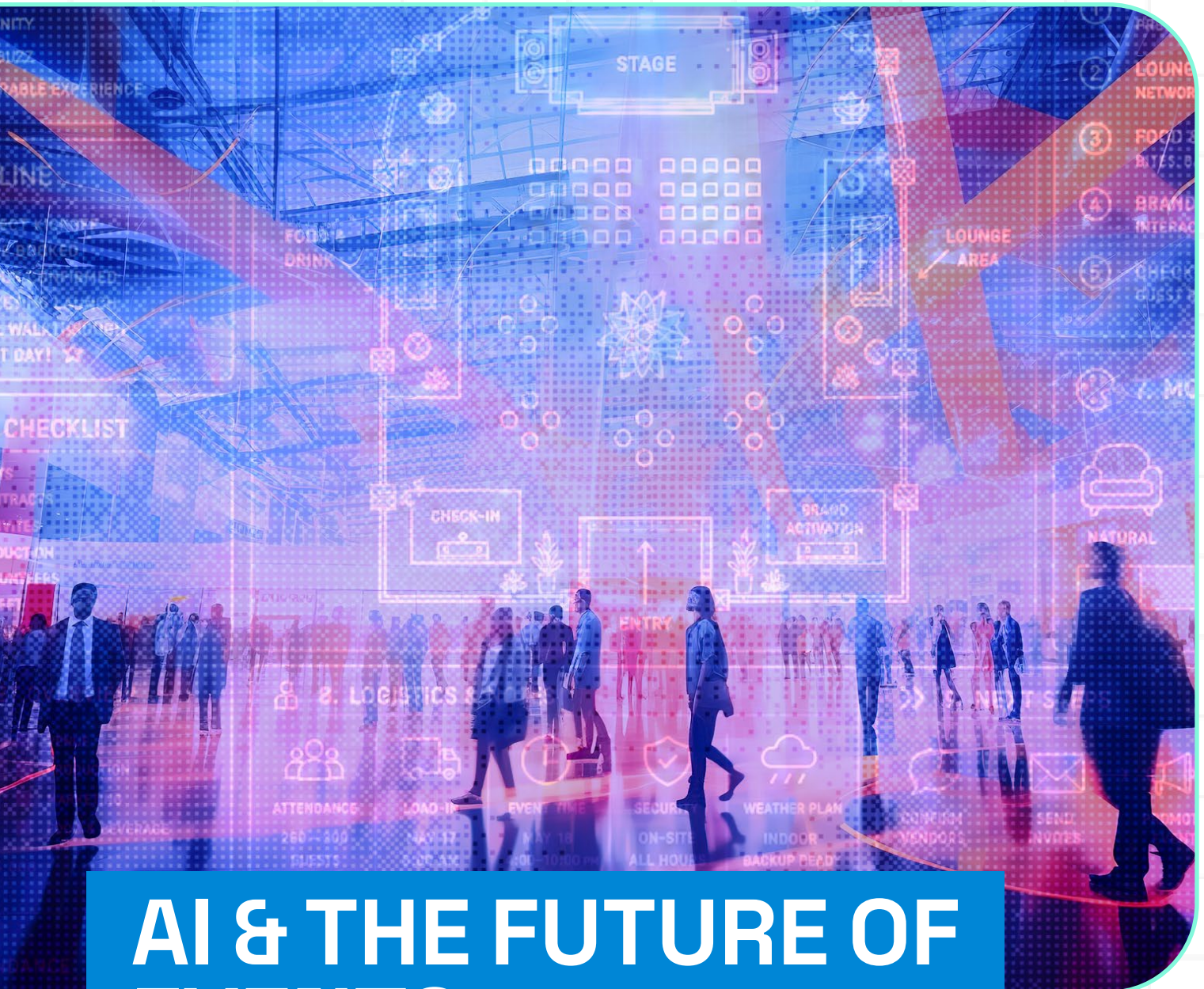




AI & THE FUTURE OF EVENTS

- How AI is Transforming Events — What Organizers Need to Know

Table of Contents

Introduction: How AI Is Reshaping Events	4
Looking Beyond AI's Shiny Light	6
Vibe Coding: An Alluring Shortcut With Consequences	8
The Promise of AI-Enhanced Event Experiences	10
Today's AI-Native Event Tech	15
Mapping AI-Native Event Tech Across Six Event Phases	16
<i>Wordly: The Future of AI and Events</i>	20
Buying Event Tech in the Age of AI	23
Conclusion: From Digitizing the Event Binder to Rethinking the Experience	27



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Introduction: How AI Is Reshaping Events

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is on a rapid journey from enhancing and optimizing events from the margins to helping us rethink what's possible, and, in some cases, questioning what's necessary. "AI can support event tech so much that it is slowly moving from a nice-to-have toward a prerequisite," says Sina Bunte, founder of DigitalMind.events. However, she warns that "many AI-powered features still feel like add-ons rather than something truly useful."

Celebrating AI achievements and positive use cases has merit, but it's equally important to question whether event tech embracing AI represents a genuine shift in event planning and execution. In many cases, "AI-powered" is merely a feature update dressed in fashionable language, and organizers deserve to know the difference.

AI is driving shifts in consumer behavior. We are increasingly turning to assistants like ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini instead of search engines. Travel planning has become the proving ground for this shift, and the same dynamics are reshaping how people discover and choose events. Organizers are using AI to help in all sorts of ways, from generating copy for websites and emails to analyzing post-event survey responses.

Organizers now have access to specialized AI-powered event tech tools as vendors race to anticipate their needs. The whole ecosystem is betting that users will prefer chatting to tools rather than navigating lists and menus. Destinations are proactive in

AI is not promising anything, it's one of the many very powerful tools for event service providers. **With proper consideration it may accelerate time to market for deliverables and may reduce delivery effort.**

—DOUG MULLER

VP, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION
GEORGE P. JOHNSON

implementing AI assistants on their websites to answer questions and guide organizers to appropriate venues and vendors

As discovery mechanisms change, so does the competitive advantage. Search engine optimization (SEO) has given way to generative engine optimization (GEO) with suppliers scrambling to appear in AI-generated recommendations. The principles are similar: understand the data these systems ingest, optimize for clarity and relevance, and recognize that visibility is now controlled by algorithms providing synthesized answers instead of ranked lists.

The events industry has been slow to innovate compared to other sectors, and for good reason. Tess Vismale, co-founder of Event Tech Atlas, says, “The event industry has little tolerance for failure in live environments.” They are time-sensitive, operationally complex, and stubbornly human. They rely on sensitive personal information, strict schedules, and the promise that when something goes wrong on-site, a human — not a chatbot — will fix it.

Against that backdrop, three distinct realities are emerging in event tech. Some platforms haven’t integrated AI, others have enhanced their functionality with AI, and a growing group of AI-native tools. This report focuses on the latter, a category with innovation at its core offering new concepts, workflows, and insights impossible without AI. It’s a practical guide through that landscape offering a framework for making smarter decisions in a fast-moving market. <

Tuning Out the Noise

Lori Pugh, vice president, MPI Academy, is already getting a sense of the kind of impact AI can have on the experience design process. She said the organization is using AI to brainstorm content, craft marketing messaging, and shape personalization efforts for attendees at the annual World Education Congress. “We’re also looking at how AI can help improve networking, content recommendations, and attendee engagement,” Pugh said.

However, Pugh believes meeting professionals need to pursue emerging AI-powered possibilities while refining what comes naturally. “Double down on the skills AI can’t replace — emotional intelligence, creativity, relationship-building, and strategic thinking,” she said. “Those human skills are becoming even more valuable in an AI-powered world.”

As meeting professionals try to determine how to maximize AI for their own roles and responsibilities, Pugh highlighted the importance of staying practical. “There are so many tools hitting the market that it can feel overwhelming fast,” Pugh said. “Figure out where AI actually adds value versus where it just creates noise.”



Looking Beyond AI's Shiny Light

Al is top of mind across the business world. But focusing on whether or not an event tech tool uses AI is the wrong question. The more interesting question is whether it enables event tech to do something additional or incremental that a non-AI tool couldn't. There are clear cases where the answer is yes. Real-time captioning and translation, facial recognition (for check-in and customized delivery of event photos), real-time support and content summarization are tasks that wouldn't be possible without today's AI capabilities. AI-native tools have also reshaped sourcing, matchmaking and lead capture.

In contrast, an AI-suggested registration form or a badge-scanning app that adds a "smart" label to a contact export represents AI as an enhancement. While these features may be valuable, they're not game changers. Event tech vendors may not intend to be deceitful, but it's up to organizers to verify claims and assess the value of AI deployment.

This conversation has an emerging financial angle. Pre-AI event tech was priced on volume: per registration, attendee, and event. AI-native tools run on consumption models tied to compute: the more the system does, the more it costs. Fully or semi-autonomous tools can consume tokens at a costly

It is 100% not necessary for event tech to be AI-powered.

That's like saying a car has to be powered in a certain way. That's not necessarily the case: the car has to get you from A to B. Sure, it'd be nice if it's electric from an environmental perspective, but a petrol-powered car is still going to get you to your destination. Provided the event tech fits your needs and makes you able to achieve your event goals, AI is absolutely not a necessity.

—**VANESSA LOVATT,**
FOUNDER, EVENT TECH WORLD

rate. As AI models improve, the cost per task tends to rise alongside the value, and it's up to organizers to clarify their operating costs.

Bias in AI is a concern. Vismale says, "One area we think the industry is still underestimating is bias in AI delivery and decision-making. If the underlying data already underrepresents people of color, smaller companies, nontraditional backgrounds, or different communication styles, AI can reinforce those same inequities at scale."

Equally, there are valid sustainability concerns around AI. The infrastructure powering AI has a significant energy cost and carbon footprint. Organizations are unlikely to avoid using AI, but they should apply the same scrutiny to AI-powered event tech procurement as they do to travel and logistics.





Vibe Coding: An Alluring Shortcut With Consequences

Vibe coding has emerged as a powerful use of AI. It enables someone with no coding skills to develop software by describing what they want. Tools like Lovable, Replit, and Cursor allow non-developers to assemble functional applications in hours instead of months.

Vibe coding can create simple event tech tools, but it's harder to create complex ones. Organizers using vibe-coded tools could face data security and privacy risks, inadequate support, and software failures. Therefore, it is unlikely to trouble established vendors with experience in making secure, bug-free, and reliable software.

As event tech becomes easier to build, it becomes crucial to distinguish between production and prototyping tools.

Event tech experts have mixed opinions. Muller supports it with guardrails and an appropriate scope. Lovatt sees it as an exciting prospect but warns that, “for most, it is not as achievable as we might like it to be.” Vismale and Keith Johnston, co-founders of Event Tech Atlas, think it works for lightweight workflows, internal tools, prototypes, or solving specific operational problems but never for mission-critical attendee-facing systems without proper testing, governance, and oversight. Bünthe offers an alternative view, suggesting that organizers could use vibe coding themselves to help clarify goals and workflows, making conversations with event tech companies much easier and more concrete. ◀



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The Promise of AI-Enhanced Event Experiences

Much of the conversation around AI radically improving events rests on a vision of AI-powered technology working seamlessly to deliver an elevated experience. This section explores what this could look and feel like for attendees, sponsors, and organizers.

The Attendee on Cloud Nine

She almost didn't come due to the expensive registration fee, long flight, and uncertainty about the program. Good scores on an event review platform helped her decide.

Two weeks before the event, something unusual happened: it became useful before it began. She chatted with the event using her messaging app. After sharing her goals, she got a personalized session shortlist, networking suggestions, and a note about a relevant keynote speaker who had written something directly relevant to her work.

When she arrives at check-in, her digital badge is waiting for her. As she puts it on, she receives turn-by-turn directions to her first session, along with a tip about where to get great coffee along the way. She arrives five minutes early and snags a great seat.

During the session, captions run on her phone in her native language. Alongside the captions are explainers and links to further content from the same speakers. When the speaker moves quickly through a complex slide, she glances down

and has everything she needs. She adds her notes as she goes, which are timestamped with the session.

That evening, she receives a summary of the sessions she attended with her notes, which she shares with her team. She also gets a link to photos of herself at the event, perfect for a social post.

She reads a summary of the sessions she missed on the flight home.

That evening, she leaves a review: Amazing event! It seemed to know what I needed before I did.



The Savvy Sponsor

His team had sponsored fourteen industry events in the past two years. Until recently, he couldn't have told you with any confidence which ones were worth it.

Now he can. Before committing to this event, his team ran it through an intelligence tool that cross-references past attendee profiles, historical engagement data from similar events, and pipeline outcomes reported by peer companies who've attended before. The event scored well. He signed the contract.

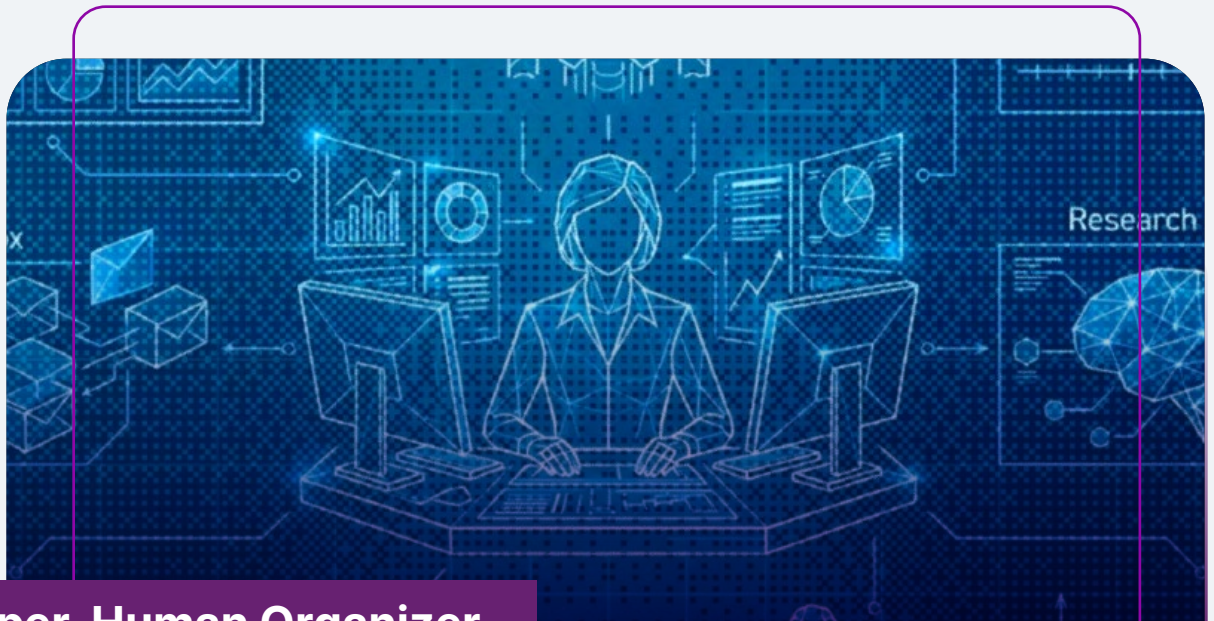
Six weeks before the show, he receives a list of pre-registered attendees matching his target buyer profile. These are not names scraped from a list, but people who have indicated through their registration behavior and agenda selections that they are actively evaluating solutions in his category. His sales team books meetings with them before they board their flights.

On the show floor, every person who stops at the booth gets scanned and that instantly builds their contact record. AI enhances it with company size, recent news, and context from their stated priorities. With permission, they record and transcribe the conversation, and update CRM records automatically. By day one, the team has dozens of leads ranked by relevance.

Sensors near the booth track dwell time and engagement patterns without capturing personal identifiers. By noon, he knows his product demo is holding attention well initially but losing it at a specific point. His team adjusts it for day two.

A week later, his ROI report compiles in minutes and shows that most pre-scheduled meetings created a solid pipeline. He's registered for the next edition of the event.





The Super-Human Organizer

She's run this conference for eleven years. She knows the work — sourcing calls, speaker spreadsheets, exhibitor manuals, and the chaotic week before.

This year feels different.

Six months out, she describes the event in plain language to a planning tool that generates a budget, vendor checklist, and backwards timeline from the event date. It's not perfect, but it's a great draft. She adjusts it, and the system learns from her changes.

Venue proposals return standardized for comparison. One tool simulates arrivals at one location and flags a bottleneck near the main session hall, making the choice easy.

Her speaker submissions are automatically screened, scored, and clustered by theme. She makes every final call, but the shortlist feels different and helps create a balanced program. A draft agenda assembles around her selections.

Registration opens. The system learns who's registering and why, then builds personas to customize the event app. It suggests attendees with compatible profiles meet at the event, most accept.

On event day, check-in queues are managed dynamically. Resources are deployed for the peak arrival time and redistributed soon after. Once sessions start, she glances at a dashboard showing rooms nearing capacity and suggests nearby overflow ones.

The next day, she reads a synthesis of what resonated. This includes not just session attendance numbers, but which moments generated the most real-time reaction, which topics were still discussed on the final afternoon, and which speakers prompted the most follow-up conversations. The event report writes itself. She edits it and shares it with leadership.

She has a clear vision to make next year's event even better, and she's already run the simulations to support her case.

Towards Seamless AI-Enhanced Experiences

These three scenarios are not speculative. Every capability exists in a product you can use today. The tools are here. What's not here, at least not reliably, is the infrastructure to make everything work together and fully leverage the technology.

That gap isn't primarily a technology problem. It's a human one.

Data architecture is a main challenge. For these tools to function as described, the right information needs to be in the right place at the right time. The other barriers are motivation, organizational behavior, and competing interests between the vendors, sponsors, and organizers who have oversight over different parts of the event data ecosystem. Organizers want a unified view of the event but depend on multiple data sources. Sponsors want qualified leads and audience insights but resist the transparency that would convince attendees to share needs and preferences. Attendees' behavioral data powers this, but they rarely understand what they've consented to, and how it's being used. The result is a default of sharing only the minimum about themselves and their needs, starving these systems of the data they rely on.

MCP to Connect the Dots

The secure and efficient transfer of data between disparate systems remains a challenge with multiple event tech tools. One solution is using an all-in-one platform, but additional tools needing to share data require a way to securely exchange it. This has relied on Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) and webhooks. However, the emergence of AI and large language models (LLMs) has introduced the Model Context Protocol (MCP). This open standard establishes a universal connectivity layer, allowing AI assistants like ChatGPT, Claude, or Gemini to integrate with external data systems through a simplified and secure framework. Once connected, an organizer can use their preferred AI assistant to interact with their live event data, without exporting a spreadsheet or switching tools.

MCP is becoming the de facto standard and it represents a meaningful change to the integration problem. However, it is still new and adoption is not widespread across event tech platforms. RainFocus and Swoogo are among the initial vendors adopting this technology. But MCP only solves the technical data challenge, not the trust and data governance questions. [▶](#)



Our industry still struggles to get basic open APIs right consistently, so we are still a ways away from MCP servers/connectors becoming standard across all event tech.

— **KEITH JOHNSTON,**
CO-FOUNDER, EVENT TECH ATLAS

Three Key Questions Every Meeting Professional Must Address Now

AI can't do anything without real human expertise. To maximize its potential, focus on answering three essential questions:

1. WHAT ARE THE POLICIES AND PROCESSES IN PLACE TO CONTROL ITS USE?

"Governance comes first," Thomas Blasucci, senior director of people and performance, Meeting Professionals International (MPI), said. "You need clear policies on what AI can and can't touch — what data it sees, what decisions it makes on its own, and what gets human review. Without that, you're guessing."

2. DO YOU HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE SECURITY PROTOCOLS IN PLACE?

"Attendee data, sponsor contracts, and registration information are sensitive assets," Blasucci said. "Before any AI tool touches them, you need to know where the data lives, who trained on it, and what happens when you stop using the platform."

At the same time, Blasucci highlighted the importance of vetting vendors on their own data handling and security. "Ask the hard questions, and expect real answers," he said.

3. ARE YOU INVESTING THE RESOURCES NECESSARY FOR THE LONG HAUL?

AI is changing at a breakneck speed. With every input, LLMs are getting more sophisticated, and organizers must be focused on keeping up with the evolution of the technology.

"Train your team continuously, because the tools are changing monthly," Blasucci said. "The professionals who win won't be the ones who adopted AI first. They'll be the ones who adopted it responsibly and made it part of how their teams actually work."



Today's AI-Native Event Tech

Skift Meetings compiled an [event tech directory](#) featuring more than 650 tools, including more than 130 AI-native tools offering core functions only possible with AI, almost 160 AI-enhanced tools, and just shy of 400 non-AI tools.

SKIFT MEETINGS EVENT TECH DIRECTORY

Most incumbent event tech companies have enhanced their platform with AI, looking to offer a stable, proven platform expanded by an AI layer. The AI enhancement varies from basic ChatGPT integration pre-populating marketing fields to a significant shift in core functionality, with some claiming to have totally reimaged the tool.

While enhancing event tech with AI is valuable, the real innovation lies in AI-native event tech. These platforms are pushing boundaries and reimagining possibilities, even if most of these tools address a single challenge and not offer a complete event management system.

AI-native platforms rely mostly on large language models (LLMs). These powerful systems trained on massive amounts of data have tremendous pattern-recognition abilities that power audio transcriptions, language translation, face recognition, and personalization. The same core technology drives many capabilities in AI-native event tech. Understanding this technology's strengths and weaknesses can help evaluate which features deliver real value.

AI-native event tech is powerful, but most organizations will only invest in new event tech if the upside is much larger than the downside. AI-native event tech needs to provide a significant leap in power or possibilities for clients to be willing to adopt a new platform. Offering something new that event management platforms lack is a good starting point, but that advantage is closing as major event tech platforms enhance their offerings through development or acquisitions. Tools that don't require deep data integrations have a better chance of commercial success, at least in the short term. <

Mapping AI-Native Event Tech Across Six Event Phases

A good way to understand the current scope of AI-native event tech innovation is by exploring how the tools support events throughout their phases.

- **Phase 0:** Pre-launch (strategy, design, and sourcing)
- **Phase 1:** Promotion (event marketing and sponsor discovery)
- **Phase 2:** Committing (registration, sponsor sales, and travel planning)
- **Phase 3:** Momentum (pre-event prep)
- **Phase 4:** On-site (event experience)
- **Phase 5:** Extending (post-event analysis & follow-up)

PHASE 0

PRE-LAUNCH



AI-native platforms can help take events from idea to launch.

Event Strategy Bot assesses event strategy and viability, while VOK DAMS' Digital Doppelgänger simulates audience reactions.

AI-native sourcing tools promise to help across the procurement stack. PCMA and dFakto's Destinaitor assists in destination selection, while Easy RFP, EventPilot, Groupize, Guavo, Mint Link, Naboo, Nowadays, streamline venue sourcing, and Cvent Vendor Marketplace aids in vendor sourcing. EventNation highlights hidden fees, risky clauses, and missing protections in hotel contracts.

As organizers plan, WIFT provides instant venue capacity forecasting to prevent bottlenecks and overcrowding. For managing large crowds, simulation tools like Outsight and uCrowds model capacity and safety.

PHASE 1

PROMOTION



AI-native tools can also help reach the right people at the right time.

Envelope builds event pages and registration forms, while marketing platforms [Bridged](#), [Premagic](#), and [Sweetspot](#) use AI to enhance content and marketing. [Nevent](#) manages attendee and sponsor CRM data, and [Singulate](#) offers hyper-targeted email marketing.

[Exhibitly.ai](#) optimizes website conversions, and [Dream Event](#) accelerates planning by generating event concepts for pitches.

Sponsors use tools like [Evenda](#), [EventTrek](#), [Vendelux](#), and [Yellow](#) to find and assess events likely to generate desired returns.

Ticketing alternatives like [EventGo](#) and Muslim-focused [Qariyb](#) offer additional consumer visibility, mainly relevant for B2C events.

PHASE 2

COMMITTING



Organizers can leverage AI-native tools to help secure registration and sponsor commitment.

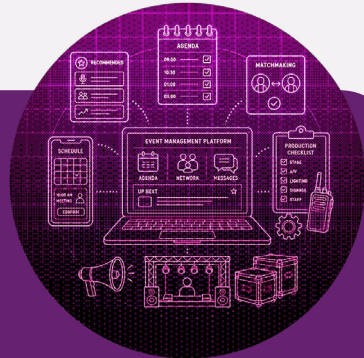
Event management tools like [AIEventManager](#), [eventpage.ai](#), [Jublia AI](#), [letzfair](#), [Mavexa](#), and [Mingloft](#) include registration functionality and support organizers with various aspects of managing events.

[Perk](#) handles travel logistics while [ExpoBooth.ai](#) prototypes booth designs.

[EventEdIQ](#) manages submission workflows, [Hyperion](#) collects and improves abstracts, and [Scurati](#) sources speakers.

PHASE 3

MOMENTUM



In the final week before arrival, attendee expectations peak, and AI-native tools shape that experience from the start.

Attendee support is crucial now, continuing on-site and sometimes beyond. This busy category has several AI concierge tools operating through chat. [42Chat](#), [Agent Analog](#), [Event Butler](#), [Event Copilot](#), [Highbar](#), [Message Matrix](#), [NoForm AI](#), [Sena](#), and [WoomAI](#) handle everything from session recommendations to logistical questions through WhatsApp or in-app messaging.

[Erleah](#) offers content and matchmaking recommendations, [Markus AI](#) offers an “AI crew,” and [Moots](#) helps organizers curate guests.

AI-native matchmaking tools like [Apella](#), [Appsaya](#), [Ezna](#), [Grip](#), [MatchPoint](#), [Netscale](#), and [Nunchi MatchMaker](#) surface relevant attendees before the event opens, reducing reliance on chance encounters. [Personatech](#) assists with meeting scheduling.

[CueForge](#) automates show-flow generation and reduces manual timing coordination.

PHASE 4

COMMITTING



The start of the live event is the culmination of the organizers’ efforts and where operational stakes are highest.

[Wicket](#) offers facial authentication check-in, and [Pointer](#) provides indoor navigation with AI-generated maps.

Attendee support continues on-site through the same AI concierge tools from the previous event phase. Now, they are handling venue-specific logistics and live troubleshooting. Matchmaking tools are used on site with features for this phase including real-time location and calendar availability and meeting notes.

As attendees focus on on-stage content, [AccessLoop](#), [AI-Media](#), [BabelTalkie](#), [Koda](#), [Kudo](#), [Mixhalo](#), [Rask AI](#), [Signapse](#), [SyncWords](#), [Translingo](#), [Verbit](#), and [Wordly](#) offer AI-native real-time captioning and translation. Similarly, [Sign-Speak](#) and [Speaksee](#) extend accessibility for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing.

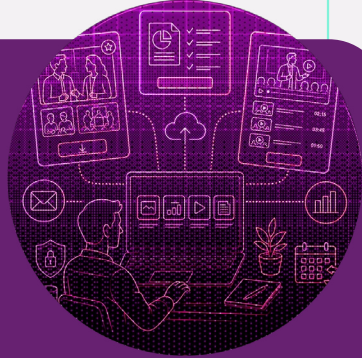
[NoteAffect](#) lets users take notes and engage with content, while [Take-Aw.ai](#) gathers insights from attendees through individual audio feedback.

[Bling](#), [BoothIQ](#), [DelightLoop](#), [ExpoPro.ai](#), [Mobly](#), [momencio](#), [Popl](#), [Romify](#), and [Snapdat](#) offer lead capture. [Backtrack](#) takes an audio-first approach, using recordings of conversation transcripts to add value for sponsors.

[Ailias](#) offers AI-powered human holograms, [Snapbar](#) offers interactive photo booths, [EventMind](#) reveals attendee feelings about events in real-time, and [Zerobeat](#) simplifies payments at festivals and outdoor events.

PHASE 5

EXTENDING



Every organizer wants their event's impact to extend beyond the immediate on-site experience, and AI-native tools can help.

[FilterPixel](#), [GetPica](#), [Kampfire](#), [Memento Photo](#), [Memzo](#), [Photier](#), [PhotoTap](#), [Relivo](#), [SmartPix](#), [Snapshare](#), [SpotMyPhotos](#), and [TurtlePic](#) offer customized near-instant delivery of event photos.

The focus of [bundleIQ](#), [Conference AI](#), [RecapHub](#), [Rozie Synopsis](#), [Snapsight](#), [Snipin AI](#), [StreamWerk](#), and [Voxo](#) is session summaries and insights reports.

[Uchop](#) generates short video clips from session highlights, and [Zenus AI](#) tracks attendee traffic and engagement using facial analysis.

Multi-Phase Event Tech

Most AI-native event tech focuses on one key function in a single event phase, but some offer multiple functions across several phases.

[Spark](#), a partnership between Gevme and PCMA, offers a copilot approach. [Umoh](#) offers automation options, and [BeauTron](#) promises end-to-end process automation.

[MergeLabs](#) helps with event coordination and operational knowledge for back-end processes, and [PlanBrite](#) offers real-time production coordination.

Two AI-native tools address sustainability and impact, both created by Gevme. [ImpactAIQ](#), developed with #MEET4IMPACT, simplifies measuring event impact. [Sustainability Hub for Events](#), created with Net Zero Carbon Events and the Strategic Alliance of National Convention Bureaux of Europe, offers sustainability resources.

[Kaltura](#), once focused on virtual events, is now all-in on agentic avatars. [Sequel.io](#) offers AI-powered self-hosted webinars, and learning management platform [Disco](#) leverages AI for rapid program development.

Gaps to Address

AI-native event tech tools may already address many challenges, but others remain. Vismale and Johnston say, "The industry lacks strong AI tools for operational intelligence and tech stack visibility. There is also room for AI tools that better support speaker management, onsite issue escalation, AV coordination, and post-event institutional knowledge capture."

While identifying all gaps is impossible, below is a wish list of gaps for AI-native event tech to tackle:

- Predicting and tackling no-shows
- Interactive real-time event dashboards
- Sponsor success dashboards
- Holistic post-event follow-up combining communications, content, and ROI

What would you add? <

Wordly: The Future of AI and Events

Skift Studio: How is AI-powered translation shaping a more personalized, inclusive meeting experience for attendees?

Dave Deasy: Rather than requiring an audience to adapt to an event, AI-powered translation adapts to the audience, creating an experience that lets attendees engage in the language of their choice on their own device.

It also creates a deeper pool of knowledge for an event community. In a global economy, the value of an event comes from diverse perspectives. AI removes the typical limitation of language barriers, enabling attendees to fully engage with speakers and peers from different regions and access a broader range of subjects. That's a critical piece of success in today's events industry, where our research shows that 79% of planners report an increase in non-native English speakers.

Skift Studio: What do meeting planners need to understand about integrating AI translation tools like Wordly into their existing workflows? What does onboarding look like for teams adopting the technology?

Deasy: Understanding the nuances of AI may seem hard, but using it to enhance a meeting is easy. Onboarding is fast and straightforward for both planners and attendees. Teams can often get started the same day, with simple configuration and light training. Attendees access it directly on their devices by scanning a unique event QR code, reducing friction for everyone involved.

Instead of coordinating interpreters and managing headsets, planners can offer real-time translation across dozens of languages with a plug-and-play process. Connecting to a sound system typically takes less than five minutes, while setting up a new session takes less than one minute. For planners, the simplicity frees up valuable time to focus on the bigger picture of the event's success.



DAVE DEASY

CMO, Wordly

Dave is a senior marketing exec with extensive experience driving growth for B2B SaaS and AI businesses at startups and F-500 tech companies. He has built multiple businesses including - AI translation at Wordly, privacy compliance at TrustArc, e-commerce at HP, and online SMB services at AOL. Dave has a BS in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Pittsburgh and an MBA from the Tepper School of Business at Carnegie Mellon.

Skift Studio: As planners balance personalization with budget constraints, how should they think about where AI-powered language support delivers the most value across a program?

Deasy: AI translation should be viewed at the program level, not as a per-session cost exercise. Think about where offering greater access will meaningfully change engagement levels for your attendees. The greatest value comes where understanding drives outcomes, such as keynotes, general sessions, training, and interactive formats like Q&A or workshops.

When more attendees fully understand the material, participation and overall event value can increase, especially in global or multilingual audiences where language has historically been a barrier. AI enables more flexible scaling of that access than traditional interpretation. In the past two years alone, Wordly has helped clients save more than \$200 million compared to traditional interpretation.

Skift Studio: Wordly launched in 2019, before most planners were actively using AI. How has the product evolved since then, after years of refining and improving the model?

Deasy: Over the past seven years, Wordly has evolved through continuous learning in live environments. Customer feedback has played an essential role in adding new languages, improving accuracy, and developing features such as custom glossaries to deliver error-free industry-specific terminology.

The platform has expanded beyond keynotes and conferences as well. We have seen enterprise-wide adoption through Wordly Workspaces to enhance internal collaboration across global teams and fuel more inclusive everyday meetings. With faster deployment, broader accessibility, and continuous improvement, Wordly has evolved into a core enterprise platform for multilingual communication at scale.

Skift Studio: You've been working with AI longer than most in the meetings industry. What advice would you give planners who are still getting comfortable with the technology and its capabilities?

Deasy: Focus on the problem you're trying to solve, not the technology itself. Think of AI as a powerful tool to help you make a program more accessible for your entire audience – not something that will require you to become a technical expert. By focusing on the problems you want to solve for your program and your audience, you will quickly see value once it's used in a live setting.

How does Wordly address data and security concerns, especially for meetings with sensitive or proprietary content?

Enterprise-grade security and privacy are part of our core requirements. Wordly uses data minimization and processes audio in real time. Additionally, attendees do not need to create accounts or share any personal data to benefit from our real-time translation.

The platform maintains SOC 2 Type II and ISO 27001 certifications, along with enterprise features like SSO and secure access controls, enabling safe use in sensitive environments.

Wordly aligns with GDPR requirements, too, to ensure success for European clients. This means we never use customer meeting data to train AI models, and we support enterprise controls for governance and compliance.

Skift Studio: How will AI reshape meeting planners' roles and responsibilities in the years ahead?

Deasy: AI will shift planners away from managing operational complexity toward designing more intentional, experience-driven programs. Planners will be able to focus more on outcomes and less on logistics, which will ultimately pay off for attendees with more engagement, better content flow, and a more multidimensional experience. <



Live AI Translation, Captions, and Summaries for Every Meeting and Event

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Flexible listening and viewing

- Select a language and follow via live audio, captions, or subtitles
- View on personal devices, room monitors, or video overlays



Lightning-fast setup

- Set up a session in under five minutes
- Streamlined workflows for event organizers, speakers, and AV teams



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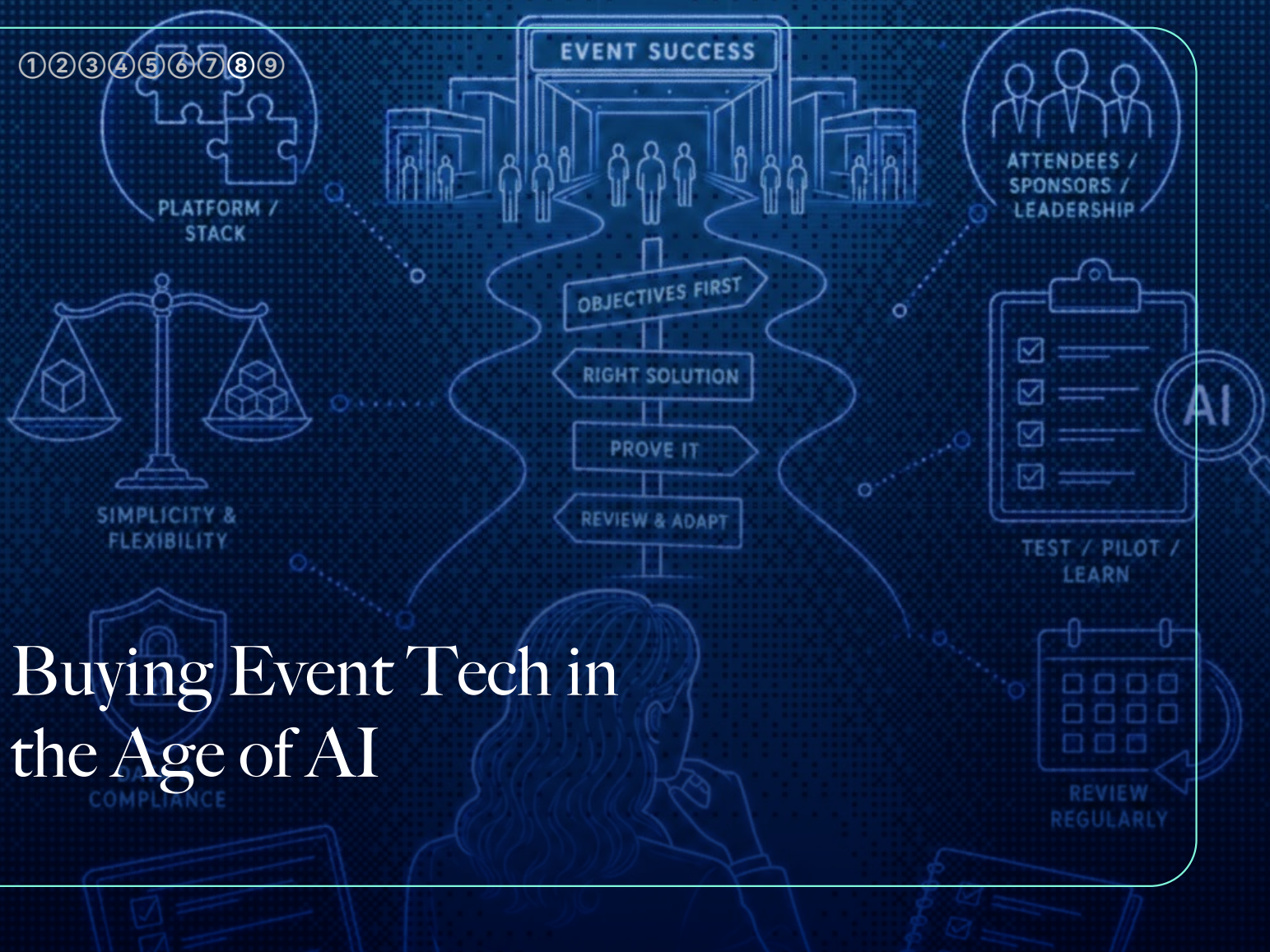


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Buying Event Tech in the Age of AI

Buying event tech is a complex process with very real consequences. A poor decision wastes budget, frustrates attendees, overloads staff, and contributes to event failure. AI adds power and functionality, but blurs the lines about what is manageable and what is real. That means the stakes are higher, and it's more important to have a clear strategy.

To avoid building an inadequate event tech stack, consider:

Start with objectives, not tools. Define what you need before seeking solutions. Explore the latest AI solutions using an event tech directory or decision engine, but don't let them dictate the strategy. Define attendee experience goals and how to measure them, and clarify what sponsors and internal leadership determine as a successful event. With these starting points, and considering

your event portfolio, determine your event tech needs with clarity around non-negotiables, integrations, data ownership, and compliance.

Keep your stack under review. A full review at least once a year is prudent, timed to a fixed date or the conclusion of your largest annual event. Replacing a core registration or event management system typically requires a three-year horizon to recover the integration investment. Adding a peripheral tool requires less scrutiny. Avoid multi-year contract lock-ins for any platform; the market is moving too quickly. This is especially true for AI-native tools. If a vendor's advantage relies on a particular LLM or machine learning model, shifts in that technology can alter your cost structure or tool performance. Shorter contract cycles give you flexibility as the AI landscape evolves.

Make demos work for you. Before any demo, explain your specific needs from actual events and ask vendors to showcase how their platform addresses them. Invite stakeholders who can distinguish genuine functionality from marketing language. During the demo, ask tough questions: what can't the platform do, where do clients struggle, and what does support look like at 7 a.m. on an event morning? Probe on support structure (can you reach a person by phone on-site?), integration reality (who bears the cost when something breaks?), data ownership (what happens to your attendee data if you change vendors?), product maturity (treat wireframes as nonexistent), and true lifetime cost of the platform (implementation fees, training, per-attendee pricing at scale, and usage caps that could trigger additional charges).

AI Demands Deeper Scrutiny

While AI opens new opportunities, it also adds challenges. Event organizers investing in tech need to be aware of the potential impacts and address them.

Understand the underlying model. Clarity on AI model usage is essential. Identify the technologies and their use. Explore if event-specific training data shaped the AI system, and how this will change with updates. There are no incorrect answers, but each model option carries different risk profiles.

Question the buzzwords. Treat "copilot" and "agent" language as prompts to ask about the tool's automation, conditions, and errors. Vague claims like "the system learns over time" likely mean you're paying to be part of their research and development.

Verify AI claims. Test any AI feature using your own data. Request a pilot or sandbox period with anonymized versions of your real attendee data. Watch the system perform on your actual event complexity, including registration patterns, speaker quality, diversity, sponsor mix, session length. Drastically different results using the same data suggest the system is still unstable. Ask vendors to show failure cases — where does the AI struggle? If they claim their matchmaking algorithm gets recommendations right 80% of the time, understand what "right" means for your event type and whether that threshold justifies the cost and complexity.

Clarify what happens when AI gets something wrong.

It's important to understand the consequences of AI errors in decision-making where AI is being used to assist with decisions. For agentic applications, ensure the option to audit the AI's reasoning and outputs, and keep a manual override option in critical workflows.

Understand AI pricing and cost modeling. A rising challenge of AI-native tools is fluctuating pricing. While event tech vendors offer per-attendee or per-event pricing, AI-native or AI-enhanced event tech pricing is harder to pin down. This is because AI uses consumption-based models or per-token pricing. These costs scale unpredictably with volume, feature complexity, and real-world data quality. To complicate matters, the AI labs providing the base models adjust model availability with pricing increases for newer models. Before signing any contract, ask vendors to model total cost across all your events for a year at realistic usage volumes and steer clear of vague estimates. Request transparent pricing documentation that shows cost per task and budget a 20-30% buffer for compute surprises.

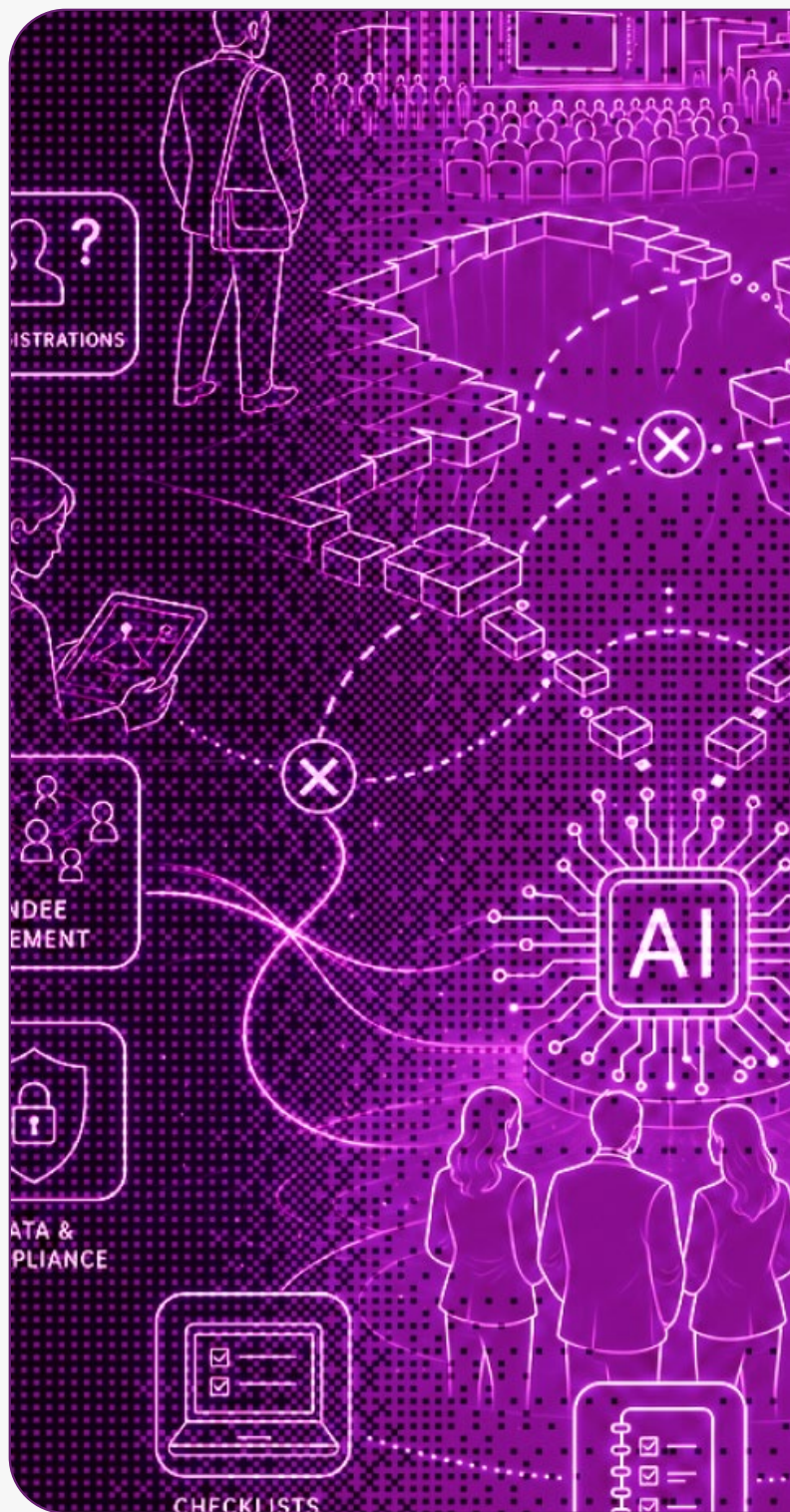
Data governance applies to all AI. Ask explicitly whether your attendee data will be used to train or fine-tune any models — the vendor's, third-party foundation models, or otherwise — even if anonymized. Get clear written answers. Understand data retention and deletion policies: if you switch platforms, can you extract not just raw attendee records but the enriched data, behavioral profiles, and insights the AI system generated? Some AI systems improve by learning from your event's interactions; if that learning happens on your data, understanding who owns that learned model matters. For any real-time features, ensure your legal and privacy teams review compliance implications before signing. GDPR, CCPA, and emerging AI regulations are addressing how AI systems use event data; what a vendor claims is compliant today may look different to a regulator tomorrow.

Sense Checks and Warning Signs

Production readiness matters more with AI. Many AI-native platforms are early-stage. For critical workflow features, ensure the platform has been fully tested and speak to other customers. For other features, the risk is lower, but set clear expectations in your vendor contract.

Check integration assumptions. If an AI tool needs to share data with others, ensure the process is clear. Emerging interoperability standards like MCP are developing — and a growing list of vendors support them. If not, understand the integration cost and maintenance burden. Gaps make AI automation promises vanish into manual data wrangling.

Don't underestimate implementation. Internal resource needs may extend beyond initial setup. Training, change management, and ongoing operations require time from people already running events. When integration is required, complexity is often underestimated. AI systems may require interpreting AI-generated insights, and it's important to know how to intervene when the system gets something wrong. Validate new platforms on smaller, lower-stakes events before deploying them on a flagship program. A pilot event provides real data to model true costs and build internal skills for interpreting results. <



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Conclusion: From Digitizing the Event Binder to Rethinking the Experience

Event tech has always moved in waves. The first wave, in the 1980s and 1990s, was about basic digitization — replacing paper systems with registration software. The second wave, with the internet and mobile revolution, was about moving that software online and into attendees' pockets in the form of apps. The third wave, forced by the Covid pandemic, was about survival and adapting to support online events.

The current wave is AI, which is structurally different from previous ones. Previous waves added new categories to the event tech stack. AI is beginning to restructure the stack itself — not just making existing tools faster or smarter, though it has the potential to do both, but creating new ways of working.

The gap between what's possible and practical is still large, and it's not primarily a technology gap. It's a gap of trust, data governance, and alignment between attendee expectations, sponsor desires, and event organizers' vision.

The organizers best-positioned for the future aren't those who adopt the most AI tools or those who reject them on principle. They are the ones that understand the challenges, have a clear evaluation framework, distinguishing between production-ready and beta tools, protect attendees' data, and maintain an agile technology stack.

The technology to build better events exists, but the discipline to build them well is still developing. <





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