RSDE
Reporting Standards for Digital Events

EXHIBITOR'S GUIDE

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What is RSDE

RSDE is the Reporting Standards for Digital Events, a set of data tables and glossary terms that bring consistency to what's being reported to you regarding your digital events.

The goal of RSDE is to help you get the information you need to best understand and evaluate the impact of the digital events you participate in. Essentially, RSDE serves as a guide for digital event platforms (DEPs) so they can prepare and provide relevant and consistently defined data to your digital event organizers, so they can in turn be more helpful to you as you strive for continuous improvement when exhibiting at or sponsoring events online.

RSDE was created by influential representatives from more than 15 organizations across the events industry, representing exhibitors like you, trade show organizers, data analysts, and digital platforms, all under the leadership of BPA Worldwide (a not-for-profit membership organization, representing the auditors' perspective).

The RSDE Standard...

- Removes ambiguity and confusion by creating an extensive glossary of relevant terms – RSDE defines the real-world activities that digital events metrics are supposed to measure/reflect!

- Simplifies comparisons from platform to platform and event to event by capturing data in a uniform way – RSDE ensures the data you receive from each digital event is accurate and reliable!

- Facilitates productive collaboration between exhibitors, organizers, and DEPs (digital event platforms), so everyone can make smarter decisions related to digital events – RSDE makes digital event reporting easy to understand for all stakeholders!

- Empowers DEPs to provide relevant metrics that have been "pre-validated" to satisfy independent audit requirements – RSDE allows DEPs to differentiate themselves by proving their data is valid!

Components of RSDE

- A Glossary of Terms *(see Appendix 1)*

- Seventeen tables of data format to provide the user of the data with what they generally need *(see Appendix 2)*

- Schematic of the relational structure of the various participant types at a digital event *(see Appendix 3)*

- BPA offers all exhibitors its BPA iCompli Privacy & Data Protection independent certification service to help you assess your organization's California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) status, identify and remediate gaps, and communicate compliance with customers, partners and vendors.

How RSDE Helps Exhibitors

Looking for a better way to determine which digital events could be a good fit for your company?

Wish there was an easier way to understand what you actually accomplished (or didn't accomplish) at each digital event, especially in comparison to others you've participated in before?

If your digital events are compliant with RSDE (in other words, if they utilize a certified digital event platform), the organizers will be able to provide you with audited attendance and exhibiting data so you can make smarter decisions about your future participation.

That means the data you receive will be exactly what it's supposed to be.

There won't be any more confusion over how many professionals attended the event or how long they watched a session you hosted or which of your appointments actually occurred. Instead, you'll be able to tell which digital events have the highest composition of decision makers for your product category, exactly how many leads you've generated compared to the total event attendance, and other important facts too... if you can't, your event isn't compliant with RSDE.

And, here's the best part: you don't have to pay extra for this more helpful data. If your show is certified as RSDE compliant, all of the data you receive will be too (check with your organizer to confirm their status today)!

How RSDE Works

- RSDE is managed and promoted by BPA Worldwide and members of the working group.

- Qualified DEPs are certified as "RSDE compliant" by BPA after they complete the auditing process and pay an appropriate fee.

- All RSDE tools are available and accessible free of charge.

Wondering how RSDE came to be and what value it brings to the events industry? The need for greater trust and transparency within the digital events marketplace is one of the biggest reasons RSDE was created. Watch **this video** to learn more!

Compliance with RSDE

An event report is compliant under RSDE if:

- All reported data uses the field name and data format specified in RSDE where the activity measured is substantially the same.

- All reported data complies with the specified standard for measuring that metric (example: a reported "attendee" should satisfy the conditions for attendance of a participant) as specified in the data table and glossary.

- Any function or activity offered within the event which is described by a "required" metric in RSDE is reported as specified. If an event does not offer some content (e.g. video sessions or engagement with attendees) the corresponding reports can be omitted.

- "Optional" fields and tables may be omitted even if the activities described are supported by the event. Stakeholders should agree in advance on which optional metrics will be provided.

- "Recommended" fields and tables are not required under the standard but are considered especially valuable to some stakeholders and are therefore highlighted for consideration in specifying terms and conditions for event participation and reporting.

How to Use RSDE

As an exhibitor, your best first step to using RSDE is confirming that your digital events are "RSDE certified." If they aren't, you won't have access to RSDE-compliant data, but there are a couple of other ways you can use RSDE.

For example:

- Familiarize yourself with the RSDE glossary (Appendix 1) and start using these terms correctly. Having a common language* (for yourself, your team, your partners, and your event organizers) will help you avoid confusion, whether you're requesting/reviewing relevant data from a previous event or early in the planning stages for future events.

- Note the digital events data points that are the most important to you. In the RSDE Data Tables (Appendix 2), you'll notice that some data points are "required" and others are "optional" – referencing these categories as a starting point, find out what data you can expect from your organizer and don't be afraid to ask for what you need.

- After a few digital events, compile the most relevant data into an overarching report of your own. Use your report to compare the specific results you achieved at each event (along with the events themselves) to one another. If your events are RSDE certified, each event will provide the same data points, so it will be easier to identify opportunities for improvement and justify your decisions about future digital event-related investments.

Again, clear communication with your event organizer is important. If you aren't the person who communicates with your event organizers most often, please share this guide with your teammate so they can bring up RSDE in their conversations on your behalf.

* Note: The RSDE Data Tables were created for people who analyze data professionally, so if that format seems a bit confusing a first, don't worry…
The schematic shown in Appendix 3 can help you visualize some of the participant types referenced in those tables and the glossary (Appendix 1) offers a more "user friendly" definition for every single data point for your convenience.

As you review the reports you receive from your show management, you (or your team members) may have questions about some of the RSDE Data Table fields. Please see below for some additional information or contact Glenn Hansen (ghansen@bpaww.com) to learn more.

Table #2 – Session Summary

Question – *How are digital events supposed to measure the duration of sessions? Do the RSDE reports show start and end times based on the "scheduled" (e.g. when the page becomes available or the stream begins) or "actual" (e.g. when the content is actually presented) start and end times?*

Answer – In order to provide accurate attendance information to presenters and determine the amount of continuing education credit earned in each session, RSDE allows the organizer to declare the official start and end time (and RSDE allows organizers to adjust these times as needed, too; for example – when a session is running late).

In other words: even if a user logs in early to wait for the speaker to begin and keeps the page open after they have finished their presentation, the maximum session time counted in compliance with RSDE won't be any longer than the actual session duration.

Table #3 – Company Registration Data

Question – *Are there any requirements for the way in which company names are listed in RSDE reports?*

Answer – Whenever multiple team members from the same company register for a digital event, RSDE recommends that the same standardized company name be listed for each one (instead of a variation, like an acronym for one employee vs. spelling out a full name for another employee).

However, the process for selecting the company name can vary depending on the organizer's preference and type of user. For exhibitors and sponsors, RSDE requires all users to be identified with the company name listed on the exhibit/sponsorship contract; however, there may be occasions when your organizer would prefer to select the company names or IDs that match a third-party source, like DUNS or ZoomInfo. As such, RSDE requires a field marked "Source ID" to explain where the company name (or the "company ID" in the case of "exhibitor_sponsor_company_ID") came from.

Table #3 – Company Registration Data

Question – *What requirements does RSDE have for defining exhibitor and sponsor company names?*

Answer – As above, RSDE requires all exhibitor and sponsor company names match the names listed in their contracts. This way, there won't be any confusion or mismatch between the names provided by each company representative and the company itself. For example, in the case when the individuals representing an exhibitor or sponsor are responsible for registering themselves.

Table #3 – Company Registration Data

Question – *Does RSDE require organizers to list each company's physical (postal) address?*

Answer – No. Although organizers may wish to utilize physical addresses for billing or marketing purposes, RSDE only requires email addresses (not physical addresses) to be collected during an exhibitor or sponsor's digital event registration, in part because physical addresses are already collected during the contracting phase and in part because a user's physical address isn't needed in the digital environment.

Table #4 – Participant Registration Data

Question – *Are digital and in-person attendees counted together or separately? Is a user ever counted twice, as a trick to make the attendance numbers seem higher?*

Answer – To provide you (as well as other interested parties) with accurate attendee numbers, RSDE requires that each user is only counted as one "visitor," regardless of the number of times they "visit" the digital event. This means your organizer must "de-dupe" (or remove any duplicates within) their attendee lists before reporting their official attendee numbers. Note: a de-dupe across platforms (physical vs. digital) must be specifically requested by the exhibitor.

Furthermore, UFI (a global association of trade show organizers and fairground owners) has clear requirements for reporting attendance, which RSDE supports. Here's what their document says:

A "visitor" is a person attending a digital or physical exhibition. The visitor is counted only once for the entire duration of the fair, regardless of the number of visits.

When a visitor attends both a digital and physical event, counts should be provided as follows (separately):

- Those unique visitors who attend only the digital event
- Those unique visitors who attend only the physical event
- If available, the unique visitors who attend both the digital and physical event, i.e. an unduplicated count of both sets of visitors (net visitor number).

Table #6 – Event Attendance by Day

Question – *How long is a digital event allowed to last? Can RSDE accommodate long-running events and 365-day communities, too?*

Answer – RSDE is agnostic to the length of an event, so the reports for the digital events you participate in (of any length!) can be compliant with RSDE.

That said, UFI is stricter in their requirements for any digital event seeking "approved event" status. In those cases, UFI says that an event cannot exceed three weeks. So, while an event or a community can be active for longer than three weeks and that data can be utilized in the reports you receive from your organizer to show what happened in conjunction with the event, any data collected beyond the three-week period cannot be used in the reports they'll submit to obtain UFI "approved event" status.

As a result, you may wish to confirm which set of dates are included in any reports your organizer provides to you when you receive them.

Table #8 – Session Participation Table

Question – *Within this data table, how is "time in session" tracked?*

Answer – As above, the time an attendee is "in" a session cannot exceed the actual duration of that session, so this term must be tracked/reported upon accordingly.

Table #10 – Individual Participation Table

Question – *Will the RSDE report show a separate "visit" for each time a user "downloads" one of our resources?*

Answer – Within one "visit" several digital assets can be offered. Every asset that is clicked to be viewed or downloaded will be recorded and can be reported. If the "visitor" exits and returns later, a second "visit" is logged, and any assets clicked will be recorded and reported. Therefore, one "visit" can generate multiple asset clicks or singular visits can generate singular asset clicks regardless if it is the visitor's first visit or a repeat visit.

- **David Adler**, Chairman at BizBash and SISO Board Member

- **Melissa Ashley**, Senior Advisor, Collingwood Advisory

- **Dax Callner**, Strategy Director at Smyle

- **Arjun Chakravarti**, Managing Director at Cogknition and CEIR Research Council Member

- **Karen Cohen**, Events Manager at UFI

- **Scott Craighead**, CEM, Vice President of Exhibitions & Events at IAEE

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- **Brian Scott**, CEO at ClearTone Consulting and IAEE & CEIR Board Member

- **Adrienne Whitestone**, Sr. Mgr, CES Operations, Attendee, and Show Services at Consumer Technology Association, Producer of CES

- **Rhonda Wunderlin**, SVP, Performance Marketing at Questex

- **Andrey Zhukovsky**, CEO at RussCom IT Systems and Vice-President of the Russian Union of Exhibitions and Fairs

Appendix 1 − **Glossary of Terms**

The RSDE Standard includes a glossary of commonly used terms. The working group believes it is important that the industry use a standardized taxonomy of terms and have a single destination to access that information.

The Glossary of Terms have been sorted by category separate from alphabetically and includes links to the appropriate data table where a particular term(s) has been referenced.

The RSDE glossary has been shared with the Events Industry Council (EIC) for review and inclusion in the Accepted Practice Exchange (APEX) glossary of industry terms.

Download the Glossary of Terms **HERE**

Appendix 2 − **RSDE Data Tables**
Download **HERE**

Appendix 3 − **Schematic: Relational Structure of the Participant Types at a Digital Event**
Download **HERE**

Contact Us

For more information on RSDE, contact:

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RSDE: Empowering You to Win in the Digital Space

Reporting Standards

+ **Consistent Data**

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Industry Trust

RSDE TERM	DEFINITION	RSDE DATA TABLE CROSS REFERENCE
Accompanying person[1&3]	Guest present with a **visitor** or **delegate** during an event. Such persons are more likely to be tracked at physical events where an entry badge is required. Digital platforms may not be capturing accompanying person information of those sharing screens or otherwise jointly viewing an event.	
Activation[3]	The action of making something active or operative; starting something. Typically, this is in regard to sponsor content and interaction. The data set is similar to click data.	5 Event Attendance Report'!B12 9 Company Engagement'!B8 12 Consolid Ind Exhibit Engag'!B12 12 Consolid Ind Exhibit Engag'!B32
Admission category[1]	Criteria defining the type of **attendee** permitted to enter the **exhibition** by the **organizer**.	4 Participant Reg Data'!B19 5 Event Attendance Report'!B12
Advertisement[2]	A commercial message targeted to an advertiser's customer or prospect. (See **VIEW**) For web advertising, an ad is almost always a banner, graphic image, or set of animated images (in an animated gif) of a designated pixel size and byte size limit. An ad or set of ads for a campaign is often referred to as the creative. Banners and other special advertising that include an interactive or visual element beyond the usual are known as rich media.	9 Company Engagement'!B13
Advertisement Click[2]	An interaction between a website visitor and the browser in which the website visitor uses a device, such as a mouse, to move the cursor (or pointer) to an active *advertising* area of the screen and then deliberately interacts with that area by clicking a button on their device, triggering an event. In the case of touch-screen devices, the user clicks by touching the active *advertising* area with their finger or a stylus. According to the ad industry recommended guidelines, a click is when a visitor interacts with an advertisement. This does not mean simply interacting with a rich media ad, but actually clicking on it so that the visitor is headed toward the advertiser's destination. (it also does not mean that the visitor actually waits to fully arrive at the destination, but just that the visitor started going there.) See Sponsorship Activations	9 Company Engagement'!B8 10 Individual Participation '!B15 16 Action Log'!B8 12 Consolid Ind Exhibit Engag'!B12

Glossary of Terms

Download the Glossary of Terms **HERE**

Glossary Grouped

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