

Resilience and new audiences: Digital technology is transforming the events industry

The events industry was one of the sectors worst affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent health restrictions. Forced to adapt to a new reality, organisations have heavily relied on the use of online technology to maintain links with their various stakeholders. This has allowed private companies and public institutions to reach a much wider audience, with hybrid formats becoming the new norm.

Temps de lecture : minute

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Since 2020, many event organisers have switched, for the first time, to a hybrid format. According to *a study conducted by LinkedIn in May 2021*, 72% of French event organisers now regard virtual events to be a necessity while 68% say they want to organise hybrid events in the future. This change in behaviour was made possible due to the strengthened support of professional online transmission companies.

A less polluting and more impactful events industry

There are two main reasons why the use of phygital formats is now widely anchored in the daily practices of events organisation. The first reason being concerns over environmental responsibility. *"The core trend amongst all professionals is a commitment to reducing their carbon footprint as quickly as possible. Thanks to digital technology, travelling to*

an event or business meeting is a source of CO2 emissions that is now easily avoidable," explains Pierre-Edouard Borderie, Head of Euronext Corporate Services. "Instead of travelling several times a year to various international locations, a manager can limit these events and instead choose to spread their important messages more widely online."

In addition to combatting environmental issues, the opportunity to increase audience size has been another unforeseen advantage. *"For many professionals, digital technology has proved to be a significant advantage in reaching a wider audience. For example, reaching those who didn't previously travel to physical events, or those who were unable to do so because of distance, cost, diary constraints or other reasons,"* highlights the head of Euronext's Corporate Services. *"During the pandemic, an association specialised in the field of CSR was forced to completely reorganise its annual gathering due to Covid restrictions. However, they were left pleasantly surprised when they managed to gather a total of 356 virtual and physical participants. This was an audience size that they had never managed to achieve before."*

How digital flexibility benefits the events industry

The pressing need to combine digital and physical event formats has reinforced the raison d'être of Euronext Group's Corporate Services. *Company Webcast*, dedicated to the capturing and webcasting of events, is the newest addition to its portfolio. Already present in the market well before the COVID-19 crisis and the eco-friendly trend, Company Webcast is convinced that it can help lead the events industry into a new era.

The team from Company Webcast defends the use of technology as an ultimately cheap and resourceful tool. *"Not only are we able to customise the platform to the characteristics of each specific event, but we can also offer personalised support by guiding first-time webcasters through their*

experience, as well as adapting to the different requests of events agencies and organisations' translation needs, for example," explains Pierre-Edouard Borderie. "Finally, we are able to support the organisers in achieving their greatest ambitions. We have built our platform so that our technology does not impose any limit on the creativity of event organisers"

In addition, the rapid acceleration in the development of digital events has led specialists in capture and transmission to adopt a more innovative vision. *"The fact that everyone is trying to make themselves stand out forces us to be inventive, to let ourselves be guided by the changes in the sector in order to make webinars and virtual meetings even more interactive,"* admits Pierre-Edouard Borderie.

Participation and interactivity: the two key ingredients for online events

The platform offered by Company Webcast allows up to 100,000 simultaneous connections, reaching a very wide and connected audience from all over the world.

However, there is still the challenge of capturing and maintaining the attention of those sat behind the screen. In this respect, there are an ever-growing number of possibilities. *"For example, one of our previous clients, an organisation specialised in the field of CSR, was delighted to be able to offer online participants the opportunity to ask questions,"* says Pierre-Edouard Borderie. *"They were also pleased with our video sequencing which allowed them to select and share the best extracts with their networks after the event, thus increasing its impact as time went on."* Company Webcast can also integrate live polls during events to obtain active participation from virtual attendees.

"We also currently offer the possibility to adapt events to make them

more environmentally friendly, allowing managers to actively reduce their carbon footprint while still increasing their influence. With the overall aim of increasing audience participation during and after the event, we are particularly invested in and motivated by innovation." And if there was ever an argument in favour of the digitalisation or phygitalisation of events, the presence of a replay button is an important one. Being able to rewatch an event allows it to resonate for longer and perhaps make an even bigger impression.

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