



Book Review

V. Martin and L. Cazarré, *Technology and events: How to create engaging events*, 2016, Goodfellow Publishers Limited; Oxford, 256 pp., (Pbk.), £34.99 ISBN: 978-1-910158-25-8, (Hbk), £85.00 ISBN 978-1-910158-19-7, (ebk) £41.99 978-1-910158-26-5.

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Whilst technology has for some time now been acknowledged as a major force in the events industry, shaping and reshaping every aspect of it, very few dedicated textbooks exist on the subject (for example Lee, Boshnakova, & Goldblatt, 2015). The authors, Vanessa Martin and Luiz Cazarré, have acknowledged this critical gap and produced a highly comprehensive, relevant and informative guide for events management students and industry practitioners alike. Bridging the gap between academic textbooks and practitioner 'how to' manuals, this new addition to the events management library constitutes a valuable resource for those wishing to understand the potential of technology to create, plan and deliver better, more engaging event experiences.

Professor Joe Goldblatt, in the foreword, best captures the essence of the book by describing it as a toolkit of techniques, practices and knowledge to best create "events without end" (p. ix). He defines these as events that pull the potential attendee to the event long before it starts and keeps them talking long after the event closes its 'physical' doors. The key to achieving this is providing meaningful event experiences, which may be interpreted as attendee engagement, networking, return on investment, or any other aspect relevant to clients, event organisers or attendees. In *Technology and Events*, the authors have fully and effectively met their main objective to discuss how technology can best be used before, during and after the event in order to create Professor Joe Goldblatt's 'event without end'. The major strengths of the book consist of the richness of event technologies discussed and the case-studies disseminated. By adopting this approach, the authors have created an ideal textbook for lecturers and students all over the world embarking on a module focused on the use of technology in events. This is a mandatory read for students aspiring to be event managers in today's highly competitive, technology driven, global marketplace. In addition, the style, layout and tone make it is an invaluable and accessible resource for experienced practitioners looking for guidance and a step-by-step approach. A visually appealing book, Vanessa Martin and Luiz Cazarré have made good use of visuals to emphasise and strengthen their arguments throughout the book.

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The book is divided into four sections. The first section constitutes an intriguing account of how technology is shaping the events sector. The two chapters aim to offer a bird's-eye view of the importance and the many uses of technology in events planning, delivery and legacy. The authors acknowledge that events managers have to navigate a highly technological events landscape and "the challenge for planners and event managers therefore lies in acquiring in-depth knowledge of all technological possibilities applicable to organising events and utilizing this knowledge to gain the maximum profit from its possibilities" (p. 57). Rich in detail, the book explores a number of trends in technology such as, for example: the rise in event apps and the use of mobile technology and tablets; developments in social media and their application in events management; or hybrid events.

Of particular interest is the discussion on gamification within the events industry. This topic has been neglected in events management literature and the industry itself has been slow to react to it. Gamification involves "applying elements and principles of electronic games in a 'non-game' context" (p. 51). The potential of gamification is only now starting to be acknowledged and understood. This is mostly due to new technology developments (such as advanced and integrated social media platforms, virtual reality, or enhanced reality), the coming of age of Generation Y or the Millennial generation as event attendees, as well as trends in gaming (such as Pokémon Go or Ingress). Event managers are realising more and more how technology goes hand in hand with games and how a technology-driven gamification events strategy can enhance the event experience. Areas such as on-line and on-site participation, event design, networking, or feedback can easily be gamified to maximise the desired outcomes. The theme of gamification is later picked up in the second part of the book and applied in practice pre, during and post-event. A relevant example of the power of gamification is explored in "Box 4.2 Poken – Gamification for engagement". This case-study demonstrates the power of gamification. The Boy Scouts of America (BSA) "adopted Poken's turnkey solution, which combined interactive USB devices, interactive touch points, touch devices, mobile apps, and a customised gamification platform" in a 2015 event in order to tackle one of their biggest challenges, audience participation and motivation (p. 138–139).

The second, third and fourth sections of the book focus on the practical application of technology to events. Adopting a positive tone but fully acknowledging the potential pitfalls of technology such as cost or over-use, the authors demonstrate a grounded, down-to-earth, practical understanding of how each stage and task involved in planning and running an event can benefit from the use of certain technologies. In addition to relevant event examples from around the world, the book also introduces the reader to industry professionals and their practice. Their testimonials and shared experiences further enhance the quality of the book. The six chapters follow the main stages of planning and managing an event. For each stage there is a clear and detailed discussion of how technology can be best used.

Another current issue *Technology and Events* taps into is 'The Generations' debate. Each generation (Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, Generation Z) has different expectations in terms of what and how technology is used in events. With each 'new' genera-

tion, the expectations are higher, in terms of volume, complexity and intensity. The authors provide some guidance on how to best cater to Millennials and their technology needs. As Generation Z comes of age, the need for such books is expected to increase. Lee et al. (2015) and Martin and Cazarré's *Technology and Events* flag the emergence of a mature and complex technology-intensive events field. Both aspiring and experienced events managers need to be informed and trained in the art of incorporating relevant technology in every aspect of an event. In short, this book provides an in-depth understanding of how technology can best be used to create engaging events and streamline the work of event organisers.

Reference

- Lee, S.S., Boshnakova, D., Goldblatt, J., 2015. *The 21st century meeting and event Technologies: Powerful tools for better planning, marketing, and evaluation*. Apple Academic Press, Oakville/Waretown.

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