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Vision & Intelligence

EVIDENCE BRIEF
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EVIDENCE BRIEF · TECHNOLOGY AND AI

AI at Events Is Still a Forecast

What will AI change at events?

Nine in ten exhibition companies and three in four event planners now use AI. The research on what it changes at events consists of scenarios, opinion papers and frameworks: none of the studies measures an effect, and the scenarios show that the same tools can create or destroy value.

By Eventamin · How we work 12 November 2026 Worldwide, Austria, Poland, Malaysia, UK

5 studies · 2 industry sources

AI in events | artificial intelligence | event technology | personalization | AI chatbots | AI matchmaking | smart events | event experience | mega-events | AI scenarios

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KEY FINDING

Studies of AI at events are scenarios, opinion papers and conceptual frameworks; none measures AI's effect on attendees or operations. Experts expect AI to personalize experiences and steer crowds, but the same tools can annoy, surveil or fail, so outcomes depend on design and data governance.

Five studies, 2021–2026; industry data 2026

Key findings

- **AI is in daily use.** In 2026, 91 percent of exhibition companies worldwide used AI in some form, and 75 percent of event planners surveyed by Cvent used it [1,2].
- **Few companies sell it.** Only seven percent of exhibition companies offered AI-powered products, most often AI matchmaking [1].
- **No study measures an effect yet.** The five studies on AI at events are scenarios, opinion papers and conceptual frameworks; none measures what AI changes for attendees or operations [3–7].
- **The same tools can help or harm.** In six focus groups, attendees, AI experts, practitioners and academics described ten drivers whose outcome swings from tailored help to ill-fitting suggestions, surveillance and system failure [3].
- **Three futures were sketched.** The scenarios ranged from a personalized event experience to a suspicious one and to badly developed systems that destroy value [3].

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FOR THE MARKET

Market outcomes

What the studies mean for each part of the industry.

Organisers & associations	The value of AI at events will depend on fit and restraint: suggestions that match needs, discreet tracking and systems that keep working offline. Pilots with measured outcomes would give organizers the evidence the research does not yet provide.
Venues & destinations	Crowd simulation, monitoring and offline fallback are the AI uses with the highest stakes for venues; a miscalculated flow or a blackout without manual control turns a benefit into a risk.
Academia	The field needs field experiments and before-and-after measures of AI at real events, including how far event leaders trust AI in critical situations without prior data.

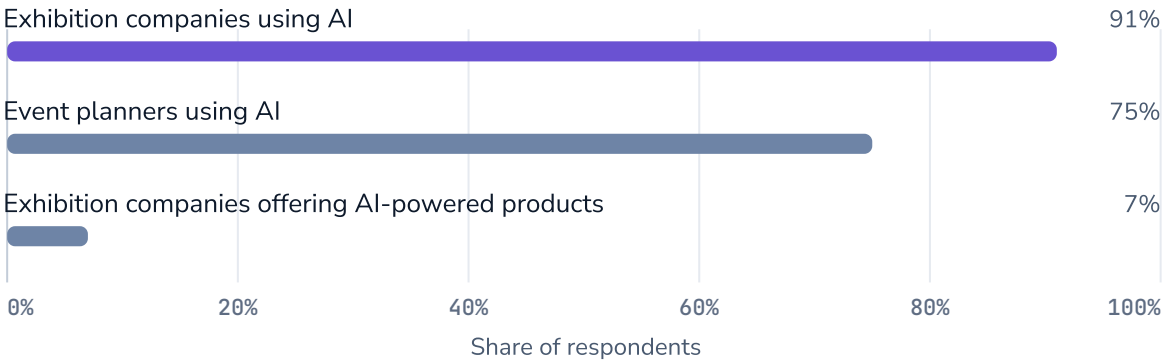
AI in the events industry

AI is already part of everyday work in events. In UFI's Global Exhibition Barometer, conducted in June 2026, 91 percent of exhibition companies used AI in some form[1]. In Cvent's 2026 Planner Sourcing Report, 75 percent of event planners used AI[2]. Turning AI into products is less common: Seven percent of exhibition companies offered AI-powered products, most often AI matchmaking[1].

The research on what AI changes at events is younger than its use. The five studies available describe applications, expectations and scenarios; none measures an effect on attendees, staff or results[3–7].

Use of AI in the events industry worldwide in 2026, by measure

Share of respondents.



Sources: UFI; Cvent · Release dates: July 2026; 2026 · Region: Worldwide · Number of respondents: 466 exhibition companies; more than 1,650 planners

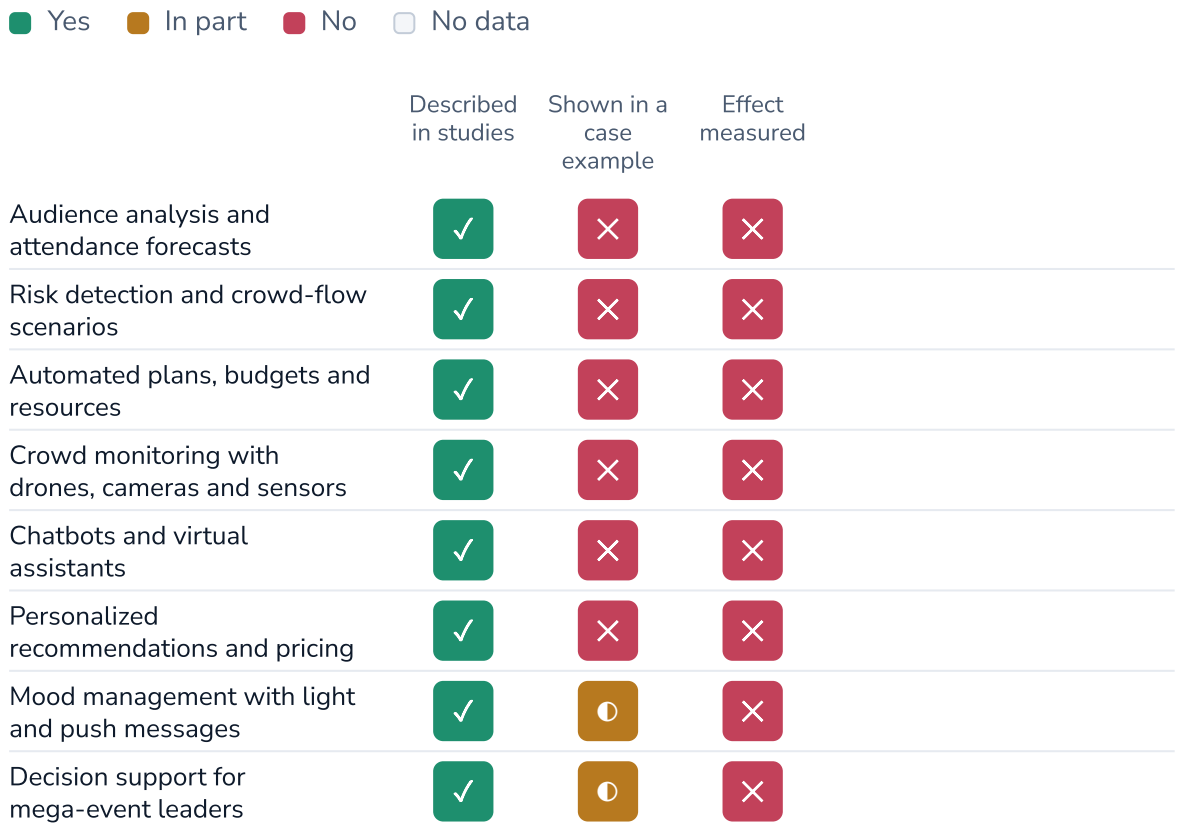
What AI is expected to do at events

The expected uses span the whole event cycle. Opinion and conceptual papers list data-driven decisions, personalization, chatbots and virtual assistants, content curation, marketing optimization and better use of resources[4]. For the preparation phase they describe AI that analyzes audiences, forecasts attendance, identifies risks and proposes crowd-flow scenarios; during the event, crowd monitoring with drones, cameras and sensors, and systems that manage the mood of the audience through light and personalized messages[5].

Evidence for these uses rests on examples, not measurement. One case describes fireworks synchronized by AI that produced a strong emotional response, without figures[5]. A framework for AI-supported leadership at mega-events draws on examples from the Olympic Games in Beijing, PyeongChang, Tokyo and Paris, the 2022 FIFA World Cup and Expo 2020 Dubai, and notes that it is unknown how far event leaders trust AI in critical situations without prior data[6]. AI-assisted mindfulness is proposed as a niche for tourism, hospitality and events, with 18 open research themes[7].

Evidence status of AI applications at events, by type of evidence

Classification of the five studies' content.



Sources: Neuhofer et al.; Abdul Halim et al.; Shmeleva; Megheirkouni et al.; Wang & Uysal · Release dates: 2021 to 2026 · Classification: Eventamin

Three scenarios for AI at events

The most detailed study sketches possible futures. Six focus groups with 33 potential attendees, AI experts, event practitioners and academics in Austria and Poland identified ten key drivers of AI's influence on event experiences and built three scenarios for 2026[3]. In the first, a personalized event experience, AI assistants make fitting suggestions, simulate crowds beforehand and keep services running offline[3].

In the second, a suspicious event experience, attendees distrust systems that push offers and track them openly[3]. In the third, badly developed systems misdirect visitor flows, need constant human intervention and leave events without access

control during a blackout[3]. The study treats AI as an independent actor at events that can create value with attendees or destroy it[3].

DRIVER	BEST CASE	WORST CASE
Suggestions and assistance	Individual suggestions that fit needs[3]	Constant, ill-fitting suggestions that annoy[3]
Tracking of attendee behavior	Subtle, discreet assistance[3]	Total control and publicly accessible data[3]
Personalized experience	Tailored journey, dynamic products and prices[3]	Attendees feel betrayed by inconsistent prices; groups split up[3]
Crowd management	AI simulates the event beforehand and prevents panic[3]	Miscalculated scenarios cause dangerous congestion[3]
System failure	Offline-capable system keeps services running[3]	Total blackout without access control[3]
Marketing and targeting	Offers accepted because attendees feel understood[3]	Attendees feel pushed to buy and distrust the system[3]

Notes on the data

The figures are based on five studies published between 2021 and 2026: one scenario study with six focus groups of 33 participants, conducted in 2019 with a horizon of 2026, and four conceptual or opinion papers, one of which was available as an abstract only[3–7]. None of the studies collected data on AI in use at real events. The classification of evidence status is Eventamin's coding of the studies' content. The Cvent figure is taken from the publisher's summary.

Sources

● Study ○ Industry source

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

2 Cvent. (2026). 2026 Planner Sourcing Report [Survey report]. Retrieved November 7, 2026, from cvent.com — Reported

3 Neuhofer, B., Magnus, B., & Celuch, K. (2021). The impact of artificial intelligence on event experiences: a scenario technique approach [Journal article]. *Electronic Markets, 31, 601–617*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12525-020-00433-4 — First-hand

4 Abdul Halim, A. H., Zamzuri, N. H., & Ghazali, A. R. (2023). The Transformative Role of Artificial Intelligence in the Event Management Industry [Journal article]. *Journal of International Business, Economics and Entrepreneurship, 8(2), 98–106*. https://doi.org/10.24191/jibe.v8i2.24045 — First-hand

5 Shmeleva, I. (2026). Impact of Modern Technologies on the Operational Efficiency and Emotional Perception of Events (Russian title: Влияние современных технологий на операционную эффективность и эмоциональное восприятие мероприятий) [Journal article]. *Universum: Economics and Jurisprudence, 1(135)*. https://doi.org/10.32743/UniLaw.2026.135.1.21520 — First-hand

6 Megheirkouni, M., Baxter, K., Ni, A., & Jing, Y. (2026). Leadership–Artificial Intelligence Interaction for Sustainable Mega-Events: Rethinking the Current and Future Research and Practices [Journal article]. *Event Management, 30, 295–307*. https://doi.org/10.3727/152599525X17385344274487 — First-hand

7 Wang, Y.-C., & Uysal, M. (2024). Artificial intelligence-assisted mindfulness in tourism, hospitality, and events [Journal article]. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 36(4), 1262–1278*. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-11-2022-1444 — First-hand

The evidence

5 studies · 2 industry sources

SAMPLE

Five studies: one scenario study with six focus groups of 33 participants, four conceptual and opinion papers; two industry surveys

YEARS

2021–2026 (studies); 2026 (industry data)

METHOD

Scenario technique with attendees, AI experts, practitioners and academics; conceptual reviews of AI in events, mega-events and hospitality

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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