eventamin
Vision & Intelligence

EVIDENCE BRIEF
NOVEMBER 2026

EVIDENCE BRIEF · TECHNOLOGY AND AI

Easy Is Assumed, Useful Decides

Does ease of use matter for event technology?

In a March 2026 survey of 476 U.S. smartphone owners, 45 percent said they download an app only when they truly need something. Studies of technology acceptance, event apps at a cycling race and four U.S. conferences, and virtual event platforms show what makes attendees use event technology, and where ease of use still counts.

By Eventamin · How we work 19 November 2026

Worldwide, U.S., Canada, Hong Kong, France, Spain, Thailand

8 studies · 1 industry source

event app adoption | ease of use | perceived usefulness | technology acceptance model | TAM | UTAUT | virtual event platform | event technology | app fatigue | attendee experience

Also in Attendee behaviour

EDITION	Evidence brief · Published 19 November 2026
DOI	https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.24378248
CITE AS	Eventamin. (2026). Easy Is Assumed, Useful Decides: Does Ease of Use Matter for Event Technology? [Evidence brief]. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.24378248
WEB EDITION	eventamin.com/evidence/technology-and-ai/does-ease-of-use-matter-for-event-technology, with interactive charts, chart data and the corrections log
LICENCE	Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) · © 2026 Eventamin

KEY FINDING

Attendees adopt event technology for what it does, not for how easy it is. Usefulness was more closely linked to use than ease of use from the first acceptance studies onward, and at events and on virtual platforms ease of use made no measurable difference. It still matters for older and less experienced users, and as a threshold: an app that is hard to use is not used at all.

Seven studies, 1989–2025; industry data 2026

Key findings

- **Apps are downloaded for a purpose.** In March 2026, 63 percent of U.S. smartphone owners said they were most likely to download an app that solves a problem no other tool can, and 54 percent delete an app once they are done with it[1].
- **Usefulness came first from the start.** In the studies that defined technology acceptance, usefulness was more closely linked to use than ease of use; with usefulness as 100, ease of use scored 71 for current use[2].
- **At events, ease of use made no measurable difference.** It did not change attendees' ratings of the event app at a cycling race in France and Spain or at four U.S. conferences[3,4].
- **Virtual platforms win on content and contact.** Among 251 U.S. virtual event attendees, informative content and communication features drove absorption in the event, while intuitiveness showed no measurable link[5].
- **Age still matters.** At four U.S. conferences, ratings of the app's ease of use fell from 4.79 out of five among attendees aged 20 to 29 to 4.35 among those aged 60 and over[4].

FOR THE MARKET

https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.24378248 · CC BY 4.0 · © 2026 Eventamin

Market outcomes

What the studies mean for each part of the industry.

Organisers & associations	Adoption follows usefulness: the program, contact exchange, meeting booking and content that attendees cannot get elsewhere. Ease of use is a threshold to meet, with extra help for older and first-time users, rather than a selling point.
Exhibitors & sponsors	Exhibitor portals, lead capture and matchmaking tools are judged on whether they serve the exhibitor's business goals; ease of use helps where staff must learn a tool quickly at the show.
Academia	Most event studies survey attendees who already use an app, which hides the role of ease of use in the decision to start. Studies of non-users and first-time users, and of use over several editions, are missing.

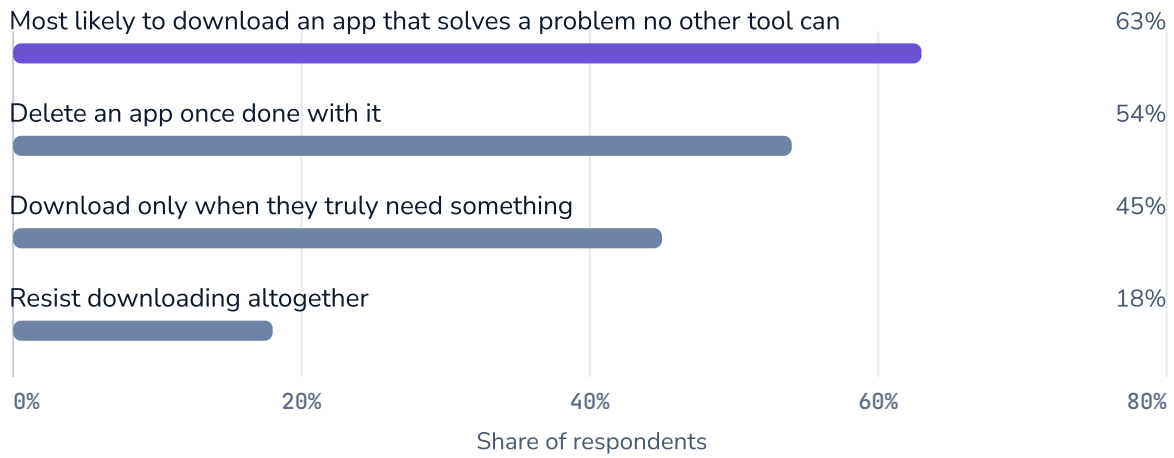
Why people download event technology

Downloads follow need. In a survey of 476 U.S. smartphone owners conducted by Clutch on March 25, 2026, 45 percent said they download an app only when they truly need something, and 18 percent resist downloading altogether when a browser or an app they already have can do the job[1]. The most common reason to download was an app that solves a problem no other tool can, named by 63 percent, and 54 percent delete an app once they are done with it[1].

For a one- or two-day event, this sets a high bar. Event studies show the same order of priorities: attendees rate event apps mainly on usefulness, while ease of use makes no measurable difference once the app is in use[3,4].

Attitudes to downloading apps among smartphone owners in the U.S. as of March 2026

Share of respondents.



Source: Clutch · Release date: April 2026 · Region: United States · Survey period: March 25, 2026 · Number of respondents: 476

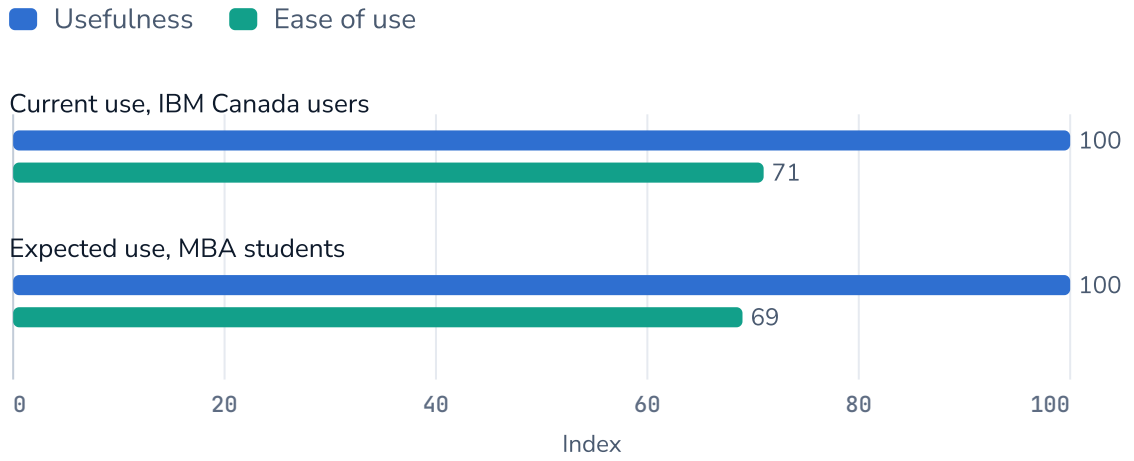
Usefulness and ease of use in technology acceptance

Usefulness has outweighed ease of use since the first studies. In two studies with 112 users of e-mail and editing software at IBM Canada and 40 MBA students rating graphics programs, perceived usefulness was more closely linked to current and expected use than perceived ease of use[2]. Ease of use appeared to act mainly by making a system seem more useful, rather than as a separate reason to use it[2].

In consumer settings, the weight of ease of use depends on the user. In a two-stage survey of 1,512 mobile internet consumers in Hong Kong, the effect of ease of use on the intention to use the service varied with age, gender and experience, and habit and the fun of using a technology joined usefulness as drivers of use[6].

Link of perceived usefulness and ease of use with the use of software in two acceptance studies

Index: link of usefulness with use = 100 in each study. The paper reports two values for ease of use in the second study; the lower one is shown.



Source: Davis · Release date: 1989 · Region: Canada and United States · Number of respondents: 112; 40

Event apps: ease of use is taken for granted

Among event attendees who use an app, ease of use does not move the rating. At the Transpyr cycling race across the Pyrenees and at four U.S. conferences, ease of use made no measurable difference to how attendees rated the event app, while usefulness, or enjoyment at the race, carried the most weight[3,4].

Ease of use still divides age groups. At the U.S. conferences, ease of use was the only app rating that differed by age, falling from 4.79 out of five among attendees aged 20 to 29 to 4.35 among those aged 60 and over[4]. A review of 79 studies on technology and event engagement names familiarity with technology and habit among the main drivers of engagement with event technology, and finds that engagement with an event's digital channels before the event shapes how attendees judge the ease of use and usefulness of its technology[7].

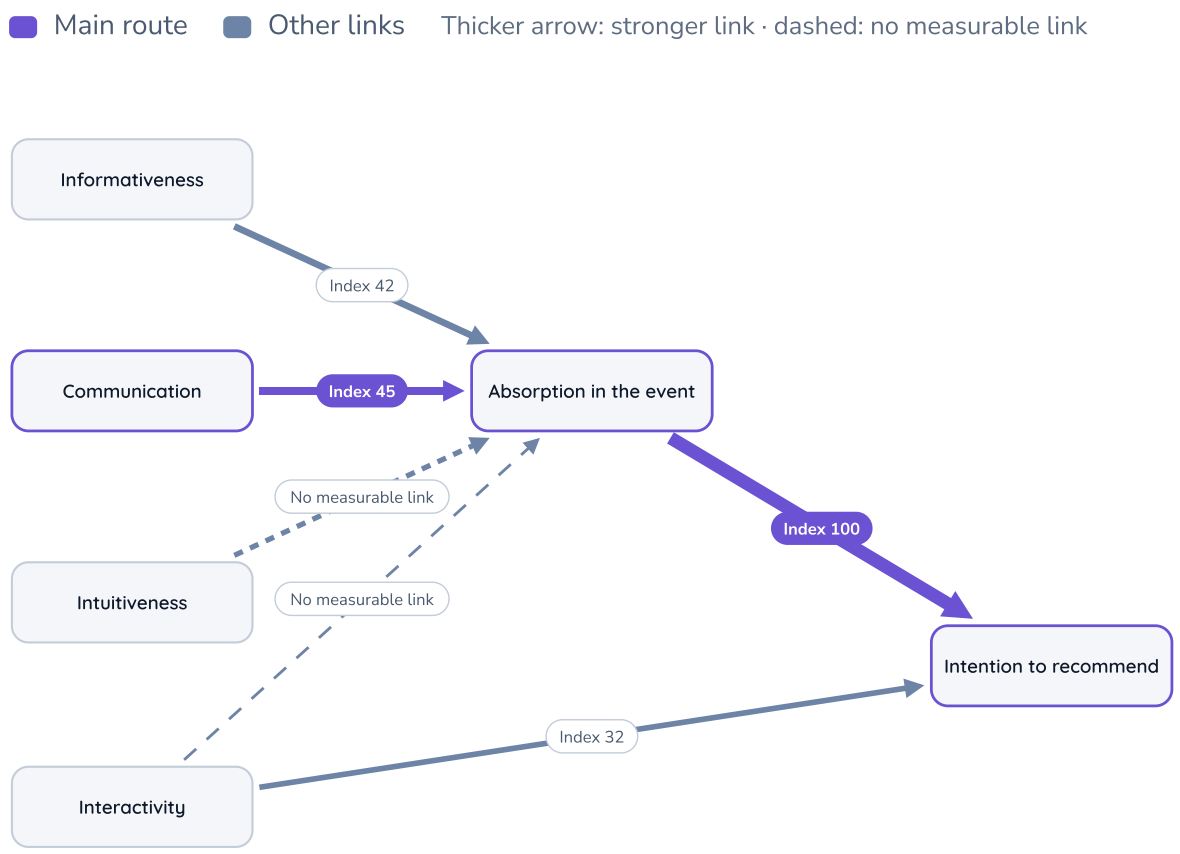
Virtual platforms and exhibitor tools

On virtual platforms, content and contact count more than intuitive design. Among 251 U.S. attendees of virtual conferences, meetings and seminars, communication features and informative content drove absorption in the event, which in turn was closely linked to the intention to recommend it[5]. The intuitiveness of the platform showed no measurable link with absorption, and interactivity mattered only directly for recommendations[5].

Ease of use remains part of the quality checklist. A scale of virtual event quality, developed with up to 699 attendees per study, includes ease of use as one of seven dimensions alongside vividness, functionality, responsiveness, entertainment, fulfillment and privacy and security[8]. For exhibitors, interviews with 12 senior trade show professionals in Europe, Asia-Pacific and Thailand found that willingness to use digital platforms depends on usefulness and ease of use, and also on fit with the exhibitor's business goals[9].

Effects of virtual event platform features on absorption and intention to recommend among U.S. virtual event attendees

Index: strongest link = 100. Solid: measurable link; dashed: no measurable link.



Source: Jeon et al. · Release date: 2025 · Region: United States · Number of respondents: 251

Notes on the data

The figures are based on seven studies published between 1989 and 2025: two acceptance studies with 152 respondents in Canada and the U.S., a two-stage survey of 1,512 mobile internet consumers in Hong Kong, attendee surveys at the Transpyr cycling race in France and Spain and at four U.S. conferences, a survey of 251 U.S. virtual event attendees and a scale study of virtual event quality[2–6,8]. Interviews with 12 trade show professionals and a review of 79 event engagement studies add context[7,9]. Index values show the relative strength of each link within one study; the strongest link, or usefulness in the acceptance studies, = 100. The event app and virtual platform studies surveyed people who

already used the technology. Industry figures are from Clutch's survey of 476 U.S. smartphone owners, taken from its published summary[1].

Sources

● Study ○ Industry source

1. Hicklen, H. (2026, April). App fatigue is real: What that means for businesses [Article]. Retrieved November 15, 2026, from clutch.co — Reported

2. Davis, F. D. (1989). Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and user acceptance of information technology [Journal article]. *MIS Quarterly, 13(3), 319–340*. https://doi.org/10.2307/249008 — First-hand

3. Habachi, S., Palau-Saumell, R., & Matute, J. (2024). Transforming event experiences: The role of application technology in shaping behavioral intentions and attachment to places [Journal article]. *International Journal of Tourism Research, 26(5), e2782*. https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.2782 — First-hand

4. Talantis, S., Shin, Y. H., & Severt, K. (2020). Conference mobile application: Participant acceptance and the correlation with overall event satisfaction utilizing the technology acceptance model (TAM) [Journal article]. *Journal of Convention & Event Tourism, 21(2), 100–122*. https://doi.org/10.1080/15470148.2020.1719949 — First-hand

5. Jeon, H., Choi, H., Choi, J., & Ann, S. (2025). Virtual event experiences: Does the virtual event platform matter? [Journal article]. *Event Management, 29, 797–815*. https://doi.org/10.3727/152599524X17265263360304 — First-hand

6. Venkatesh, V., Thong, J. Y. L., & Xu, X. (2012). Consumer acceptance and use of information technology: Extending the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology [Journal article]. *MIS Quarterly, 36(1), 157–178*. https://doi.org/10.2307/41410412 — First-hand

7. Chen, J., Jung, S., & Cai, L. A. (2025). A critical review of technology-facilitated event engagement: current landscape and pathway — First-hand

forward [Journal article]. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 37(13), 169–189*. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-02-2025-0236

8 Kim, S.-E. (2021). Measuring quality of virtual event: Scale development and validation [Doctoral dissertation]. *University of Nevada, Las Vegas*. https://doi.org/10.34917/25374048 First-hand

9 Yuaikwamdee, D. (2025). Enhancing Trade Show Value through Servitization Strategies [Journal article]. *Romphruek Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 43(3), 52–74*. First-hand

The evidence

8 studies · 1 industry source

SAMPLE

Seven studies: two foundational acceptance studies with 152 respondents, a two-stage survey of 1,512 mobile internet consumers, attendee surveys at a cycling race in France and Spain and at four U.S. conferences, a survey of 251 U.S. virtual event attendees and a scale study of virtual event quality; interviews with 12 trade show professionals and a review of 79 event engagement studies add context; one industry source

YEARS

1989–2025 (studies); 2026 (industry data)

METHOD

Field and laboratory surveys, attendee surveys, a two-stage consumer survey, scale development, interviews and a literature review

About Eventamin

Eventamin reads the peer-reviewed research on events, exhibitions and hospitality, sets it against industry data and states what it means for the market. Every brief is published by Eventamin as an organisation: its sources, method and corrections are open.

eventamin.com · contact@eventamin.com · How we work: eventamin.com/method