

Welcome to the Event Tech Podcast, where we explore the ever evolving world of event technology every week. This show is brought to by Endless Events, the event AV company that doesn't suck. Now, let's talk tech.

Brandt Krueger:

Hell everybody, and welcome to the Event Tech Podcast. I'm Brandt Krueger of Event Technology Consulting, Will Curran is ... he's on location, so he's not able to join us today, but he is actually listening in and going to be feeding us questions through the chat. He's just not able to join us live today. But I am being joined live by the incomparable Adam Perry, from Event Industry News and Event Tech Live. By the way, for those of you ... I used an adjective there, incomparable, the adjective of the day via Will is addictive. So, apparently I am the addictive Brandt Krueger from Event Technology Consulting. Got to keep that gag going so long as possible.

Brandt Krueger:

But Adam, for those of you who don't know Adam, he is our Event Tech brother from another mother, over across the pond in the UK who has been absolutely on ... lighting up the content over there with Event Industry News regarding Invent Technology. And then of course created Event Tech Live and the Event Tech Awards. He's a technology evangelist, and really, if you haven't heard of Event Tech Live, it's like the only exhibition and conference show dedicated exclusively to event technology.

Brandt Krueger:

So Adam, thanks so much for joining us.

Adam Perry:

No, thank you very much for having me, and I must say that's probably the best introduction I've ever had, ever, anywhere. I think I actually might transcribe some of that and put that back into my bio with a quote from Brandt Krueger.

Brandt Krueger:

Well, the good news is, and we say this at a close of every show, the good news is that Endless actually runs the transcriptions of these shows, so you'll be able to actually cut and paste that intro right out of those transcriptions.

Adam Perry:

Literally just copy and paste it, yeah.

Brandt Krueger:

Exactly, exactly. Well, you know, and yeah, I'm fanboying you a little bit here, because Adam, I've been a fan of your work with Event Industry News going back several years now, and I remember reaching out a long time ago and just saying, "Hey man, you guys are doing great work over there", and I wish we had a little bit more of what you were doing over here in the US.

Because especially early on, you were getting really wonky with the actually tech specs of shows, so it was like hey, we had this many of this kind of light, and this many of this kind of sound system and all that stuff. So, I was totally geeking out on that pretty early on.

Brandt Krueger:

And it feels like you guys have pivoted a little bit more general event industry news, over the course of the years. Is that accurate?

Adam Perry:

Yeah, I'd say so. When we launched Event Industry News, we tried to take a broad look at the events' industry, and be more of a general news publication for it. And you know, you were right, we were doing some of the very tech heavy, especially on the kind of concert touring side of things. And we still get that information today, and for also, it's super interesting to see the kind of spec and build, and what goes into some of these fantastic shows that we see on TV and in real life. However, unfortunately I think it was possibly a little too far for the vast majority of our readers. And to be fair, here in the UK, we do have some great publications.

Adam Perry:

One in particular is Total Production International, and they do a fantastic job at actually filling the publication and the website full of that stuff. So, we decided to let the guys that know how to do that best, to that, and kind of focus more on obviously what we could see our readers engaging with and do that. So, unfortunately we don't carry as much of that anymore, but yeah, it was some of the good stuff back in the early days.

Brandt Krueger:

I suppose I'll forgive you for that. But-

Adam Perry:

Yeah.

Brandt Krueger:

... it's never too geeky for me, which is why we created this podcast-

Adam Perry:

I'll just send you the press releases and stuff like that from now on.

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah, there you go. There you go. So, that's why we created this show, so we could get a little bit nerdier, get a little bit deeper dive into the event tech as opposed to the event icons which is our a little more broader podcast as well. But now that I'm done fanboying, we can actually talk about what we wanted to talk about today. We brought you on, not to talk about Event Industry News, but to actually talk about ... because you've been speaking more and more in the industry, about event tech on a budget, and that's something always such an important topic of

discussion whenever we're talking about AV and technology. Because people are like, "Okay, that's great." They're seeing these wonderful articles in some of the industry mags about the things that you can do with millions and millions of dollars or pounds, and okay, what can we do when we don't have that kind of money, is such an important topic.

Brandt Krueger:

So, I want to just kind of start turning it over to you and say, "All right, so what are the some of the great things that you're seeing out there, as far as event technology on a budget?" And I know you've got quite a bit of categories, so light it up.

Adam Perry:

Yeah, so you're right. I think there's a big misconception in the sector, that technology means huge amounts of budget. And I speak a number of events in the UK and abroad, who, when engaging with the audience, the profile of that audience is not necessarily the huge corporate or the big brand, or even the substantially sized event organizer that has the 10, 20, 30, 50K, 100K plus to invest in a suite of technologies across their business or their events.

Adam Perry:

And I wanted to portray, or at least provide the knowledge that there are so many technologies out there that can either be used for free, and to try and get you started and to test the water, or for very kind of low ... sorry, low budget that has to be put into actually make that achievable. And you know, that can be things like Q&A software. So, there are some great platforms out there like [Glisser 00:06:03], and [B-Vox 00:06:04], and Slido. Slido, for example, you can run an event, absolutely free, and I did this just last week, an event here in the UK that I was speaking at, where the organizer didn't have a Q&A software, but I wanted to use that to engage with the audience.

Adam Perry:

And it didn't cost me a penny. I think even kind of on the top end, if you want to unlock some of the brand new features, and the sponsorship stuff, which obviously for an event organizer, can mean revenue. I think you're only talking in the region of like 550, 600 UK pounds in order for you to access those features and ultimately drive revenue for your business. We talk quite a lot about apps in our industry, don't we? And the overriding cost of apps. But Guidebook actually has a really good setup where they do a pay period adoption, so it's around four pounds in British money, per activation. So, if you have an audience and you're not quite sure what their reaction's going to be to introducing an event app, or whether the adoption levels are going to be there, then it really mitigates the risk of investing two, five, 10K in developing, delivering, publicizing, marketing, and trying to get that adoption.

Adam Perry:

And okay, if it doesn't work, that's not the best outcome. But at least it's not kind of killed your budget so much in terms of actually that early investment before you know kind of the outcome.

Brandt Krueger:

No, yeah. I'm jumping in here because you bring up a fantastic point, and I want to make sure that we lay it down much more dramatically, as it were. That is, and something I talk about all the time as well, that there really is great technology at every budget level. And people do get a little bit put off by some of the costs. And so, especially when we're talking about the actual mobile app for your event, there's great providers at every single budget level. And like you said, it's a fantastic way to dip your toe in the water, just to see how it's going to work, and how it's going to go. So, you don't have to dive in with both feet, you don't have to dive in with a ton of money.

Brandt Krueger:

So, yeah. So, let's ... you mentioned ... Let's zoom in a little bit on some of these categories so we give each one of them their due.

Adam Perry:

Okay.

Brandt Krueger:

So, let's focus for a minute on some of that audience engagement technology. You mentioned Slido. I feel like we're going to have to do a dedicated Slido episode, because it keeps coming up over, and over, and over again. It's just one of those things. I see it written about all the time in articles. Tell us a little bit about that platform, and maybe some of the other ones that you see as being great budget options in the area of audience engagement.

Adam Perry:

Yeah, sure. So, do you know what? There are quite a few. So, other brands are available other than Slido. And events at Live actually, we use five companies to do audience Q&A and interaction on the stages that we have at the show. The reason we do that is actually more so to demonstrate to the audiences that there are more than one option out there, and to demo them live. And also to give back a little bit to the companies that supported us, and expose their brand in a live setting.

Adam Perry:

So, whether it's Slido or Glisser, B-Vox, a new one that's kind of coming into the market is Pigeonhole. That's a really interesting one from the Irapac region. But you know, the value that we get out of Slido is that audience engagement moderator tools in order for them to understand what the audience is wanting to actually get out of a speaker, or get out of a panel and get their questions answered, rather than just carrying on with the conversation or the moderator just asking blank questions to a speaker.

Adam Perry:

Going back to quite on in the earlier days, we did a fantastic session with Julius Solaris of Event Manager Blog, where he came to me and we were in discussions about him doing something at

Event Tech Live, but he was like, "I don't want to do the same old presentation." We kind of agreed together that actually, what we would do is a blank Q&A session, no presentation. So, for Julius, that's quite a leap of faith to come to an event like ours, get up on stage with nothing prepared, and then fully rely on the audience engaging with him through Q&A software, and obviously traditional methods in order to create a session. And through the Q&A software that we had there, that was a fantastic session.

Adam Perry:

And I think afterwards, he said to me, one of the most engaging sessions he's done because he felt that the audience got exactly what they want which was asking him about his background, his opinions, what the future of event technology and things like that was. So, these ... for me, these Q&A systems, there should be no reason, if you have speakers, that you don't use them. You know, they range in budgets, they range in features, but they are such powerful tools, not only to engage the audience but to get the data out of the backend of it as well. And continue the conversation afterwards.

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah. I think it can't be under ... The right word is escaping me, I haven't had enough coffee yet, and it's late for you. So, we're lucky that we can put two sentences together coherently. It can't be understated, we'll put it that way, that the power of some of this audience engagement technology, that when you go beyond the two microphones on stands, in the aisles, and opening that up, and really being open to the possibilities that that can give, regarding frank and open conversation. I've seen some C level that's able to handle that very well, and I've seen others that have handled it not so well.

Brandt Krueger:

But the ones that handle it well, almost find it addictive. That instant feedback, that instant ability to get questions out of people's heads and up to the stage can really be a thrilling and exciting part. So, if you've been holding off on using that kind of technology, using some of these systems that Adam's recommending, it would be a really fantastic way to add that next level of engagement and interactivity in your event.

Adam Perry:

Yeah. I'd just add to that one final point, if you are somebody who, as an event organizer, are very much mindful of inclusivity, and that means making your event accessible to everybody and everybody. That doesn't necessarily just mean with disabilities and things like that. There are lots of people that would not feel, for a number of different reasons, confident in sticking their hand up, taking hold of a microphone and asking a question in a live audience. So, these tools can really include those types of people and empower them to be involved and part of the event.

Brandt Krueger:

So, let's move on to the next kind of area as we're thinking about the various areas of event technology and event. What have you got maybe on the line of registration? So, I know there's some really kind of juggernaut free ticketing platforms out there. What have we got for free and low budget registration systems?

Adam Perry:

Okay, so one company that I think really stands out for me in that sense is Boom Set. Registration isn't overly complicated. In fact, I've seen some people do it quite well on things like just a Google Doc, you know? Essentially that's what a registration form is. It's taking specific information to allow that person to access the event, right? Email address, name, dietary requirements, that kind of stuff. But I think the thing that you need to be mindful of, and this is where technology can help is that element of when people arrive on site, right? That check-in process, the speed at which they check in, how they're greeted, how their information is processed.

Adam Perry:

And especially around let's say things like VIPs and speakers in terms of getting the information to your team that those people have arrived so they can take care of them on site. And for me, one of the really most cost effective options out there is ... well, there's two. There's kind of like social tables in Boom Set, who both do really cost effective on site check-in, self service check-in systems, that Boom Set have just released out the selfie capture and facial recognition elements. They integrate with things like Eventbrite. They can deal with the walk-in registrations, they can have signature collections, all this kind of stuff.

Adam Perry:

And we've actually used them in the past for our rewards program, to do all the RSVPs and the guest check-ins, and all that kind of stuff. And it gives us a live fire roll call as well, of who's on site. And where it can be really interesting, and I think they both do this is that real time reporting on who's on site. So, if you're an event which has multiple entrances, and different ways that those visitors can come in, then just using those systems on an iPad or something like that, you can have visibility on a number of attendees and where people are coming in from, and the most popular. So, if you need to back that particular up with more staff and stuff like that, you can get that real time reporting.

Adam Perry:

So, I think Boom Set's in a region of around \$300 to get started. So, real powerful tools to kind of bolster whatever registration you already have in place.

Brandt Krueger:

And that's what's so funny, and it's one of the things that's made probably registration the most difficult area for companies to invent in, is because they're fighting the free, or basically free when it comes to Google Docs, or even an Excel, or something along those lines. But what you get for such a minimal investment, is a tremendous amount of tools and ease of use, and things

like that, that no spreadsheet can possibly have. So, while I totally understand people's reluctance to try and move into these systems, you just kind of have to take the leap and understand that you're going to get so much more out of it for a relatively minimal investment.

Adam Perry:

Yeah, do you know one of the interesting conversations, Brandt, that I keep having with people in the industry, especially registration companies, is I ask them this question, "Do you think we'll ever see a time when the registration data and information moves to the power of the organizer?" Imagine that one event budge that gets you access into any event in the world, right? Imagine just that for a second, just you never have to register for an event again in the sense of you just use ... I forgot, remind me what the global entry, or something like that in America, it's called? Isn't it?

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah, yeah.

Adam Perry:

Yeah? So, imagine a system which people can register for that gets them that super quick, super clever access to any event. And nobody likes to fill out a registration, a form out, let's be honest about it. But wouldn't that be cool where the person actually owns their own data and decides what's passed to the event organizer. Maybe they're enumerated in some way, or re-compensated in some way at the event with VIP perks, or stuff like that, if they give that extra bit of information that the organizer kind of wants to sell to sponsors and stuff like that. But for me, there's no reason why registering for an event shouldn't be like a one click process.

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah. I mean, we can dream. And I think at some point we're gonna have to deal with this idea of online identity, and I know there's a few ... well, there's a lot of people trying to attack it from different angles. But one of the ... we could go down a serious rabbit hole here. I'm going to try and resist the urge. But you know, hey, that's what this show is for, right?

Adam Perry:

Yeah, sure.

Brandt Krueger:

So, I'll throw out a quick technology that's a free technology that anyone can implement, called SQURL, S-Q-U-R-L. I forget what it stands for, but basically they're trying to deal with this idea of online authentication and identity, in a way that's safe and secure. And the guy that's behind it is a security researcher that I trust, whose been around forever. And so, we might get there, Adam. We might get there to where that one click registration fill can happen, and then like you say, you can add in your customization as needed.

Adam Perry:

Well, we have like Chrome, and Safari and things like that. But have the pre population of your banking information, and that kind of stuff now. So, the tech's kind of there. We just need to bridge the gap between the browser or whatever online system you have. And maybe there's another platform like the sign on with LinkedIn, or sign on with Facebook. Maybe there's somebody out there that can do the event sign on and boom, off you go. I don't know.

Brandt Krueger:

Well, and it sounds like Apple wants to get in that space now, too.

Adam Perry:

Yeah, possibly. Interesting.

Brandt Krueger:

That's going to be interesting to watch.

Adam Perry:

Yeah.

Brandt Krueger:

All right, anything else on the registration side before we move on?

Adam Perry:

The only thing I would add to that is whoever's doing registration, especially in the trade show exhibition space, or the space where you have sponsors, exhibitors at your event, and you are trying to get visitors and exhibitors to engage as much as possible, so that flow of lead capture and those leads generated for your exhibitors. I would really advise looking into systems like Poken, which is owned by GES Visit. Conduko there's another one in the UK here called Yellow Box. Anything where the visitor badge that you give to your visitors is NFC enabled, and then there's like a little solution on the exhibitor's stand, or sponsor walls and things like that.

Adam Perry:

We saw a huge uplift in the transfer of leads between visitors and exhibitors. It's very much in the power of the visitor. But for example, just using that one system last year, we generated 12 000 leads for 125 exhibitors. So, it's really kind of smoothed out the friction of lead generation and content curation across the show, and ultimately the exhibitors get more out of it, the visitors get a little bit more of a less awkward way of kind of giving their information to an exhibitor, they're getting something back. So, that's the only thing I would advise, anybody who's got that situation is looking to that technology because it's super powerful and you get all those stats back to resell your exhibitors and sponsors into the following year.

Brandt Krueger:

So, like I mentioned at the top, Will's kind of listening in from where he's at right now, and he's kind of asking ... and I don't know if you've got anything kind of along those lines, but focusing

more on pre and post show engagement. Anything you've got along those lines that you're able to engage folks, not just at the show with the audience engagement technology, or like you were just mentioning with the lead generation, but stuff kind of leading up to and then after the show?

Adam Perry:

So, I think you have to think about this problem as a multi pronged approach, right? No one solution or one approach is going to fully engage our entire audience, because ultimately your audience is probably engaging with your event, or wants to attend your event for a number of different reasons. So, I think you have to kind of segment your audience and try and understand the main principles of why they're trying to attend the event. So, some come to your event to engage with educational content, right? They're looking to empower themselves, gain extra knowledge, and things like that. So, what we're looking at this year, pre show and post show, is actually extending the content out to online learning platforms.

Adam Perry:

So, these are platforms that are set up specifically to deliver online classes, and engage in sessions and speakers and things like that.

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah, yeah.

Adam Perry:

And we're looking at that as a way to kind of ... four to six weeks out from the event, deliver a series of educational content online, which anybody can engage with, all around the world. And also maybe some post show as well. We have so much content submitted to us, and even though we have five stages, we can't just ... we just cannot physically fit it into the event. So, that helps us to extend, and also provide some online engagement outside events. So, that could be Reg Drive as well, the marketing for the show. And I suppose showing the value of the kind of content that you deliver.

Adam Perry:

Now, I appreciate some events out there charge for that. But there should be no difference why somebody can't pay for the online elements as well, or maybe if they register early, they get VIP access to that kind of stuff. So, if you're kind of looking at the attendee that's looking at education, then that's something we're looking at, and that's something I would suggest that ... and again, low cost, minimal input. You've got the speakers, you've got the content. Just roll it out as part of your marketing. A little bit before out the event, and obviously at the event, the ultimate reason you've got exhibitors, and sometimes visitors, a visitor is there to grow their network, find connections that they might be able to do business with, or partnerships with and things like that.

Adam Perry:

So, in that sense, I think when you look at platforms like grip, who are kind of trade show specialists, and Umbrella, who are more maybe corporate events and conference specialists. Then those tools can be really helpful in empowering those people to find the connections that they want, and I'll give you an example of my own experience. I went to web summit I think around four or five years ago, first time at the event, it's in Dublin at the time, huge amount of people there. There was just no way without some form of technology I was going to find the people that I wanted to speak and connect up with. And use that actually. And the vast majority of people that I met with through that technology that they developed and deployed, was actually all the visitors. It wasn't necessarily the exhibitors.

Adam Perry:

So, I think again, if you're trying to cultivate meaningful relationships at your events by getting people to meet with each other, then that's a really good way. And then there's probably one other that I would mention, that I've recently come across which is, I hope I get this right, a company called Brain Dates, who actually approached networking and content event in a slightly different way. So, they're approaching it from bringing small groups of people together, maybe four or five around a particular topic or subject, or interest level, and almost curating, getting the audience to curate the content that they're there at the event, to listen in and discuss. Which I think's a super interesting way to approach it.

Adam Perry:

There is still an element of human, or people, that kind of help facilitate all that at the event, but that's another interesting one to look at. So, those are kind of two key areas that I would look at.

Brandt Krueger:

I think it's fascinating, going back to the idea of the learning management system, sometimes called an LMS. That using that kind of system pre-show is a really fascinating idea. As soon as you mentioned that, I was like, "Oh yeah, I can see that." And so, there's a lot of those platforms out there, many of them are free to not very expensive. And so, that's a fascinating idea. And then the ones that do cost, it seems like a natural sponsorship opportunity.

Adam Perry:

Exactly. I think, depending on ... you could even do a very low risk, let's say pay per eyeball, on that scenario. So, maybe you give your sponsor, let's say a set up fee, it's going to cost you \$500 for this, and then if we hit this level of eyeball, if we hit this level of eyeball, then you know we're compensated for exposing your brand and your message to more people, right? And maybe that caps out at like 5K or something like that. But yeah, easy, easy sponsored content. And I think also a way to really engage with speakers that are maybe further afield, maybe travel, logistics, all that kind of stuff just makes it impossible for them to kind of be physically at the event, that's a great way for those speakers to deliver content still to your audience, and your audience engagement and without all that incumbent cost and logistic elements.

Brandt Krueger:

So, we kind of handled the audience engagement, both before and after, and during the event. We handled the registration side. Let's get into the actual event app itself. That's kind of where a lot of this stuff, as far as these event tools started. What have you got for the actual app itself?

Adam Perry:

Probably not much more than what's already out there and existing, you know what I mean? There's an interesting conversation around how the web's developing, and whether we can provide the same information in a much seamless way to the audience, for most events. And then there's obviously chat bots and things like that, that are popping up and becoming more ubiquitous on event websites, and on the places that the audience, the public are going to first interact with you, even in places like Facebook and things like that. For me, I think event apps are a really nice entry point into event organizers, and events kind of touching base or testing out technology. It's kind of a safe way to do it. And I think that culturally, people who attend events still aren't necessarily overly familiar with event apps.

Adam Perry:

We probably are, as event industry people, because every event that we go to, because it's an event for event people, has an event app, right? But you know, some people, like my wife has never had the opportunity to download an event app because she's never been to an event recently with one at it.

Brandt Krueger:

Right, right.

Adam Perry:

So, to her, it's still brand new. And I think that's one of the things unfortunately for event apps, because it was one of the first technologies to come into the sector, there's been this overriding pressure on them to deliver and to have this 100% event app adoption, and all the ... it's going to be the solution to all these problems. And I think we've not just, as an industry, given them enough time to evolve and be used within the sector. I by no means don't think they're dead. When we look at the stats for Event Tech Live, still it's within the top five reasons people come to a show. Research and event apps, what's the ability, what can they do for me? So, I've got nothing really exciting and new on the event app front, but what I will say is, event apps are becoming more useful because integration is becoming much better.

Adam Perry:

Our event app provider now integrates with our matchmaking provider. They can integrate with our swag delivery system for attendees. Our floor plan provider. We use a lot of different technology providers at Event Tech Live, and that conversation five years ago was super difficult. Like sorry, we can't integrate with any of these platforms, we don't have the bandwidth. But using platforms like Blender, and Zapier and other systems, or just direct integrations that are formulated, if you want to bring other things into your event app to make it more useful for the attendee, then that can be done now much more easily.

Brandt Krueger:

And it's always interesting to me that Europe, and to a certain extent UK as well, I know there's complications with Brexit and all that kind of stuff, but there's a bit of a reputation of because of things like GDPR being very sensitive about data, but at the same time, what's going on over there is I'm seeing really, really great and cutting edge uses of personalization. So, when you've got those integrations, when you've got that information, and they're just being really careful about making sure it's opt-in, and how long is that data retained, and all that kind of stuff. But they're actually, I'd say, you guys are doing much more in the way of personalization compared to what's going on over here, in North America with just taking simple questions off of registrations, and being able to then integrate that into the app, into the experience, into the engagement, all throughout the event to really personalize those experiences.

Adam Perry:

Yeah. I suppose we're kind of figuring out all the difficult stuff at the moment, facial recognition, how does that play out in an event, what's the legalities of it? All that kind of stuff. But that's a good thing. We are an industry that solves problems just inherently, and GDPR is one of those things that at the moment is more European focused, but I can see something like that coming into play in the states, and things like that, not too far in the future.

Brandt Krueger:

No, it's already sneaking in on a state by state basis. So, yeah, you're absolutely right. We're going to see more of that. It's probably almost a better solution that you've got that coming down kind of Europe wide for the most part, as opposed to individual country by country, because that's where it gets messy, and that's what it's going to be here is very, very messy. So, let's talk ... you mentioned kind of the web technology. Is there anything new and exciting that you're seeing as far as the actual event websites? Or the tools that are used to create them? Because that's kind of a struggle the planners have a lot of times as well, is just that simple basic hey, I've got an event and I need to get a site up and running.

Adam Perry:

Yeah, I mean, do you know what? There are so many great tools out there that you don't even necessarily need an event specific supplier to have a great website. You know, there's platforms out there like Wix, and others, WordPress is such a powerful CMS. We launched our first event websites using WordPress. And the templates and things like that, that come along with them are so powerful now with so many other integrations. And Wix, as I mentioned earlier, that integrates with a number of ticket and providers, so if you're with Eventbrite or another, you can pull your ticket in pages and things like that, and super, super quickly. I don't think you need this behemoth of an event website, and I think there's some crazy stat out there that like 50% of events don't have a website.

Adam Perry:

They just kind of use Eventbrite as their event website, right? So, I don't think you need necessarily kind of crazy platforms to deliver it. We've partnered this year with a company called EventsCase, who do a great website. For me, if I was looking at websites, what I would look at is some key components. Again, accessibility. Translation, because we have to understand that not everybody speaks English as a native language. Optimization in terms of SEO, which is a super important to finding traffic for your event. But also, things that ... make sure the provider is mobile friendly, iPad friendly, every screen under the sun friendly, because you just don't know where your audience is going to come from. And if people have a bad first engagement with your event websites, no matter what platform they're on, that's going to be how they feel about your event.

Adam Perry:

And they're going to rank it in terms of quality just off that basic. So, it is worth investing in your event website. Making it look and feel, and work well. And there are some great providers out there in the event space that do that. But you don't necessarily have to invest, again, \$10 000 to make great event website. It can be done quite cheaply.

Brandt Krueger:

I'll throw one more in there as well, that it's something that costs you basically nothing, it costs you time, and that is to really just make sure that you're reviewing those websites for spelling errors and things like that, because I can't tell you the number of times that I've been on even industry conference websites where there is a spelling error, or there's a picture that's linked to something that is a broken link, or something along those lines. And it's just such a downgrade in the perception of that event. There was one very recently that I was looking at for a potential speaking gig. And it's like oh, there were spelling errors all over the thing. It's like, I don't know if I want to have anything to do with this.

Brandt Krueger:

And it's also, it's one thing if it's in a ... maybe someone from another country and English isn't their native language, and this is just a translation of the site. But this was the primary website. It wasn't like it was in another thing, so I was kind of like, "Yeah, no, I'm out on that one." No, no. Yeah, by the way, I want to talk to you about ...

Adam Perry:

Just on that. So, there's kind of two technology streams for events. There's Event Tech, which is a technology that is specifically developed for events, right? But there is also a tech that we use as event organizers, that's not necessarily built for events. It's maybe a wider ... one of those tools that we use across our business is a platform called Grammarly. Have you come across that before?

Brandt Krueger:

I have. And I use it.

Adam Perry:

So, Grammarly is a great tool to make sure that whatever you're looking at and wherever you're working on a document in text and content for your business, it's checking everything. And you can even get it to check in English US, English UK, number of different languages. That's, again, a free tool that you just need to know that it's there in order to be able to use it. But can save those really painful mistakes of words being misspelled, or even sentences not being constructed the best.

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah, it's a fantastic tool, it's a free tool, it does have paid levels of subscriptions that you can do. But I find the free one is honestly pretty darn good, and it works with Google Docs, and just actual just forms and stuff in Chrome, so it's a really, really super handy tool. I also choose when to ignore it. Because sometimes you lose your voice, when you start doing things perfectly grammatically correct.

Adam Perry:

Yeah.

Brandt Krueger:

So, but that's your choice then, right? So, you can always choose to ignore the squiggly line when it comes to it. But it's a great point that you bring up about tools that we use, that aren't necessarily event tech. So, why don't we hit that for a second? Are there any other things that are not necessarily event tech that you're really digging on right now? Grammarly is a great suggestion. Will and I have done an entire episode of the various apps that we use, so I'd be curious to know if anything else is kind of floating your boat these days.

Adam Perry:

Giving away some of my secrets now.

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah, yeah.

Adam Perry:

So, I'm a fan of anything that automates certain processes. I don't know how this might be perceived, but there is a tool called LinkedIn Helper. Have you come across this before?

Brandt Krueger:

I have not. It sounds interesting.

Adam Perry:

Okay. So LinkedIn Helper is a tool that you can pay to essentially access ... and it's very cost effective. We're talking I think in the region of maybe \$10 or something a month. And it actually has lots of different functionalities to it. But one of the things that I use it for is, actually leading

up to Event Tech Live, is to send a personal message to my connections to say, "It's coming up to Event Tech Live. We'd really love to see you there. Here's a link if you'd like to register." And probably send them a VIP link or something like that. And that just helps me contact all those people in a different way to just sending a blanket email or trying to extract their data from LinkedIn, and then send them a message that way. And for me, that's helped to save lots of times, and we've been able to track the conversion of that client successfully as well.

Adam Perry:

The other way that we've actually used it as well is to connect up with people that we feel the event would be of interest to, and automate that process as well. So, some people will not like that kind of approach. And I can totally understand why. But, essentially the end user would see or have nothing different than if you were to literally go into their profile, press the message button, type out the message manually, hit send. It really isn't any different to that, but it does save a lot of time, and heartache in terms of reaching out to those people on that platform. It's got lots of other functionality, which I'll let you kind of ... or your listeners kind of explore for themselves. But it, again, it's one that's worth looking into in terms of time saving and stuff like that.

Brandt Krueger:

I'll throw one in on the receiving end of that. Which is that sometimes it's not always obvious when messages are coming through via LinkedIn. A lot of times it is, I'm not sure how LinkedIn Helper handles it or not. But sometimes it'll say via LinkedIn, or something along ... have the LinkedIn icon or something. But sometimes they don't, and one of the ways that I help keep track of that, just to kind of know where things are, is that if you're a Gmail user, and this is a pro tip for anyone that's a Gmail user, I funnel everything through Gmail, just because I love the filtering. If you take your actual address and put a plus and then whatever you want before the at sign, so if your address is adamperry@gmail.com, I don't know if it is, I'm not saying it is, but if it's Adam Perry, then you do plus LinkedIn@gmail.com, and you use that as your LinkedIn address, anything that comes via LinkedIn, is going to have that plus LinkedIn attached to it.

Brandt Krueger:

And so, you can do filtering based on that. So, I've got all kinds of various plus versions of my address, that I use. And so, anything that comes in through LinkedIn, whether or not it says it, is going to have that plus LinkedIn attached to it, because that's the email that's registered with LinkedIn. So, a little bit of tip on that. So, I'm always frequently kind of amused. It's like oh, okay. You're not sending that to me personally, you're sending that to me through LinkedIn, probably using some kind of a system like LinkedIn Helper. So, that's my little pro tip. Any other categories you want to dive into? Is there any other things? Otherwise, I've got a few general questions that I'd like to blow at you.

Adam Perry:

So, I actually have something to add to Gmail, because we use that in the business suite of tools here at Event Industry News, and the events as well. One little tool that I found really

useful is a tool called GMass. Now, GMass can act as your mass emailer, if you don't have let's say a MailChimp, or a Send Grid, or something like that, to send emails to a contact database. And it's really good at that, and it can do some fantastic things with personalization and things like that, as long as you've got all your information set up quite nicely in something like Google Sheets. It's a fantastic tool.

Adam Perry:

But one of the things that it really helps me out with is following up. So, I'm bad at remembering to follow people up, or that somebody's not responded to me, and GMass has this really cool function where you can set followups based on certain increments of days. So, you can send one after two days, another one after five days, another one after 10 days. I think it allows you to send up to kind of like eight. And in each of those followups, you can actually change the text that follows them up. And then you can base it on permission, so if they've not replied to you, if they've not clicked on anything, if they've not opened on anything. So, you can do a number of different ways in which it follows people up based on what kind of outcome you're looking at, and that's just helps me so much, and actually getting responses from people from automatic followups going out based on them not responding to me.

Adam Perry:

My own team, and clients, and everybody as well. So, if you're using Gmail, that's a great tool to kind of automate the followups of emails that you don't get responses from on things.

Brandt Krueger:

Nice. Well, it actually opens up a couple more categories for us. I mean, what about ... what are other kind of marketing tools that you would recommend, that we might be able to use? Either for our events or leading up to them?

Adam Perry:

Yeah, absolutely. So, again, one of the things that's been really painful for us in the past is listing events at Event Tech Live. In all the places that you can list events online, whether that be Google themselves, Time Magazine, maybe it's something like Eventbrite, or even something more specific like a resident advisor which tends to deal with dance music events and things like that. This can take up huge amounts of hours going through each website, submitting your information on each form, and then kind of going through the process, over and over again. And there are thousands of these websites out there, some more generic, some more specific to the industry that you're trying to serve.

Adam Perry:

There's a fantastic platform out there called Evvnt, which is spelled double V-N-T. So, it's E-V-V-N-T. And I think they allow you to kind of use their system and list once with one kind of publication, and then I think to access like thousands of publications, I think it's around \$500 to submit an event. What's really interesting about this platform is it actually gives you live links

back to those publications so you can see the physical listing of your event, and then you can also have an indication of where that's ranking in search terms for your particular event as well.

Adam Perry:

So, not only a real cool time saving tool, you can really track the ROI of your marketing and kind of how people are finding your event and stuff like that. So, just even on the time saving basis, I think Evvnt is worth a look.

Brandt Krueger:

Cool. And so, kind of the last thing that we wanted to throw out is anything that might help us out with the logistics? There's so many moving parts in an event, and it's funny, I was actually working our local Fourth of July celebration and just for our little suburb, and I was just kind of making a point to thank a lot of the organizers, and they're like, "What?" And I'm like, "Yeah, I know how much work goes into these things in order ..." I said, "This is kind of what I do." So, I just wanted to let you know that I know how much work goes in, and thank you so much." And they were like, "Wow, yeah. Yes, it is a lot of work."

Brandt Krueger:

So, how do we get through those logistics of events, and all of those moving parts?

Adam Perry:

So, one of the things that I think can help with that is a platform called What Three Words. Now, this is around kind of event delivery, and getting things to the right places, especially in green field sites, and festivals and outdoor events. But also it may be a large convention centers, or exhibition centers. There's a really interesting story behind What Three Words, but they've been most recently used at Glastonbury for people to be able to find exactly where their tent is, no matter where they are in the event. Now, we're probably also been there of like had a few beers, and can't remember where we put the tent. And spend three hours trying to find it. But What Three Words was actually born out of somebody who worked in event logistics in terms of ensuring things and people were in the right place at the right time.

Adam Perry:

And constantly having to try and almost write hieroglyphs to get people to the right place, because how do you tell somebody to be, let's say, on top of the hill, left of the tree, to drop those five toilets off? Or be at entrance B at Excel Exhibition Center. Super hard, and not all places as well are fortunate as maybe the States and the UK of having a relatively sophisticated postal and addressing system. So, this guy had a really interesting friend who was a mathematician, sat in the pub one day, how do I overcome this challenge? There's got to be a way.

Adam Perry:

Mathematician literally turned around to him and said, "Well, if we divide the earth up into three by three meter squares, and apply three unique words to each of those squares, you can

basically get anybody to anybody, anywhere in the world. And you know, you can go and check out What Three Words, you can use their mapping technology and kind of literally, at three meters square, find out what the ... you could literally get somebody to drop something off in your backyard, your front yard, the next door neighbor's house, the road across ... anywhere you want, in the middle of a field, it's super clever technology. That technology's also that they're free to use, so if you want to use their app or their website, you can do that, and you can give your contractors and even your team, or your attendees specific addressing that they can use to get right exactly where they need to be when they need to be there.

Adam Perry:

The best thing about What Three Words is larger technology companies, automobile manufacturers like Mercedes, et cetera, are integrating this technology into their systems as well, so that you won't even have to download or use anything extra in the future. It will just be there. In the UK, some of the medical teams have been using it really well to get right to where people are injured, maybe on the side of a mountain, or in the forest or something like that, with pinpoint accuracy. So, you know, if you have trouble with your event logistics and getting people to the right place, or constant phone calls, asking for directions, I'm lost, I don't know where I'm supposed to be, then What Three Words is one of those tools that can really shave off a lot of time.

Brandt Krueger:

It's one of those weird things that it doesn't seem like it should work. But it does. And so, just for an example, I just pulled up my local grocery store, and chose a random parking spot in front of the local grocery store. And so, for that literally, like you said, three meter spot, so just about the size, a little bit smaller than a parking spot, that exact spot in the globe can be addressed by beard, awake, fonts. So, it's like, this idea that you can actually get to a very, very, very specific spot is a fascinating thing, without having anything like latitude and longitude, it's actually ... you could actually remember that. You could remember beard, awake, fonts, is where that location is in the world.

Adam Perry:

Yep. So, just imagine how powerful that is for an event. Let's take Las Vegas, let's take the Sun's Expo Center. It's part of the big hotel complex, you're trying to meet up with your friend, or you're trying to get to the entrance where you can load in your stand or stuff like that, that can give that pinpoint accuracy so you know exactly where to be.

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah. And if you're looking at their website, you can actually see the satellite view. And I feel like I heard that Google Maps was working on integration with that, and being able to look stuff up based on the What Three Words. But I don't think that's been integrated yet. But that's a fascinating, fascinating and great tip. Any other logistics you want to throw out there? Otherwise, I've got a few more questions for you before we let you go.

Adam Perry:

You know, just on logistics and planning, I think anybody who's not looking at tools like Asana, Monday.com, those kind of things, we've seen a big difference in our business in terms of team communication, where projects are up to, where elements of projects are up to. And it's a real step away from the Excel Spreadsheet. And again, Asana and things like this can start off for free. You don't necessarily going to cost you out of the gate in order to start using them. They will take some time and some patience because they require you to put the effort in to set them up and make them work, and put the things in there that are going to keep track of.

Adam Perry:

But again, little costs to get out started, and such great tools when you actually start using them across a team.

Brandt Krueger:

And remind folks not to forget Slack. I mean, Slack has a free tier as well that ... Everyone knows I've got a love-hate relationship with Slack, but it's definitely an organizational tool, and a way to keep people connected leading up to an event, so it's definitely an alternative.

Adam Perry:

Yeah, we use those together, actually. We use Slack and Asana together, and so to power our events.

Brandt Krueger:

Exactly. All right. So, Will chimed in, he wants to know if you had an extra \$1000, what would you spend it on first? So, what's the ... if suddenly an extra \$1000 lands in your budget, what's the first thing you would spend it on, and then what's the second thing you would spend it on?

Adam Perry:

Okay, so the first thing I would spend it on is not tech, it's better coffee. I don't think you can ever give people better quality ... no, even better quality coffee. They always want good coffee. You know, it's really interesting. I think when it comes to the tech side, for us, one of the big things, because we deal with so much content, is a solution called Line Up Ninja. So, this is a new platform that's in the region of five to \$1000 that really helps us to take control of our call for papers process. It really saves time in communicating with speakers, reviewing and automating some of those notifications and that communication with your speakers on whose been successful, whose not. You can manage multiple tracks and submissions, unlimited speakers, things like that.

Adam Perry:

And they've got some real flexible tools around then taking that content and displaying it on things like your event website, your event app, AV screens at the event and all that kind of stuff and it looks great. One of the most interesting ... well, two interesting things about that tool is that it looks at riders for speakers, so if they require a Mac HDMI adaptor X, Y, Z, then if a

specific room spec doesn't have that, it will flag that and tell you that you can't put that speaker in there. It will also look at that speaker, what that speaker can and can't do in terms of, can't do in terms of commitments, and it will flag those.

Adam Perry:

And then it has this really cool auto shuffle feature. So, if you don't mind where your speakers speak, in terms of stages and things like that, you can throw it all in there, press one button, and it will create this automatic schedule for you and piece everything together in perfect order. So, real cool tool.

Brandt Krueger:

What was that called again?

Adam Perry:

Line Up Ninja.

Brandt Krueger:

Line Up Ninja. Okay, got it. We're going to be trying to drop as many of these into the show notes as well, so as we're going along, we're trying to take notes on all of these great tools, and we'll try and drop links to them in the show notes once we're all done. Line Up Ninja. I love the shuffle idea. I also love the flagging idea, because on a show that I was recently at, no matter how many times you communicate what's going to be in what room, you always wind up with that one person that said, "I was told that there was going to be this, and there's not this." And then all of a sudden you're scrambling to try and add an extra projector, or something like that on there because that's what they were told, and they're a sponsor, and now you need to make sure that they're satisfied.

Brandt Krueger:

All right, excellent. That's a nice one. I'm going to have to remember that one, for sure. Let's do one more here. Where do you go to stay on top of technology? Will and I have talked about this on a couple different shows, but curious to know what are you following? Any kind of blogs, websites, people that you try to do in order to stay up on tech? Either tech in general, or event tech.

Adam Perry:

I think literally everything. I don't think there is enough things that you can follow. Event Tech Brief is a cool one, Michelle Bruno, I follow those. Your podcast, obviously. I kind of listen in and follow that. I think what I also try and do is not stay so focused on our sector, right? I don't kind of sit within our industry and have these blinkers on that there's nothing going outside.

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah.

Adam Perry:

I think the same as you guys. I'm one of the avid followers of things like the Apple Keynote, the Google IO events, kind of trying to understand what the world's doing in terms of technology and then how that might filter down and apply to the events sector, because we're kind of like sponges. We adopt, we don't necessarily create these technologies. We kind of take technologies that are existing and then make them work specifically for how events work. That's my opinion, at least anyway. But you know, it's always interesting to sit through things like the Google IO podcast, the Google IO event that was most recent, one of the most interesting things for me out of that was around podcasting, and how they are now actually using podcasts as search rank.

Adam Perry:

So, if you're searching for something, and there is a podcast that's relevant to the subject matter that you're searching for, they're actually going to show that quite high up in search rankings as content that you might be interested in. And I think podcasting's now we're seeing coming more into the event space. Ultimately it's just into the way that speakers and people are engaging with each other at the event, right? A interesting conversation. And I think as an industry, we could ... events have the power to really harness podcasting as a way to still communicate with their audience after the event, or provide live content, during the day of an event. There's no reason why somebody can't get four or five podcasts recorded, and it gives you four or five months kind of content out of the backend of it.

Adam Perry:

Or it might be kind of like the debrief of the speaker after they've just come off stage as the keynote. And they do kind of like a 20 minute quick debrief and provide that back out to attendees that weren't able to make the event, maybe if that event's ticketed, for example. So, that's kind of where I look. I kind of look like in all places, and I try, as an event organizer, to go to different events which sit outside the events industry as well. See how like the set industry are doing events, or the Blockchain industry are doing events, or the hospitality industry are doing events, because those guys are doing their own thing for their audience, and might just be doing something really cool or interesting with or without technology.

Adam Perry:

So, as event organizers, I think it's important that we also go to events and experience them as a delegate as well.

Brandt Krueger:

Absolutely. Huge. So, we're wrapping up here, you kind of covered one of our closing questions, which as you know, the technology that's inspiring you, and exciting you these days. If there's anything else you want to throw on that, I want to give you the opportunity.

Adam Perry:

Oh, put me on the spot.

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah, I'm going to do more than that.

Adam Perry:

I don't think ... You know, there's so much. I think on that, I think I'm inspired on a day by day basis about the number of startups that are coming into the sector. I'm really tackling some of the problems head on, and not just the flashy stuff at the front end of the stuff that we see on TV, and the stuff that the audience engaged with. But actually really trying to solve problems around project management, and event delivery, and task management, and team management, and all those kind of things. I personally still feel we're kind of on the tip of the iceberg when it comes to how our industry really utilizes technology. I think it's a really exciting time, personally.

Brandt Krueger:

And just to throw it out in shameless self promotion mode, we had episode 160 on event icons, was dedicated to how to use podcasts at your events as marketing tools. So, if you want to learn more about that, feel free to check that out. So, I'm not going to let you escape in our form that we have everybody fill out. We ask what's the craziest fun fact about you, and you wrote, "Need to think about it." So, you've had some time to think about it-

Adam Perry:

Oh, crap.

Brandt Krueger:

... what's the craziest thing, fun fact about you that people wouldn't expect? I'm not going to let you get out of this one, so what's something about you that people wouldn't expect?

Adam Perry:

Okay. So, I never actually graduated from school. The reason for that is I actually got, in the UK we call it expelled. I don't know if there's a difference where you are.

Brandt Krueger:

No, that's about right.

Adam Perry:

Let's just put it this way. I hacked the computer network system and put something on every desktop background that I shouldn't have. That seems to have followed me through as well, because in one of my previous jobs, I worked for a publishing company. They have this IT guy that was just, he was like ... oh, he was awful. He was like the Terminator of technology. You couldn't use anything, you couldn't do anything. And he locked down all of the news websites and stuff like that, which was crazy because as a publisher, you kind of use other news websites to also kind of see what's going off within your sectors and stuff.

Adam Perry:

And nothing special, but I used like a proxy to get around kind of like content blocking. Unfortunately he walked in behind me and saw me so that got me into trouble. And then in addition to that, at the same company, I'm surprised I didn't get fired from this company, you know? I also uploaded the ... no, sorry. I sent a document to somebody on an email chain, and it started looping and bouncing back, and it shut down the servers. And these guys went to press printing something in the region of about 100 000 newspapers. And on that very same day, that's when it took the server down. So, yeah. Don't let me anywhere near your technology because I kind of screw it a little bit.

Brandt Krueger:

Apparently so. Maybe it is best that you just kind of work on your own, and do your own thing. Doesn't play nice with others, you can wear that tee shirt.

Adam Perry:

Yeah, so three little secret tidbits about me that I don't necessarily tell to other people.

Brandt Krueger:

Fantastic. Absolutely fantastic. All right, well Adam, thank you so much for joining us. We want to tell everybody to be sure and go check out Event Industry News, but we're coming up on another Event Tech Live, aren't we? So, why don't you tell folks a little bit about that, the timing and all of that that's coming up?

Adam Perry:

Sure. So, Event Tech Live this year will take place in London, across the 6th and 7th of November. Really cool venue called The Old Truman Brewery. So, it's not your traditional kind of exhibition conference center, in the middle of Shoreditch which is a really cool place to visit as well. This year, we'll see in the region of 150 exhibitors from all around the world doing different things. You can literally come and find everything from registration and apps to the ... we have like 20, 25 new startups in the sector exhibiting, we have five stages of content, one in particular this year which is a new launch for us just focusing for two days on marketing, marketing technology and marketing tactics for your event, which we feel touches everywhere.

Adam Perry:

Last year we saw two and a half thousand attendees from 47 different countries engage with us in the live event, and then per show another two thousand through our online VR delivery and content environment that people can go to the Event Tech Live website and actually check out themselves, just have a look on the menu and click on the 3D virtual tour. So, yeah. If you can't be there in person, we do record all the content and deliver that out to people so they can still kind of engage with the content and listen in. But if you can make it across, if you can make it to the event, and you're looking for technology, I don't think there's a better place to come and focus on that topic.

Brandt Krueger:

I'm glad you brought up the virtual tour, that's something I wanted to mention. It seems like such a simple thing, but it was really cool. I got totally sucked in, it was like walking around the trade show floor, bouncing around, seeing where I could get to, can I get out the fire exits? Can I not? You know, that kind of stuff. So, it was a really entertaining addition to just further add to my FOMO I'm trying to ... yeah. Event Tech Live is definitely on my bucket list of getting over there at some point and getting to that show. So, yeah. If you've got a chance, if you're in the area, if you're not in the area but you're able to get over, please do go check it out because I think it's going to be a great time. So, once again thank you so much, Adam. Where can folks follow you if they want to find out more about what you're up to?

Adam Perry:

Follow me on Twitter [@PunchtownPerry](#) is probably the best place.

Brandt Krueger:

Punchtown Perry. That's right. And sometime we'll have to get the full story on that one, but I think we'll save that for another day. So, thank you all for listening. We really appreciate it. Thanks for listening to the Event Tech Podcast. You can check it out at [EventTechPOdcast.com](#). There, you're going to be able to see the show notes, the links to all the resources that are shared. We were furiously typing away in the backend trying to get down all of those resources that Adam just banged through. And so, hopefully we got as many of them as we could. We'll try, and get links to those as well. We've got transcripts, like I said, up there. There, you're going to find those links to subscribe to the podcast in your favorite podcast app, iTunes, Pocket Cast, Google Play, all the places that you want to see, or actually hear, this one, because this one is an audio only podcast.

Brandt Krueger:

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