remain for next year.

Warehousing

After each gift is precisely made, they must be stored, sorted, organized and prepared, and what better place to do that in than an enormous warehouse right in the North Pole? With gifts for children all over the globe at hand, he could not possibly fit them all in a corner of his workshop. The gifts are not handed out randomly, each is planned for a different child and region, which means Santa cannot be going back and forth for each gift, he must have them already sorted them out in the warehouse, each on their own labelled shelf based on area and with special labels for each one of the exact location and child it will be received by. But before all this, the elves and their packing skills play a big aspect on how this all plays out. The right toys must be picked with accuracy so they can be stored on each self and labelled correctly, this procedure leaves no room for mistakes for till Santa's big trip, then it

will be far too late even if he had all the elves at once performing. If that scenario plays out, it will be an absolute disaster, which means there simply cannot be any faults during this procedure.

Moving gifts

On his once a year debut day, Santa, with all the gifts now made, packaged and sorted out correctly, is ready for his big trip around the world, a surely long trip that must be done in one night, but it is not only the different time zones that help him out, but also his trusty incredibly quick delivery sleigh. It seems to be the best choice; it has space to hold his sack and himself and is packed on the front with a group of reindeers that have been training all year long just for this day. Other than the means he uses to go dashing through the falling snow, he must have planned ahead once more. Since his time of delivery is timed for only the night, his trips cannot take too long, therefore he must have a route planned out for the easiest and quickest paths needed to pass from every country and home without excluding any home, big or small. Speaking of sizes, each home is different, small, large, with different structure as well, which results in Santa having to enter each home using different means, because of course, it cannot always be a chimney waiting for him to pass through. At times, he must use windows, balconies, which at times might make the trip shorter or even delay it. Lastly, there must be no backtracking. One small circle done for any missed homes and his planned-out route on the map no longer serves a purpose.

Delivering

With gifts having passed through their neat procedure, and with roads to take already settled, once the sun settles down and everyone goes to bed, it is time for all the gifts to reach their owners and their new homes. All houses, with difficult or simply passages, are entered with absolute silence so as not to disturb anyone that is asleep and risk Santa getting caught. With a quick look around each interior, Santa already knows where each gift belongs no matter how a house is settled out, under the tree or in the stockings over the fireplace. No gifts can be tossed outside of a door in a rush and risk causing any harm to the toys, otherwise all the previous work will be undone. Since Santa cannot be the only Saint giving, he needs to receive something as well, which comes to the fresh glass of milk and cookies that await him on a platter right under the tree, and we cannot forget about the ones that fly in the sky, carrots for the reindeers should be an essential so they can keep up their magic flight.

Team working

In the art of gift-making there are many factors that make it work. The essential ones being the hard-working elves, each one absolutely skilled on the part of the procedure they have been assigned to, whether that be gift wrapping, preparing the sleigh and Santas suit, helping train the reindeers, making the toys or simply even tidying up is up to their own skills. The elves work hard every year before Christmas day to be well prepared and ready for when the time comes, which means many hours of work done with fidelity. Their work is not their only past time of course, Santa knows that Christmas is a time of happiness for all, even the ones that make it happen, so he makes sure to provide them with breaks between working, as well as making the time spent during their working fun and entertaining as well with songs and occasional times for joking around with one another, and having a taste of the Christmas spirit themselves.

Avoiding risks

Santa cannot always depend on his elves or a Christmas miracle in case something goes terribly wrong during his trip and ruins the whole day, he needs to be prepared as well for whatever obstacles come his way. Good Winter weather is not always promised, one year the snow can be gentle, lacking or even brutal, Santa must be well packed with equipment to protect his sleigh, the reindeers, himself and of course the gift, along with a backup schedule for if some deliveries need to be done later during different conditions. The reindeers are always well prepared and trained, but that does not assure peak performance if they were to get harmed or sick, luckily, back at the North Pole, Santa has a whole barn of reindeers that are ready to act and the place of any reindeers that are unable to perform. The gifts cannot be forgotten either, any disruption during gift giving could result in a gift getting harmed in the process, and since no child can be left without a gift during Christmas, Santa must always carry some spare ones on the bottom of his sack to replace any undone toys, so everyone can have a merry and bright special Winter day.

Saving the planet

Santa always remains Saint Nick under his red suit and white beard, despite his different appearance, he always looks out for being a good example and even better in his actions. Along with thinking about the wellbeing of his elves, his reindeer and himself, he also pays mind to the one that provides him of his snowy home and sky, the environment. With so many gifts in line, there must be a lot wrapping done, some pieces cut and tossed to the side, if it was all made of paper it would mean a lot less fir trees to decorate and a lot more to shred, and since there is no Christmas without a Christmas tree, Santa makes sure that all his wrapping paper is reusable, leaving no space for waste. It is not only the outside that needs sustainability, but also the toys themselves, they should be ready for a prolonged usage with long lasting materials that keep them in shape so they cannot be thrown out even before the next gift giving. His long now usage of reindeers has been a very beneficial attribute to protecting nature, his lack of using machines and fuel for his sleigh means any harm to the environment is zeroed down when it comes to his trip.

Measuring the performance

At the end of the night, once the sack is emptied out, once all the names on every list have been checked twice and he arrives back at his home, during his time of rest and having a meal with Ms. Claus and all the elves, the reindeers at their stable sleeping and eating or out having fun, Santa always makes sure to keep track of how well everything had gone. With some previously done statistics along with standard numbers and diagrams, Santa compares and tracks down his and his team's final results. Since his trips are timed, he must make sure that all gifts were given on time so that the children receive it without him possibly having gotten caught at any moment. Checking his list again, he has to make sure if all the gifts were given out and to the correct receivers, any mistakes made, any lacking or swapped gifts, could mean the night had been a failed one, and that there would be some unhappy smiles in the morning, along with his own. Santa always makes sure everyone is happy with their gifts, how pleased each child is with what they have received puts on the line whether they will be writing more letters next year as well and if they will keep on believing in him, after all, what would Santa be without any happy kids to give his presents to?

Conclusion

Santa's logistics system shows us that planning is very important (CSCMP, 2025). Santa cannot wait until the last moment to prepare gifts. He must plan early so that every child receives the right present on Christmas morning. When things are planned well, everything works smoothly and there are no surprises (BBC Bitesize, 2025). The story also teaches us that small mistakes can turn into big problems. If one gift is lost, broken, or sent to the wrong place, many people may be affected. That is why Santa and the elves must be very careful at every step. Another important lesson is that logistics connects people, products, and time. Toys are made in one place, travel long distances, and arrive exactly when they are needed. Elves, reindeer, and Santa must all work together at the right time. Even though Santa's world is magical, his system works like real life. Shops, schools, and homes all depend on good planning and delivery. This shows us that logistics helps make people happy, not only at Christmas, but every day.

Keywords

Logistics, Supply Chain, Gifts, Santa Claus, Christmas

Author biographies

Haris Folina is a student at the 7th EPAL in Thessaloniki, Greece. She dreams of studying economics and logistics and enjoys learning how things travel from one place to another. Christmas was a wonderful chance for her to explore a subject that expresses just that in the characteristic face of Santa Claus and his act of gift giving all around the world.

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