

**Enhancing
customer
experience
through**

technology

Enhancing customer experience

As the organiser of a successful event, you already know that you can't stand still. Every year, your event needs to evolve - creating fresh experiences and new memories for those who attend. Whether that comes from an updated format, or you switch up the mix of exhibitors / performers, it's that constant looking to the future that will keep your event on everyone's calendars year after year.

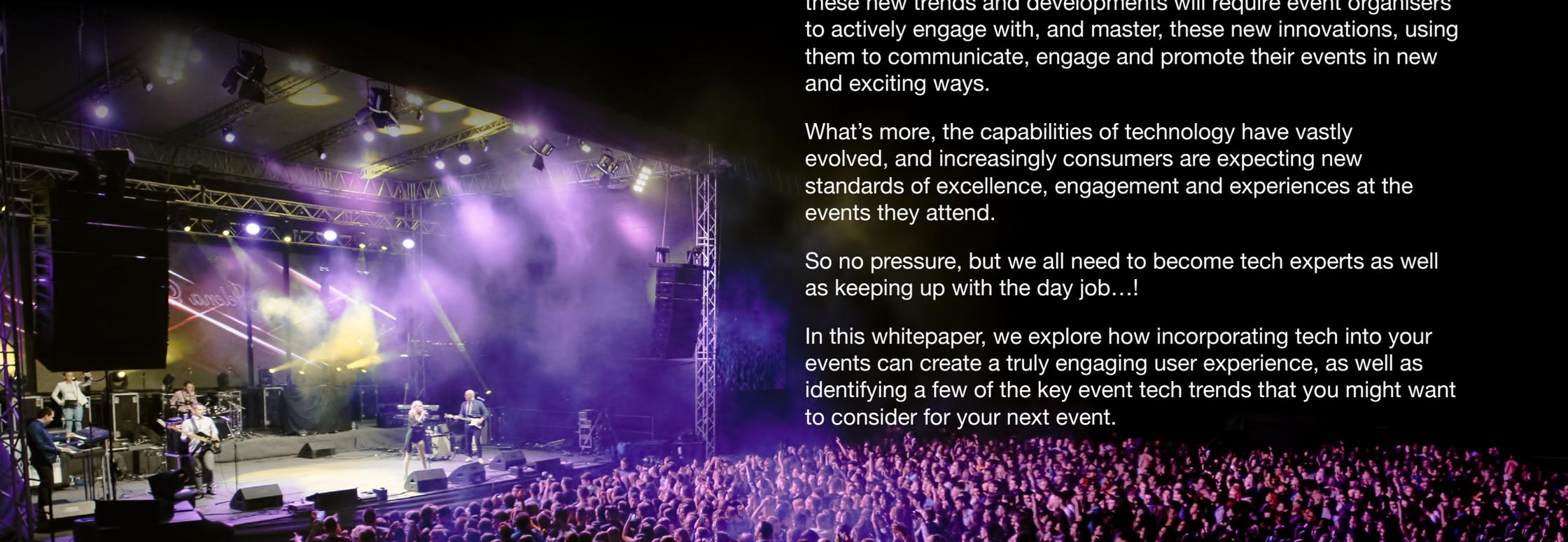
The one thing that nobody can get away from is the increasing integration of technology in all aspects of our daily lives. Not just in the obvious way of keeping us more connected (at the last count, there were well over 100 social media sites), but also impacting our health, entertainment, lifestyle and education.

With technology developing at such a rapid rate, staying on top of these new trends and developments will require event organisers to actively engage with, and master, these new innovations, using them to communicate, engage and promote their events in new and exciting ways.

What's more, the capabilities of technology have vastly evolved, and increasingly consumers are expecting new standards of excellence, engagement and experiences at the events they attend.

So no pressure, but we all need to become tech experts as well as keeping up with the day job...!

In this whitepaper, we explore how incorporating tech into your events can create a truly engaging user experience, as well as identifying a few of the key event tech trends that you might want to consider for your next event.

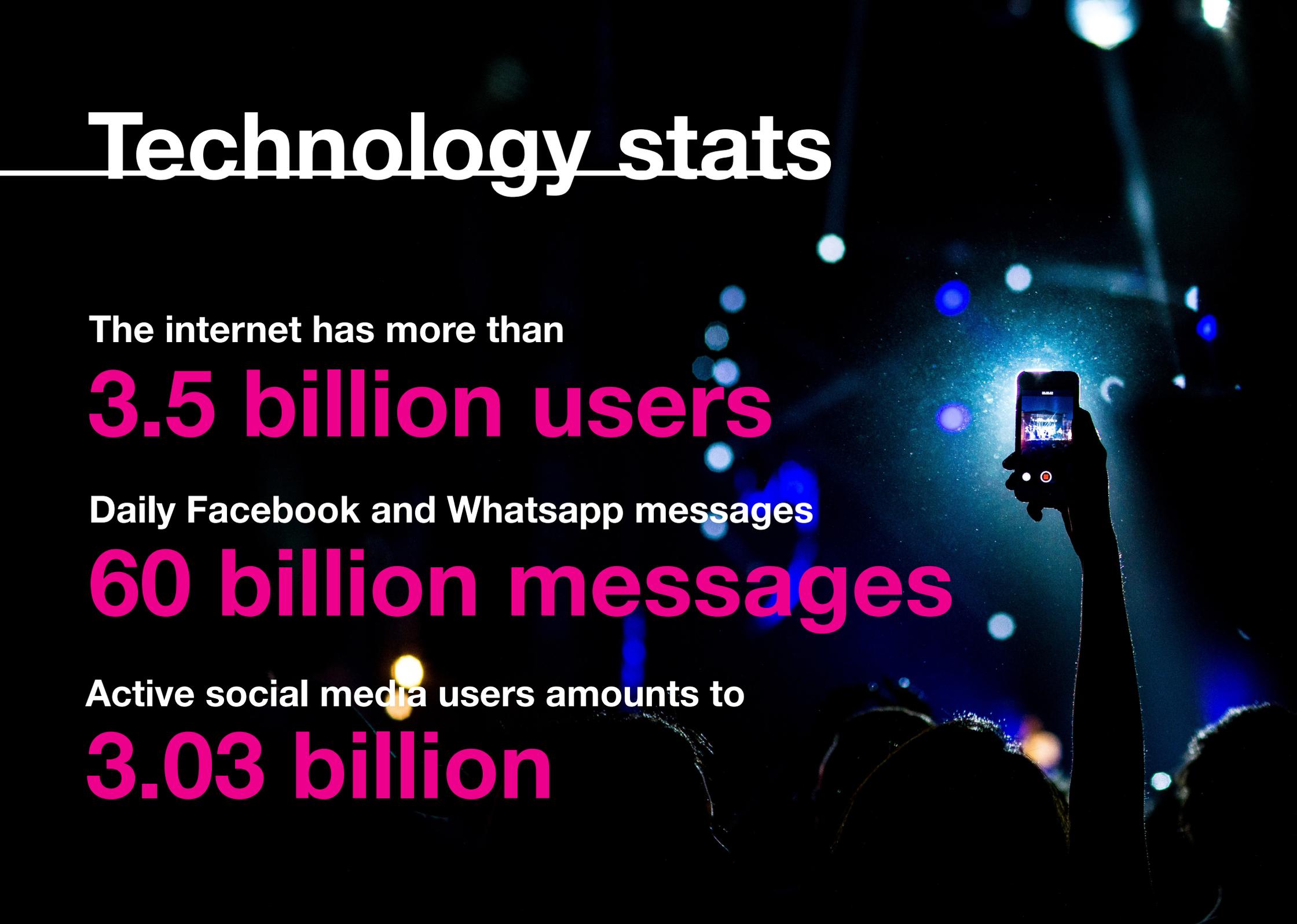


Usage of technology

The increase in the usage of technology by individuals of all ages is continually on the rise, and nowhere is this more apparent than with our usage of mobile phones.

Over the past 5 years, the amount of time we spend using mobile phones has more than doubled, from spending an average of 107 minutes a day in 2012, to 233 minutes a day in 2017. And unbelievably, the latest stats claim we are now touching/looking at a device up to 2617 times in a single day.

Technology stats

A hand holding a smartphone at a concert with blue bokeh lights in the background.

The internet has more than

3.5 billion users

Daily Facebook and Whatsapp messages

60 billion messages

Active social media users amounts to

3.03 billion

Average daily total time spent on mobiles

2012 **107** mins

2013 **133** mins

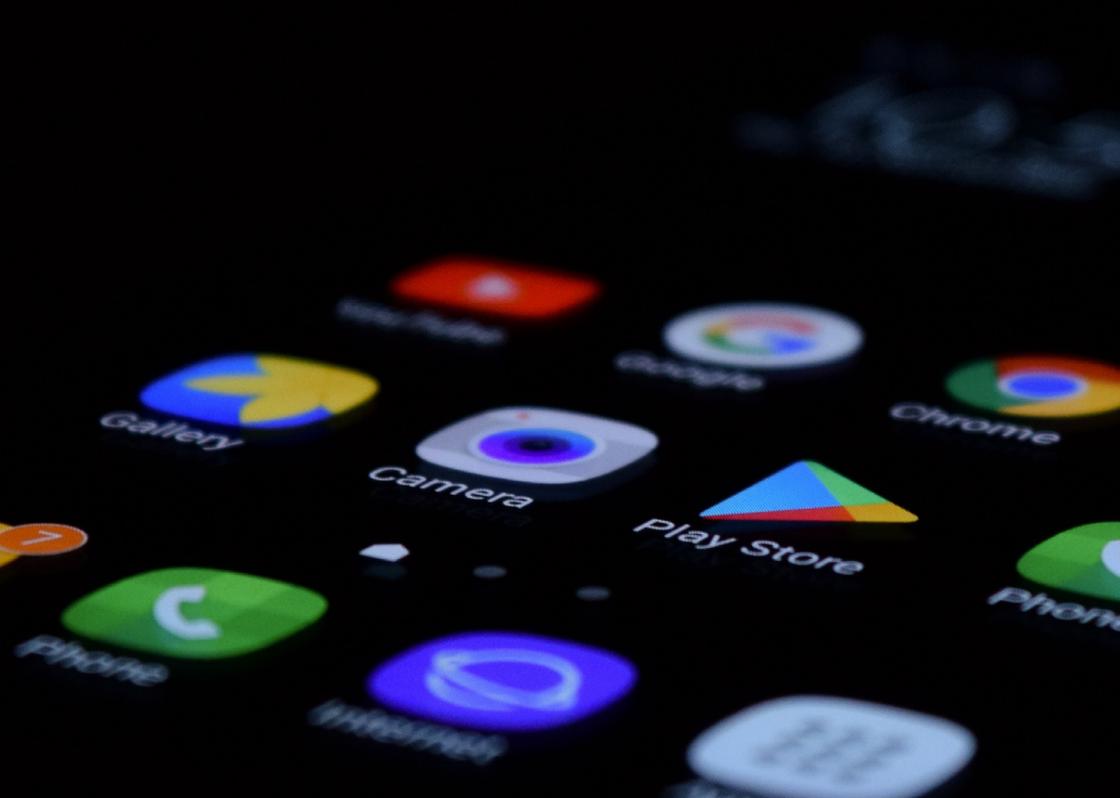
2015 **181** mins

2017 **233** mins

We interact with them

on average

2617 a day



84.9%

of time spent of mobiles is on apps

20%

of the average daily total
time spent on media.*

And this usage isn't limited to an in-home or office environment. Visitors to your event will be documenting their experiences on their Instagram stories or via Facebook Live, indirectly influencing potential visitors to your event in the future.



How can **#eventtech** impact on customer experience?

Whilst “customer experience” is sometimes written off as a buzzword created by fluffy marketing-types, there is increasing evidence to prove that a visitor’s experience can help drive the success of future events.

With the shift of the customer’s focus moving away from the acts or products available to them at an event, their experiences, memories and feelings they have at an event are becoming a key factor to success.

Events that ignore customer experience will find it increasingly difficult to get the leading edge in a competitive environment.

A photograph of a band performing on stage. The scene is lit with blue and purple lights, creating a moody atmosphere. There is a lot of smoke or fog on the stage. The band members are silhouetted against the bright lights. In the foreground, the heads and shoulders of an audience are visible, some with their hands raised.

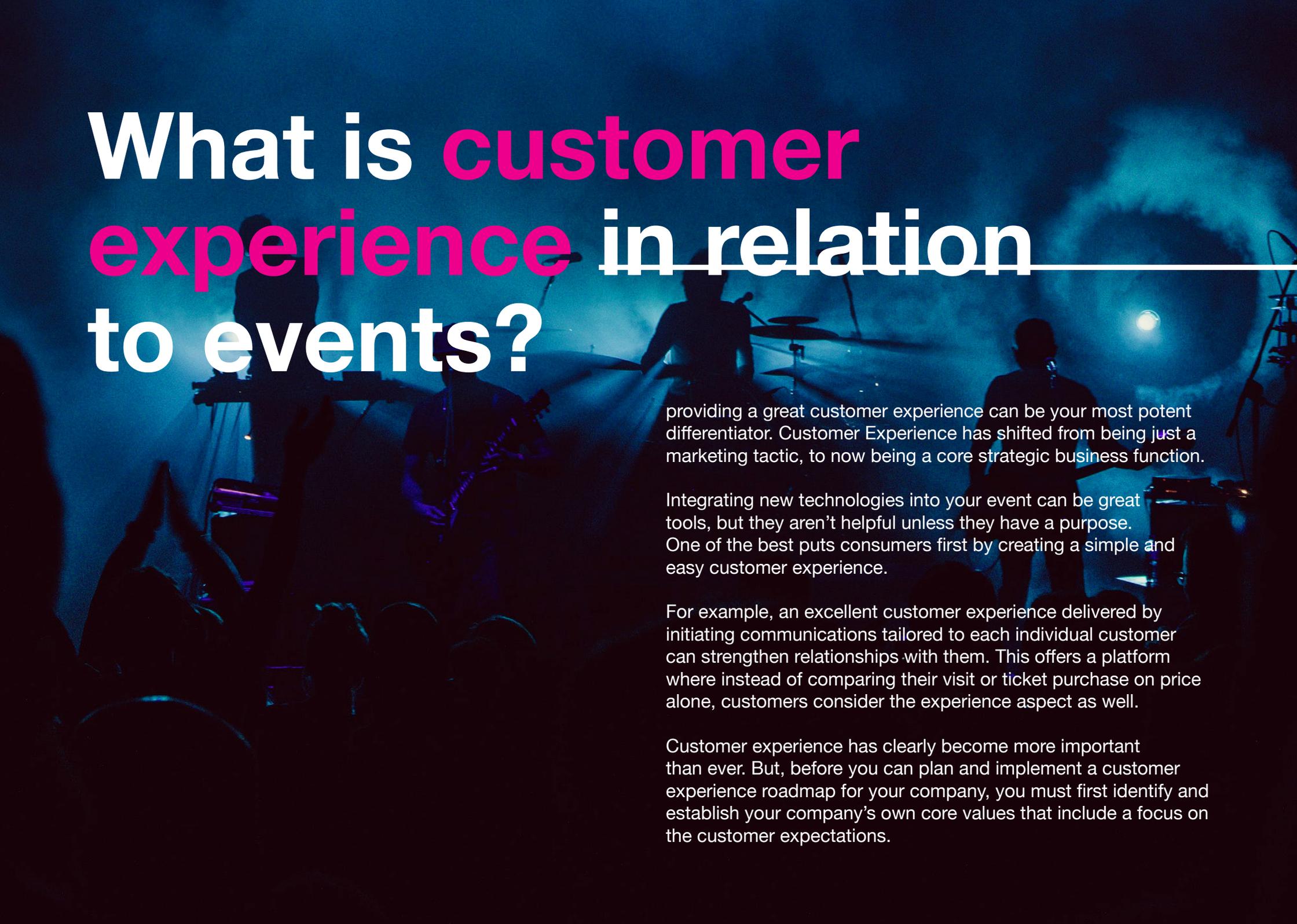
What is **customer experience** in relation to events?

Customer experience refers to customers' perception and relationships that they have developed with an event. These perceptions can affect their behaviour, enhancing their overall experience in either a positive or negative manner.

With customers becoming more demanding, and customer loyalty decreasing, as well as new events competing for the £'s in a customer's wallet, real-time customer reviews are becoming an increasingly important measure of event success.

Events who have a focus on integrating strategies that will provide a better customer experience are much more likely to achieve better customer satisfaction rates. Creating a happy customer will mean they will be more likely to become an advocate for your event, potentially attracting new visitors as well as returning themselves.

With more and more new technologies emerging, and the increase in pressure on attracting and keeping customers,



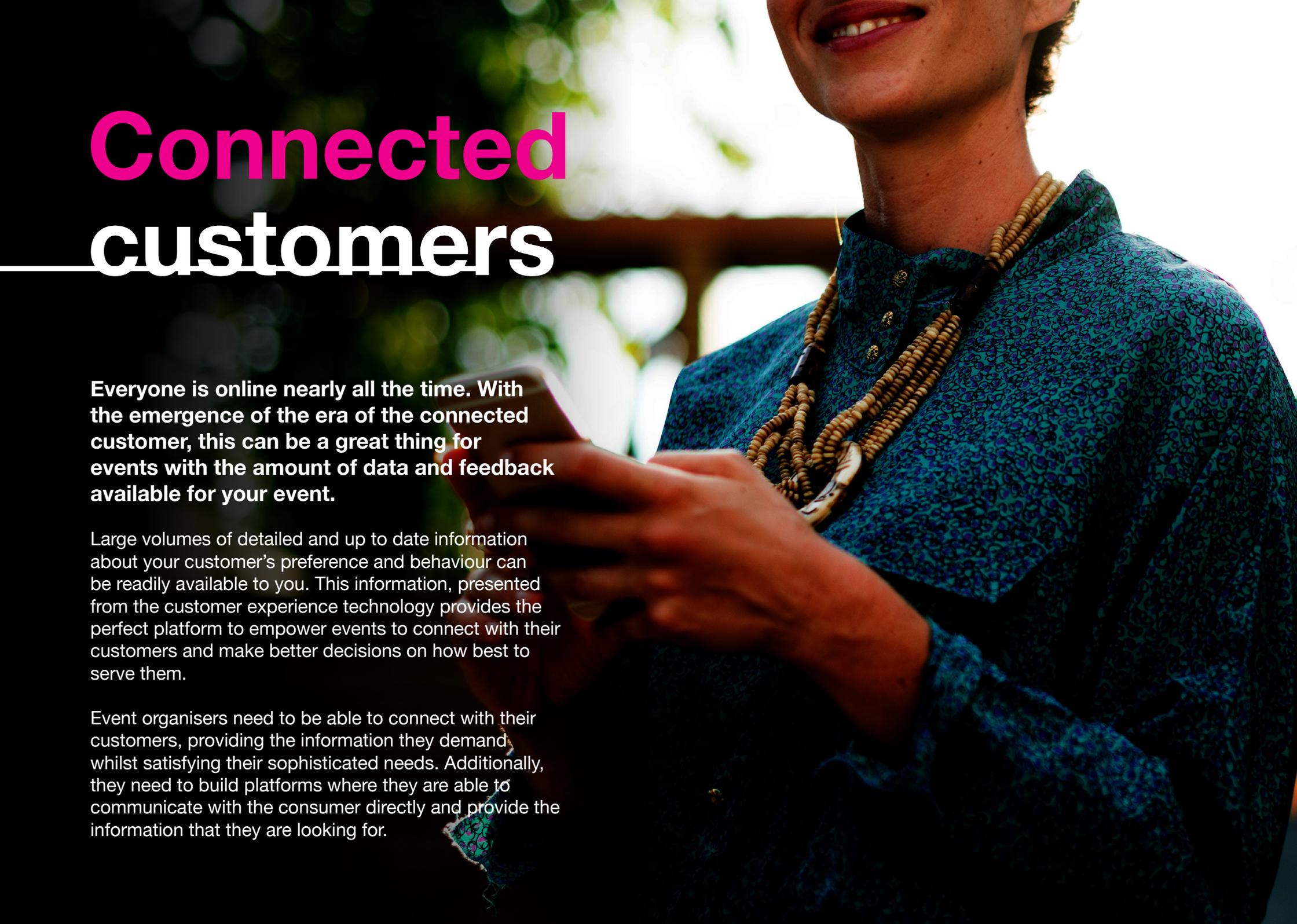
What is **customer experience** in relation to events?

providing a great customer experience can be your most potent differentiator. Customer Experience has shifted from being just a marketing tactic, to now being a core strategic business function.

Integrating new technologies into your event can be great tools, but they aren't helpful unless they have a purpose. One of the best puts consumers first by creating a simple and easy customer experience.

For example, an excellent customer experience delivered by initiating communications tailored to each individual customer can strengthen relationships with them. This offers a platform where instead of comparing their visit or ticket purchase on price alone, customers consider the experience aspect as well.

Customer experience has clearly become more important than ever. But, before you can plan and implement a customer experience roadmap for your company, you must first identify and establish your company's own core values that include a focus on the customer expectations.

A close-up photograph of a woman smiling, looking down at her smartphone. She is wearing a blue patterned shirt and a multi-strand beaded necklace. The background is blurred, showing green foliage and a wooden structure.

Connected customers

Everyone is online nearly all the time. With the emergence of the era of the connected customer, this can be a great thing for events with the amount of data and feedback available for your event.

Large volumes of detailed and up to date information about your customer's preference and behaviour can be readily available to you. This information, presented from the customer experience technology provides the perfect platform to empower events to connect with their customers and make better decisions on how best to serve them.

Event organisers need to be able to connect with their customers, providing the information they demand whilst satisfying their sophisticated needs. Additionally, they need to build platforms where they are able to communicate with the consumer directly and provide the information that they are looking for.

Get ahead of the trend

Artificial intelligence, virtual reality, big data, chatbots and cloud computing are some of the technologies beginning to take centre stage, opening up new opportunities to engage with customers at your event. Events that are willing to embrace the creativity offered by technology will stand out from competitors and provide customers with a new and richer experience.

There is a lot of interest surrounding technology, with around 80% of businesses aware of its implications. However only a small percentage of these events have incorporated it into their strategies – so set yourself ahead of the rest and enhance your overall event experience.

We're all aware of the exciting potential presented by new technology but understanding exactly what can be done with it is sometimes less obvious.



So what are some
of the various
technologies that
can be used at
your event?



RFID



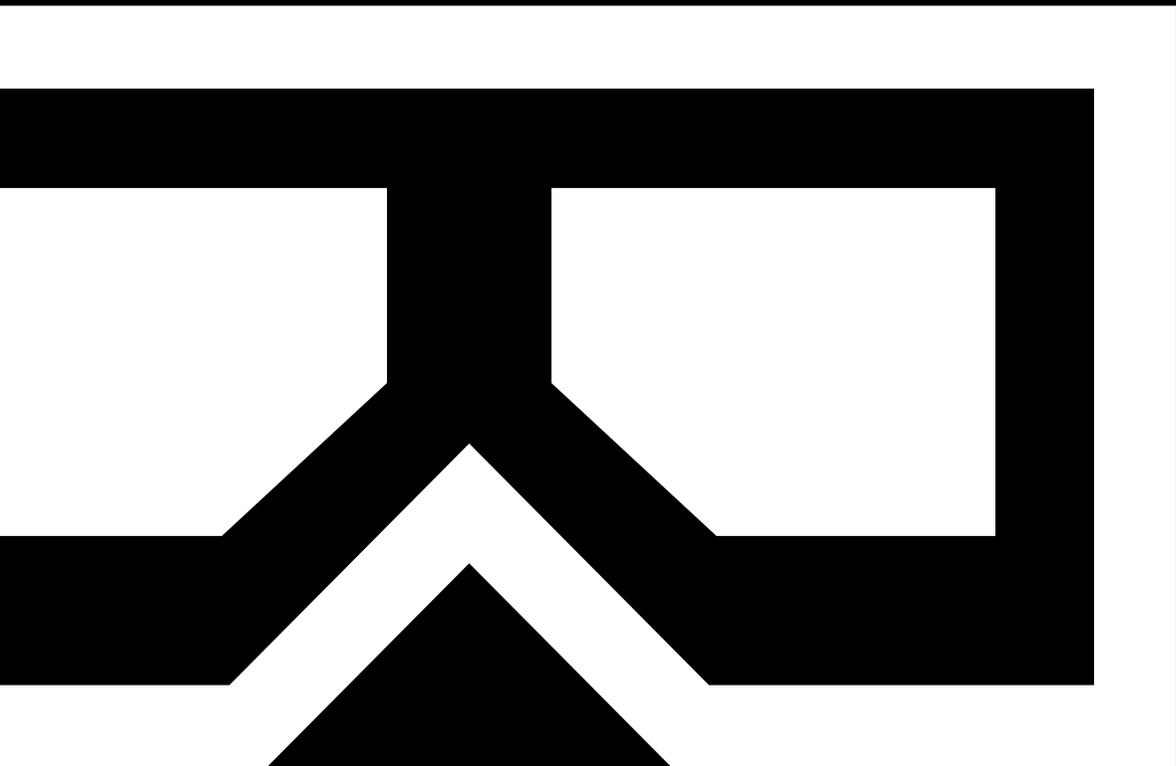
RFID stands for Radio Frequency identification and has been around for many years now. It is used extensively throughout many industries and all of us have come into contact with it in our daily lives, often without even knowing it. RFID has shown that it is an effective tool in the retail business, but that's just the beginning.

You may have never heard of it, or you may not know the various ways that you can incorporate it into your event, but RFID is already demonstrating its ability to enhance a customer's experience at an event.

RFID technology has helped to streamline the data capture process and enable events to track customer behaviour and interactions with various aspects of the event, in real-time. This allows event organisers to measure the performance of an event less obtrusively than traditional methods.

RFID can be used for all event types to improve the experience for your events attendees. From shorter lines as attendees will be able to wave their wristband or badge over a sensor to get in, or interactive experiences with photo booths, to gaining real time insights of the whereabouts and actions of your events attendees.

Virtual and augmented reality



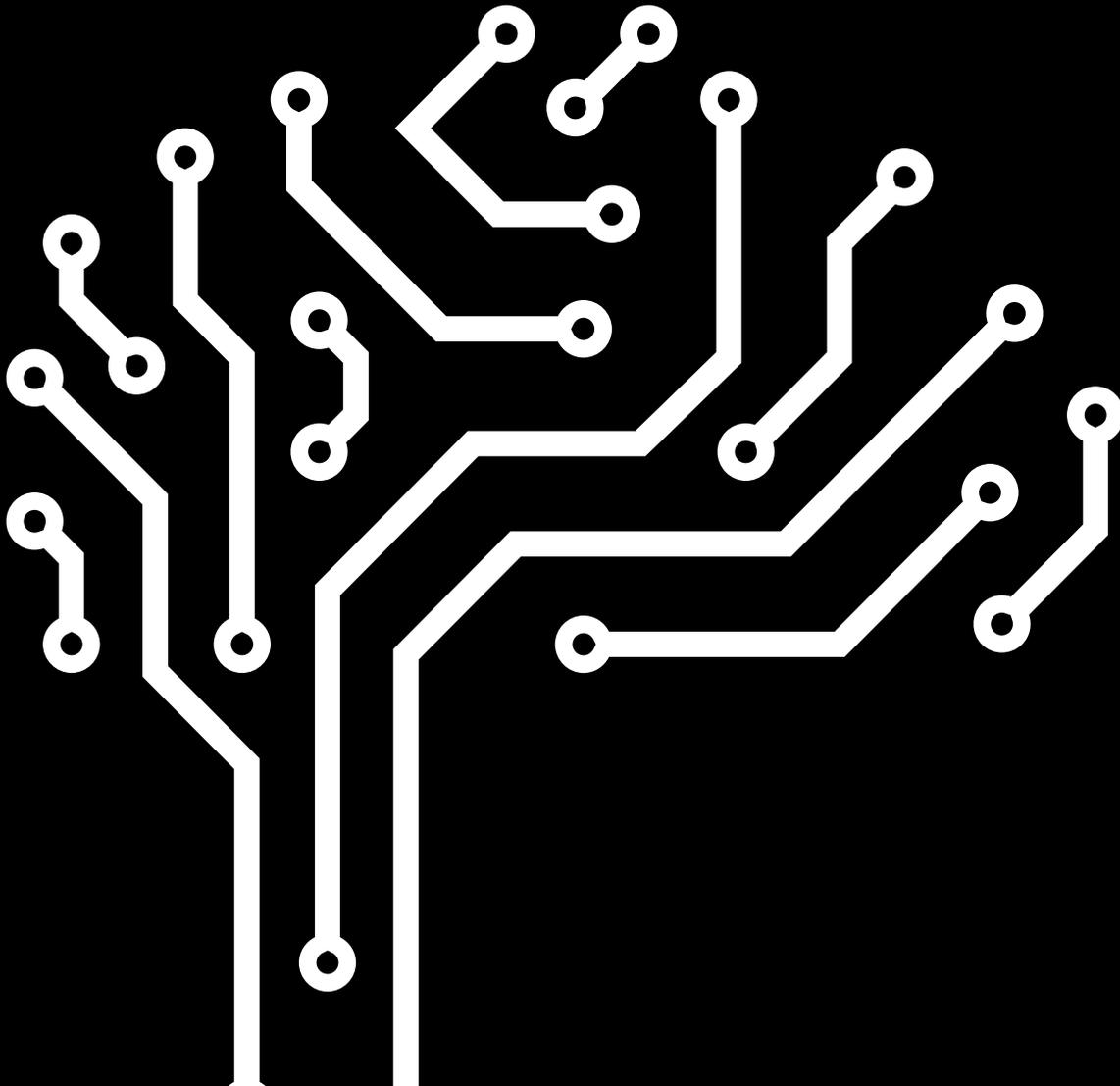
VR and AR have the ability to change the way we discuss, attend, and interact at events.

“AR” is a broad term that covers everything from broadcast graphics overlaid onto live TV, to mobile apps that make print or products come alive when viewed through your phone. More recently, smart glasses have changed the way we experience our environment, by using overly graphics and information and placing it into the scene before you..

Virtual reality involves the use of a headset where a computer-generated simulation is shown to the user, blocking out the surrounding real world and immersing the user in the generated environment.

The company Merrel utilised VR, using the Oculus Rift, to create an immersive hike that had people feeling like they were hiking around crumbling ledges and over a treacherous terrain in the mountains.

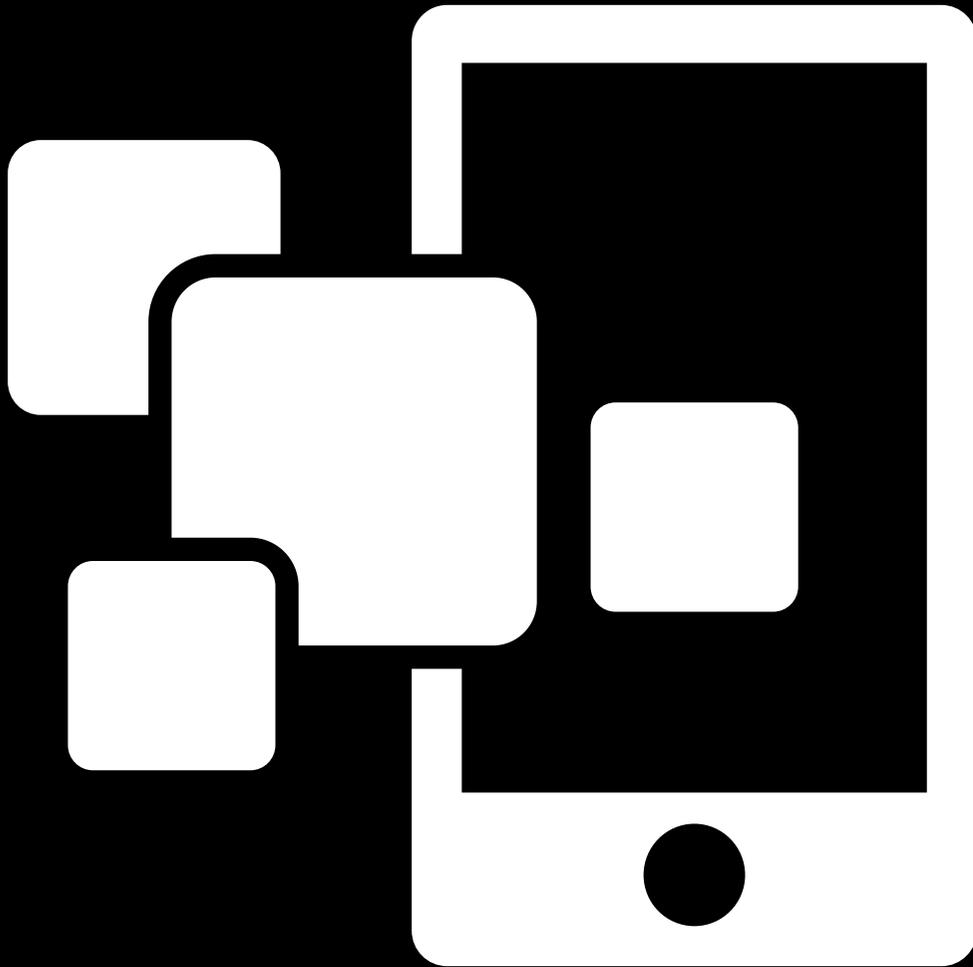
Deep learning



Deep learning is the gate-way to create value from “big data” that businesses hold. Deep learning can be used to collect and learn from almost any data from a variety of sources at an event, including voice, photo, and video.

With the right data collected, deep learning could provide events the knowledge to predict how their attendees have responded to previous scenarios, and will provide an insight on what could be improved to enhance the attendees experience further information.

APPS

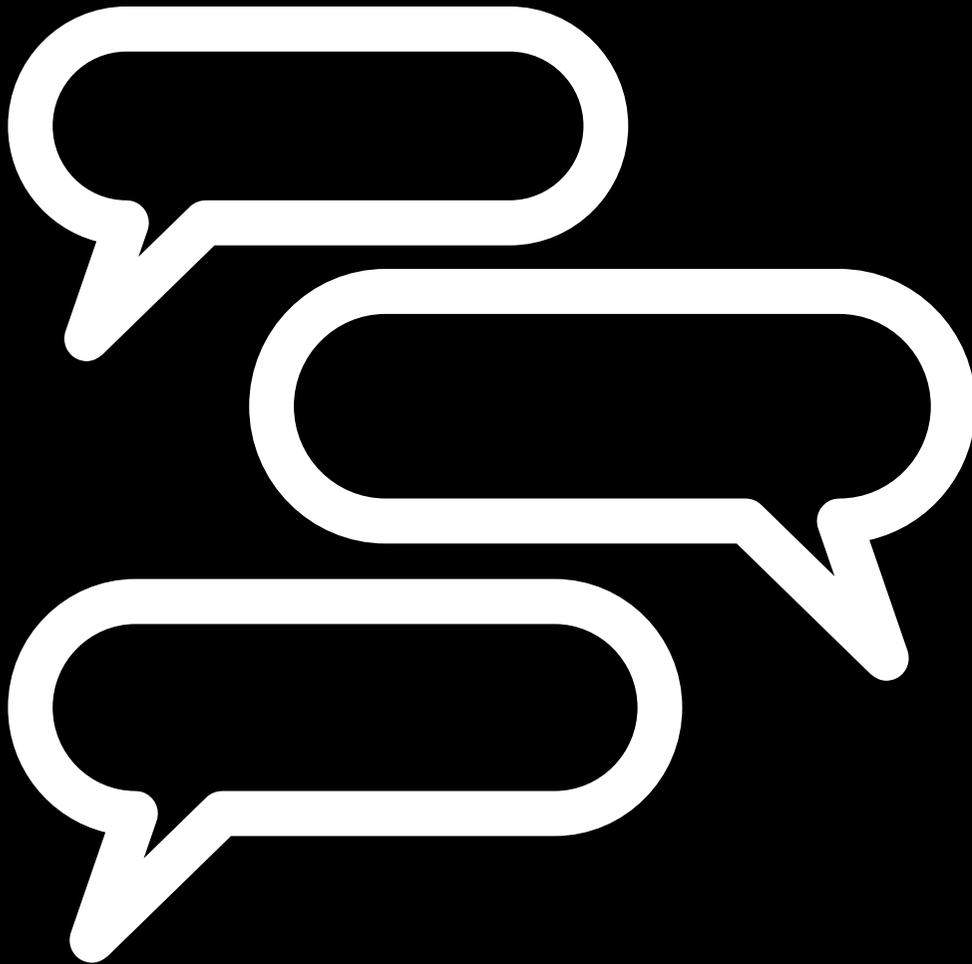


The use of apps at events can provide the perfect platform for audiences to engage with and share content with one another.

Apps allow the creation of branded mobile applications with the information attendees need, such as news, schedules, maps, attendee information, exhibitor information, information on acts or speakers, and much more.

Attendees are able to download the apps straight on to their mobile devices to gain access to the important event-related information.

Chat bots



Chatbots, or just Bots as they are more commonly known, is a technology that connects event attendees with you, the event organiser, in real time.

They are easier to access for attendees, since they don't require an app download or website login.

Chatbots have the technological capability to learn from previous interactions and personalise conversations and continually improve their functions and communication with the user.

In the future, the technology could enable events to move away from having a dedicated event app, instead having all events content delivered through a Facebook Messenger chatbot.

Case Study: Secret Act Chatbot, Glastonbury Festival

Greenwood Campbell, a leading digital agency based in Bournemouth, discussed and identified issues that they had experienced at previous Glastonbury Festivals. They wanted to know about the “Secret Acts” whilst at the festival, and where and when they were performing, knowledge that previously was not readily available.

Having already seen large brands such as Dominos Pizza and BBC News successfully using chatbots to both influence and generate high engagement rates, Greenwood Campbell looked at both the Facebook Messaging Platform as well as WhatsApp as potential carriers for their Glastobot – with both services combined reaching over 1.2 billion users.

Greenwood Campbell decided that Facebook would be the perfect platform to build the Glastobot. Not only is it the more popular of the two options, but the data usage for Facebook Messenger is very low, and therefore the chatbot would work quickly and responsively on both 2G and Edge networks having all events content delivered through a Facebook Messenger chatbot.

Although the official Glastonbury app and website are updated promptly, sometimes the mobile signal is so poor that people aren't able to find information quickly enough.

Case Study: Secret Act Chatbot, Glastonbury Festival

What was created?

A lightweight, simple chatbot using Facebook messenger with very simple functionality was clearly the way forward to provide quick, up-to-date information for festival-goers.

The final chatbot functionality would be very simple: it would provide information on the various acts and stages. The team of developers at GC connected to an open source feed of information that would allow them to serve this information to the Chatbot users. They also monitored Twitter and rumour feeds in real-time to learn who the secret acts might be.

Case Study: Secret Act Chatbot, Glastonbury Festival

How was it received?

The bot launched the week before the festival and received over 5,000 messages over the course of the weekend.

Greenwood Campbell had a team of people working throughout the weekend, monitoring the bot to make sure that it was operational and that it wasn't getting asked questions that they hadn't anticipated.

Their research paid off as the most popular questions were either "When is [act] playing" or "Who is playing on [stage]".

What was learnt?

During the course of the weekend at Glastonbury, the team monitoring the bot's usage found that it was asked some very unusual questions; some which needed some quick programming so the bot was able to auto-answer, and some that required the team to answer themselves – with cheap beer and weather being the second most popular types of questions.

Key steps to integrate technology at your event

What are some key steps to take to incorporate tech at your event and create a truly engaging user experience.

Do your research

- What else has been used before?
- What technology has been successful?
- Does it meet your needs?
- What work is required?

Be clear on your events vision and objectives

- What do you want to achieve?
- How will it contribute to your events goals?

Event goal vs customer experience goals Understanding your user

- Who will be the user
- What platforms will they be using
- Do they have experience using the technology you want to use?

Map every stage of your customer experience

- Against the objective, what is the current customer experience – what stages are required for the customer to have a good experience

Key steps to integrate technology at your event

Select an approach that meets your budget

- Will the technology meet your budget?
- How much usability will your budget get?

Test, test, test

- Ensure you test before your event to reduce any problems arising at your event
- Marketing your technology before your event
- Ensure your event attendees know about the technology
- Use it as a USP

Review

- Take feedback – was it successful or not?
- What needs to be developed?
- What needs to be removed or introduced?

There are no indications that this level of tech adoption is going to slow, and we can only predict that with the advancement in functionality of our mobile handsets, our engagement with tech at Events is only going to be more commonplace.

For Event Organisers, this can be a difficult concept to understand – but with an increasing amount of resource available to you, as well as fantastic free-to-attend event in London called Event Tech Live, there are plenty of ways to keep you up to date with the new and exciting technologies that are emerging.