## Editorial: Emerging Technologies in Events Special Issue

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The event landscape has rapidly evolved amidst the push toward creating more immersive and memorable experiences, especially so within a brand- and market-proliferated landscape. Event organizers, attendees, and other external stakeholders can now scrutinize more options to host events that generate competitive advantages and deliver better returns on investment (in the form of time, money, resources, etc).

This backdrop has created the impetus to explore the role of emerging technologies as a vehicle for events. Almost overnight, the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated the transition of physical, in-person events into virtual-only interactions, and then hybrid (combination of inperson, and online) activities. This crisis became an opportunity not only for organizers and technology developers to advance digital transformations, but also forced stakeholders and attendees into acceptance of the more innovative evolutions across the events industry. The proliferation of emerging technologies have continued since the pandemic as the events industry is confronted by a range of factors - a shortfall of skilled labour, calls for greater inclusivity, and government and industry support to embrace digital competencies.

The current landscape, therefore, justifies the need for this special issue on emerging technologies in events - showcasing current trends, and elucidating nuanced insights into the concepts, enablers, and barriers to adopting emerging technologies. This special issue features four papers on topics like digital payments, the Metaverse, livestreaming, and technology adoption in general. The following papers were also written by scholars at different points of their research careers and various geographical regions, indicating the global importance of emerging technologies in events.

First, Wang and Chan (2025) examined the *willingness to pay effect* of digital payments using the Innsbruck Christmas market as the context for their investigation. The authors found that participants were more likely to adopt digital payments based on their familiarity with the event, and the benefit of expediting transactions using such forms of payment compared to cash. This adds to the understanding of how emerging technologies such as digital payment modes can support B2C operations and potentially enhance willingness to pay through loyalty schemes e.g. incentives for using a given payment platform.

An, Hur, Lee, and Kim (2025) then explored the impact of the Metaverse on the MICE industry through industry attitudes in South Korea. The authors identified that whilst the Metaverse has merits for the MICE industry, its application may not be as widespread due to high costs and attendees' propensity to gravitate towards human-to-human networking and engagement. Notwithstanding these limitations, Metaverse can play a supportive role in enhancing user entertainment and memorable outcomes for MICE events.

The final two papers were conducted using systematic literature reviews - Khan, Sujood, Rehman, Kareem, and Al Rousan (2025) on livestreaming, and Sjukriana, Hanafiah, Asyraff, and Kusumah (2025) on event technology adoption. Khan et al. (2025) reviewed 139 articles on livestreaming at events and asserted that its growth may be attributed to technological advancements on social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, which allowed organizers and attendees the opportunity to create personalized content to enhance interactions and potential monetization opportunities. Their research culminated in a conceptual framework to showcase the antecedents and outcomes of livestreaming at events, providing avenues for future studies.

Sjukrjana et al. (2025) analyzed 33 articles that probed event technology adoption within the broader scope of tourism and hospitality, ascertaining that emerging tools such as Virtual Reality (VR), Artificial Intelligence (AI), and mobile apps were preferred due to their ability to enrich attendee experiences and foster engagement. Yet, concerns in areas such as privacy, cost and logistical requirements may prove stumbling blocks for event organizers, especially those that operate on a small to medium scale, as well as others targeting not-for-profit entities.

All the same, these four papers within the special issue provide interesting and valuable insights to foster future work in the space of emerging technologies within events. We hope that these articles present a platform to build a stream of research for interdisciplinary work, cross-cultural collaborations, and support of the journal with papers in the technological realm.