

GainingInsights

Technology in Convention & Exhibition Centers

The role of Technology in enhancing event experience as well improving operational efficiency continues to grow rapidly.

Convention & exhibition centers across the globe claim to have leading technology on offer at their venues. Noted below are just three examples from high profile international convention & exhibition centers.

"the most technologically-advanced, purpose-built facility"





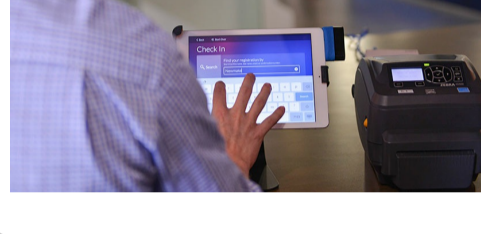
"we are one of the most technically advanced convention centers"

"this center has industry leading technology"

But what does it all really mean? How does a customer validate statements like "most technologically advanced" or "industry leading technology"?




There is no straight forward answer as there is no uniform way to measure or compare technology in venues in the way we can compare the size of the exhibition floor or the number of seats in auditorium.

Technology in convention & exhibition centers can broadly be categorized into three groups.

 Building Related Technology	 Venue Organizer Tools	 End User Experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Retractable seating systems o Operable or Movable Walls o Robotic Kitchen Equipment o Fibre Optics o Green Technology o Building Management Systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 3D Event Visualization (seating, sound, lighting) o Content sharing by Multiple Presenters o Live web streaming o Holographic projection o Outside broadcast technology (DH AV multi room displays) o Intelligent lecterns o Multi-image displays o Laser mapping for exhibitor booths o Digital Interpreter o Social media integration tools o Beacon & RFID Tracking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o High-speed Wi-Fi with multiple connections per person o Intelligent Registration Kiosks o HD LED Walls o Robot arms with LED displays o Unconventional screen shape displays (Aglo) o Interactive digital signage, LED wayfinding walls o Touch screen walls & displays 


CURRENT MARKET EXPECTATIONS

Whilst today, there is no official standard for technology offerings in a convention & exhibition centre, GainingEdge research indicates the following as the minimum expectation from international organisers:

-  High quality broadband (Ethernet and fibre optic back bone infrastructure as well as wireless) to simultaneously support all core facilities and delegates at the rate of one connection per guest based on expected maximum guest capacity for the venue.
-  A suite of audio-visual equipment suitable for the multi-use configurations the venue. Quick and easy to use. Avoid opening sessions with "technical difficulties". Existing systems are designed for single presenter mode but today's need is towards multiple presenters.
-  LED wall screens complemented by appropriate sound and interactive technology to allow large plenary sessions in the main hall to be simulcast alternative rooms in the venue.
-  Video conferencing / webcasting capability integrated into the plenary hall support remote presentations and conferences with keynote speakers at remote sites and with event recording capability.
-  Simultaneous interpretation system.
-  Flexible lighting requirements in multi-use halls to allow a wide range of use. Circuit design for different types of control to provide for general space lighting, perimeter lighting and spot lighting.
-  Digital signage/information (LED wayfinding), and registration kiosks.


5 KEY DIGITAL TRENDS

Virtual Reality



Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) are making headway at events. Exhibitors can provide headsets to delegates to create an immersive experience of their offering (VR), or to demonstrate a product's features (AR). It is also seen usage for Virtual Site Inspections. Holography can be used without the need for a viewing device, with its use for interactive stage events now also common.

Mobile



With information readily available in digital form from maps, marketing content, papers, schedules. They allow event managers to interact with delegates and can be used to track delegate's movements (in similar way to beacon technology or RFID name tags) as a form of Artificial Intelligence to understand what interests delegates. Apps can be linked to social media platforms for broadcast of event information, and also used for live polling and live streaming of events.

Data Analytics




Beacon common RFID & Apps driving data analytics to enhance the delegate experience and event quality.

Biometrics



Facial recognition, biometrics and sentiment analysis will be used to measure attendees' mood, engagement and demographics.

Gamification



The success of Pokémon Go (augmented reality game) will likely make its way in some form into event gamification engaging attendees.

TECHNOLOGY vs DIGITAL

Technology is crucial in supporting both the flexibility and versatility of function spaces, and in enhancing the customer experience. In particular, it is improving the engagement of delegates through the digital domain as "engagement" becomes an increasingly key component to events.

However, Technology is not the same as Digital. Sure, digital builds and extends from technology. But, digital should be seen less as a thing like technology and more as a way of doing things. For most venues, digital is a new way of engaging with customers.

Digital information and physical resources combine in new ways to create experiences, value and ultimately revenue. According to HBI (Nov 2012) it is about exploiting the pervasive digital connections between systems, people, places, and things.

Right now digital is buzzword in every industry including ours. Hence, it is common to see digital elements dominating most of the reported technology trends. GainingEdge has tracked the following as key trends in the digital space.

About the Author



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Rod leads the Convention & Exhibition Centre Development advisory team at GainingEdge, a global consulting firm engaged exclusively to the convention exhibition industry. Rod's expertise is in development advisory and asset management of Convention & Exhibition Centres. Having advised on projects across all continents he brings a very global perspective. His current engagements include Cyprus, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Norway and Singapore.

Email Rod

His advisory experience includes feasibility studies, design reviews, and operator selection. He has advised new and existing venues. He was previously at PwC and IHG.

Meet the GainingEdge team at IMEX


Meet Gary Grimmer, Paul Vallee, Jane Vong Holmes, Lesley Williams, Jane Cunningham Milos Milovanovic and Bruce Redor at IMEX Frankfurt from 15 - 17 May 2018.

GainingEdge Knowledge Exchange @ IMEX

Once again GainingEdge will be organising a Knowledge Exchange at IMEX Frankfurt on Thursday 17 May in Logos room from 0830-0930hrs. Attendance is on a first come first served basis and there is not cost to attend.

Legacy development: how destinations can play a role in assisting associations achieve their core purpose.

Registration will open soon, should you want to be notified once registration opens please email Jane Vong Holmes.

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