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EVIDENCE BRIEF
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# Event Tech Moves When Pushed

## What drives event-technology adoption?

Nine in ten exhibition companies now use AI, yet most use only the standard tools available to everyone. Studies of event operators, small businesses and industry conversations show that event technology spreads when policy and competitors push it, and that the industry's digital maturity remains low.

By Eventamin · How we work 12 November 2026 Worldwide, Thailand, UK

**5 studies** · 1 industry source

event technology | event tech adoption | AI in events | digital maturity | MICE technology | event apps | virtual event platforms | technology adoption drivers | small and medium enterprises | Events 4.0

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KEY FINDING

Event technology is adopted mainly under outside pressure: government policy and competitors weigh more than a firm's own capabilities. Use is wide but shallow, with industry attention centered on social media, marketing and apps rather than data and advanced technologies.

Five studies, 2020–2025; industry data 2026

## Key findings

- **AI use is wide but shallow.** In June 2026, 91 percent of exhibition companies worldwide used AI in some form, but 70 percent used only standard tools and four percent ran their own models on their own data[1].
- **Outside pressure drives adoption.** Among 305 MICE operators in Thailand, government policy had the strongest influence on the intention to adopt new technology, ahead of competitive pressure and the firms' own technical capabilities[2].
- **Adoption is already common.** 82 percent of these operators already used some form of MICE technology, and 99 percent expected to adopt more[2].
- **Industry talk centers on marketing tools.** In LinkedIn posts by event professionals, social media, marketing and apps were the most discussed technology topics, far ahead of data and augmented reality[3].
- **Events spread technology to small firms.** 61.3 percent of business event attendees surveyed for a UK study on small and medium-sized enterprises named knowledge gain as a main reason to attend[4].

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FOR THE MARKET

## Market outcomes

What the studies mean for each part of the industry.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Organisers & associations** | Technology adoption follows policy programs and competitors more than internal plans, so public funding schemes and industry benchmarks are strong levers. Cost-benefit evidence matters most to organizers after the pandemic. |
| **Exhibitors & sponsors** | Business events are a channel for selling technology to small firms, which attend mainly to learn. Demonstrations and knowledge sessions reach them better than product pitches. |
| **Investors & advisers** | Most AI use in the exhibition industry rests on standard tools, and only a small share of companies sell AI products. Proprietary data and models remain rare, which leaves room for specialized platforms. |

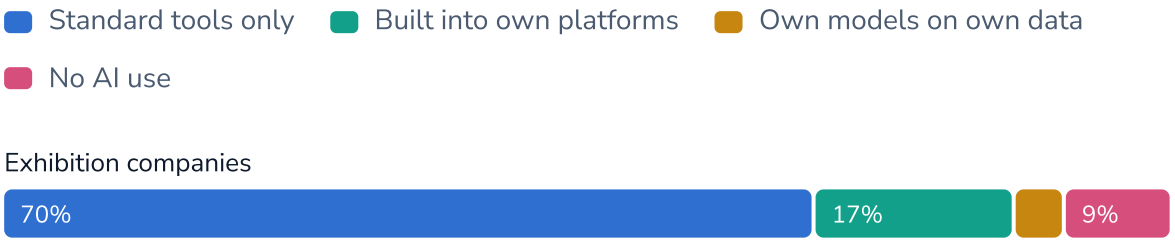
## AI and technology in the exhibition industry

AI has reached most of the exhibition industry, but mostly in its simplest form. In UFI's Global Exhibition Barometer, conducted in June 2026, 91 percent of exhibition companies used AI in some form[1]. 70 percent used only standard tools, 17 percent had AI built into their platforms and four percent ran their own models on their own data[1]. Seven percent sold AI-powered products, and AI matchmaking was the most common AI feature offered to customers[1].

The question for organizers, venues and suppliers is what moves event companies from basic use to deeper adoption.

**Use of AI among exhibition companies worldwide as of June 2026, by depth of use**

Share of respondents.




Source: UFI · Release date: July 2026 · Region: Worldwide · Survey period: June 2026 · Number of respondents: 466

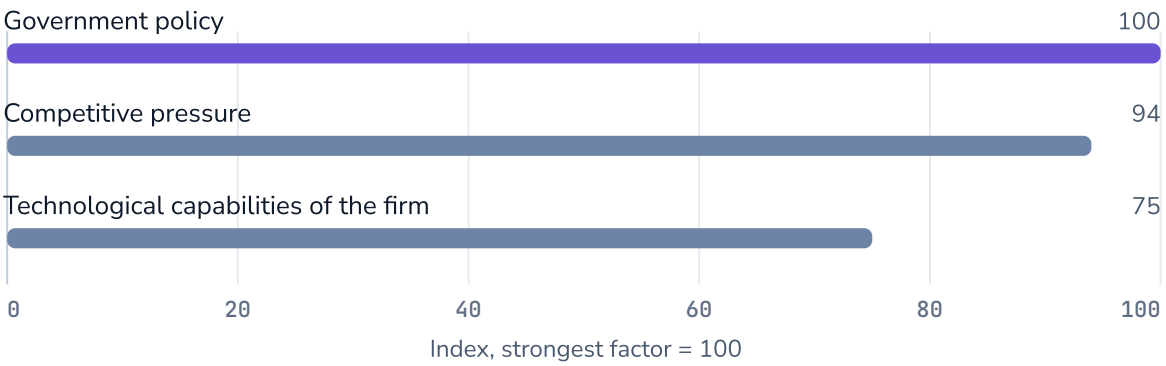
## What moves operators to adopt

Outside forces weigh more than in-house strengths. In a survey of 305 MICE operators in Thailand, from meeting and incentive organizers to convention and exhibition companies, government policy had the strongest influence on the intention to adopt new technology[2]. Competitive pressure followed closely, and the firms' own technical capabilities came third[2].

Adoption was already widespread: 82 percent of the operators used some form of MICE technology, and 99 percent expected to adopt more in the future[2]. A review of 33 studies on event technology adds the organizer's main criterion after the pandemic: the cost-benefit ratio of a new system[5].

### Influence of selected factors on MICE operators' intention to adopt new technology in Thailand

Index of influence: strongest factor = 100.




Source: Sintharapantorn et al. · Release date: 2023 · Region: Thailand · Number of respondents: 305

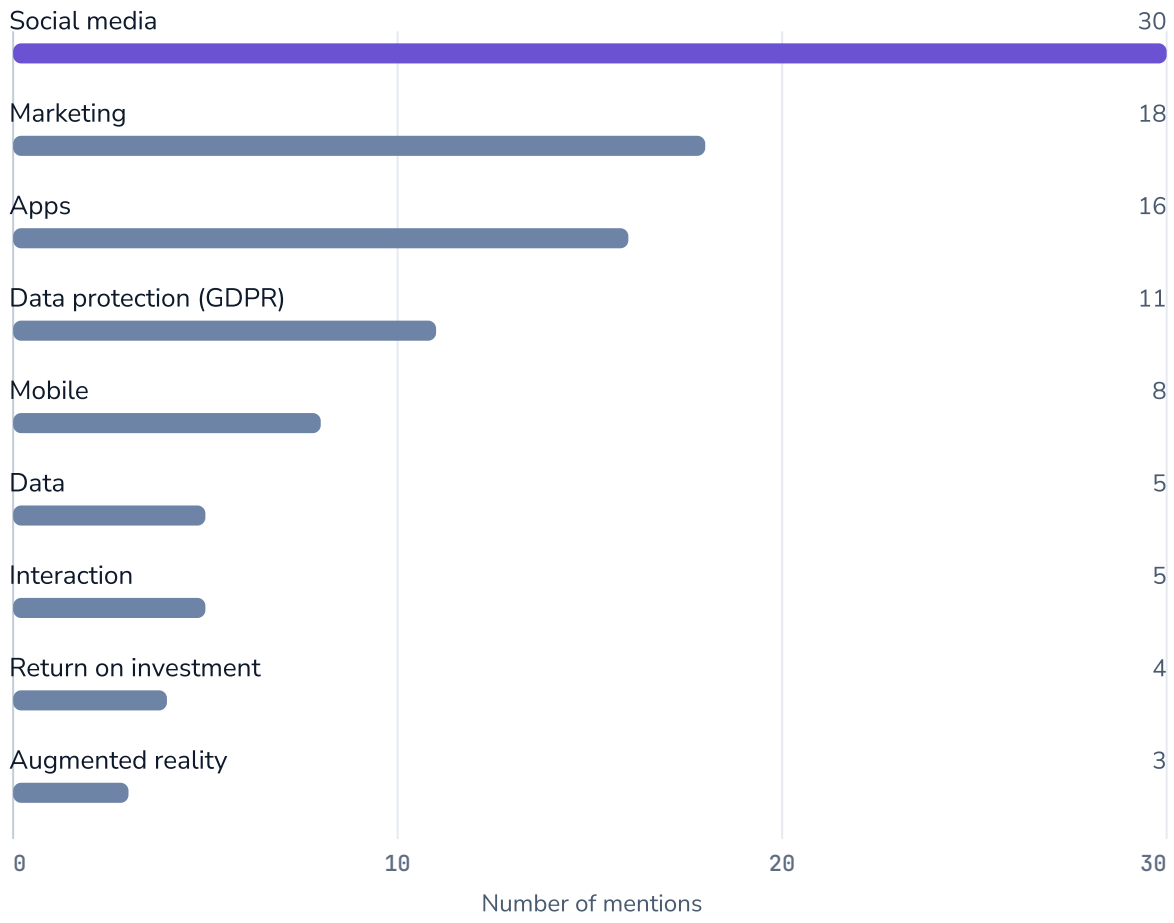
## Digital maturity of the events industry

The industry's own conversation centers on basic tools. In LinkedIn posts by event professionals, social media was the most discussed technology topic, followed by marketing, apps and data protection rules; data, interaction, augmented reality and return on investment trailed far behind[3]. Academics in tourism and events were familiar with online registration, e-mail and websites, but many knew little of the technologies behind Industry 4.0, such as cyber-physical systems and cognitive computing[3].

Research mirrors the gap. A review of 79 studies on technology and event engagement found 58 dealing with media technology such as social media and apps, 22 with immersive technology and 13 with smart assistive technology[6]. A second review of 33 studies found that research focuses mostly on attendees, while organizers and suppliers remain little studied[5].

### Event technology topics discussed by event professionals on LinkedIn, by number of mentions

Number of coded references.




Source: Ryan et al. · Release date: 2020 · Region: Worldwide · Data: LinkedIn posts by event professionals

## Events as a channel for technology

Business events themselves spread technology to smaller firms. In a UK study on technology adoption by small and medium-sized enterprises, 61.3 percent of 75 business event attendees named knowledge gain as a main reason to attend, and 45.3 percent networking[4]. All five event organizers interviewed saw their events as a way to transfer knowledge and build contacts that lead to adoption[4].

Attendees adopt technology when it is easy to use, useful, socially endorsed and enjoyable, and when privacy and security concerns are met[5].

## Notes on the data

The figures are based on five studies published between 2020 and 2025: a survey of 305 MICE operators in Thailand, a UK master's thesis with five interviews and 75 survey responses, an analysis of LinkedIn posts with an academic survey, and two literature reviews covering 33 and 79 studies[2–6]. Intentions to adopt are self-reported. Index values compare factors within the Thai survey only. No study measures what adoption changes in costs or results.

## Sources

● Study ○ Industry source

1 UFI. (2026, July). Global Exhibition Barometer, 37th edition [Survey report]. Retrieved November 7, 2026, from ufi.org — First-hand

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3 Ryan, W. G., Fenton, A., Ahmed, W., & Scarf, P. (2020). Recognizing Events 4.0: The digital maturity of events [Journal article]. *International Journal of Event and Festival Management, 11(1), 47–68*. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEFM-12-2019-0060 — First-hand

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5 Sjukriana, J., Hanafiah, M. H., Asyraff, M. A., & Kusumah, G. (2024). Unveiling the landscape of event technology adoption in hospitality and tourism industry: insights from a systematic literature review [Journal article]. *International Journal of Event and Festival Management*. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEFM-06-2024-0077 First-hand

6 Chen, J., Jung, S., & Cai, L. A. (2025). A critical review of technology-facilitated event engagement: current landscape and pathway forward [Journal article]. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 37(13), 169–189*. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-02-2025-0236 First-hand

## The evidence

**5 studies** · 1 industry source

SAMPLE

Five studies: surveys of 305 MICE operators and 75 event attendees, an analysis of industry posts and two reviews of 112 studies; one industry survey

YEARS

2020–2025 (studies); 2026 (industry data)

METHOD

Operator survey in Thailand, small business study in the UK, LinkedIn and academic survey on digital maturity, two literature reviews

## 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.

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