

Industry Gathers to Create Reporting Standards for Digital Trade Shows and Events (RSDE)

Members from more than 15 organizations from the event industry, including trade show organizers, exhibitors, and digital platforms, and under the leadership of global assurance provider BPA Worldwide, have been working together for the past six months to bring consistency and trust to the data being reported by developing standards and a common language for digital event reporting. The project is called **BPA Reporting Standards for Digital Events (RSDE)**.

The event industry's recent focus on digital brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic uncovered a new challenge: a lack of measurement standards for digital events. To tackle this challenge, a diverse body of industry experts was assembled from around the world. The working group contends that consistent standards provide a stable – but continually evolving – foundation enabling the entire exhibition industry to further develop and thrive.

As [announced on July 8th](#), the first phase of this initiative was recommended amendments to the [Auditing Rules for the Statistics of UFI Approved Events](#) to include digital metrics and audit protocol. The recommendations were accepted. As a result, organizers pursuing UFI “approved event” status can include attendees and exhibitors to digital and hybrid events such that digital event metrics are on par with physical event metrics.

One of the results of the working group – phase two of the initiative – was the creation of standards for the digital event marketplace that will be used as criteria for conformance testing to help ensure data

reported from digital event platforms are accurate, reliable, and comparable. A glossary of terms has been created, as have data formats and tables for reporting.

According to Glenn Hansen, BPA's President and CEO, “With hundreds of digital platforms and the reemergence of the industry in a new era, there is a tremendous need to develop industry standards for taxonomy and data formats for digital events similar to what exists for physical events. We are following in the footsteps of the Internet Advertising Bureau (IAB), which successfully set the standards for the digital advertising industry during its infancy. And, in doing so, helped stabilize and empower the media and marketing industries to thrive during a time of disruptive change.”

Ultimately, these standards will serve as a guide for digital platforms to adopt to help organizers accurately and efficiently report event metrics and provide exhibitors with the information they need (and have been eagerly awaiting) to understand and create success through digital events.



Industry Gathers to Create Reporting Standards for Digital Trade Shows and Events (RSDE) — Continued

The value of this group's efforts to the events industry overall is threefold:

- Remove ambiguity and confusion by developing a glossary of terms defining the real-world activities the metrics are supposed to measure or reflect;
- Simplify comparison from platform to platform and event to event by creating a uniform structure for data capture that establishes accurate and reliable reporting standards;
- Facilitate productive collaboration and empower all parties to make smart decisions within the digital events environment by setting a reporting standard that is understandable for all stakeholders.

“As an event organizer, Questex is fully behind the initiative to create standards that will hold platforms accountable so we can bring a new level of confidence in the data to all parties involved: organizers, sponsors, exhibitors and attendees alike,” noted Rhonda Wunderlin, SVP, Performance Marketing for Questex, and a member of the working group.



Arjun Chakravarti, Managing Partner, COGKNITION Analytics and member of CEIR's Research Council added, “Our clients tell us that while one of the main benefits of digital events is the opportunity to gain a complete view of how people engage with their event, actual data reported by digital event platforms is often incomplete, inconsistent, or inaccurate.”

The working group is now engaged in phase three of the initiative – establishing a protocol to certify digital event platforms' (DEPs) compliance with the standard. Having a certification program in place will enable DEPs to assure organizers and exhibitors the data outputs have been independently third-party validated to conform and are accurate. The result will be visitor and exhibitor metrics pre-validated by BPA to satisfy audit requirements. This will offer DEPs a differentiator in the events marketplace.

Is your digital event platform compliant with the standards?

To find out and to learn more about RSDE's work, contact **Glenn Hansen**
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