

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

Will Curran:

Hello everyone. This is Will Curran from Endless Events, and welcome back to the Event Tech podcast. He is the lazy Brandt Krueger joining us today.

Brandt Krueger:

Yes, and that is the expensive Will Curran that you just heard from right there.

Will Curran:

I feel like ours were a little insulting today, but that's not what we're talking about today. Today we are talking about a new story that just hit the wire and we thought it'd be so interesting to hit your ears. We're talking about a new story that came out on theverge.com, talking about Primavera Sound festival switching to mobile only tickets. Whoo, mobile only, no paper tickets at all, very, very fascinating. So-

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah. I mean, yeah, one of the things that we're trying to do a little bit more of are these topical posts where we actually go through the news and kind of do it, so let us know what you think about it. Is this something that you enjoy? Is it not? You know the ways, #eventtechpodcast, let us know.

Brandt Krueger:

But yeah, this was a fascinating article that you brought to the table. It brings up an interesting discussion about this idea of going fully mobile. Now we've touched on it in the past with some of our episodes, you told your story about going fully cashless at a festival. It might be worth recapping that, because I think it brings up some interesting points. So, if you could just briefly recap that story of your experience with a fully cashless festival.

Will Curran:

Yeah, totally. So if you definitely go check out the episode, I think where... I don't remember which one we talked about. We'll find out, we'll put it in the link of the description down below. But talked about my experience on C2 Montreal where it was a cashless system. Everything was based into the click, mobile tap system, and that was how you paid. I'm trying to remember. I don't think they didn't have an option to do cards, but I just didn't bring my wallet because they said, this is the preferred way to do it. But it might've been that you could only do that way because I feel like I would've brought my wallet anyways.

Will Curran:

But anyways, did it, went to pay for food and their system didn't work. And long story short, I ended up just being like, "Well, I'm hungry. What do we have to do to fix this?" And long story

short, the vendor just was like, "Take the food, come back to me in an hour. I trust you." he had to play this like old school system of, I trust that you're going to do the right thing.

Will Curran:

And yeah, luckily, obviously it worked out for him because I'm a trustable person, but what if I wasn't? All that sort of stuff. But definitely brings up a really good point that we talked about a couple episodes ago about, always making sure that you have a backup for everything. So I think we'll definitely talk about that today.

Will Curran:

But what's really interesting I think about this as well, is that it was the... Apparently this is the... I thought this was, already happened, but this is the first, according to the BBC, the first major music festival to completely ditch paper tickets in forms of mobile ticketing only. They're using a platform called Dice, which I hadn't heard of before this article. I don't know if you had a known much about them as well, but I'm guessing very much probably focused on the music festival world.

Will Curran:

What's interesting too, is that this system also will service their nightclubs, their other events, all their tours. So it seems like it was just this big brand, Primavera, basically rolling out that, Hey, we don't believe in paper tickets anymore.

Brandt Krueger:

Right. So I mean it's... We talked about what would be the backup plan, and it sounds like as long as you've got an official ID, if you don't have a mobile device. There's other interesting tidbits in here, because it's all about trying to curtail scalping, and forgery, and those kinds of things.

Brandt Krueger:

And so the idea, it mentions in here that the QR code actually doesn't appear until two hours before the event. So there's no way to go in and pick away at the QR code and figure out the details and maybe figure out a way to counterfeit it. I'm guessing that's a lot of things. So really reducing the amount of time that anybody has available, it reduces the possibility of...

Brandt Krueger:

Where the scalping comes in, is that you can't just print out the ticket and then sell it to somebody. You literally can't get the QR code until a couple of hours before the event. So really, really tuning in to this idea of, we want to make sure that the person we sell it to, is the person that comes in.

Brandt Krueger:

So you can't resell it on another site, but you can transfer it between devices apparently. So if you buy one for a friend, you can send one of the tickets over to them, but that person also has

to have a Dice account. And so, everything goes through Dice, whether it's refunds, or return tickets, or all of those types of things.

Will Curran:

I think it's really interesting because obviously ticket scalping, it's such a huge industry, right? Like the markups that happen on some of these concerts is absolutely crazy, and I know that scalping is always a really big issue when it comes to events.

Will Curran:

One of my buddies actually is the head of the box office at Comerica Theater. He talks about it all the time is how ticket scalping done the wrong way can really, really hurt ticket sales, and can be a really big pain in the butt. And it's funny because when it happens it's not people look bad on the ticket scalpers, they look bad upon the venue, or the artist, and everything like that. So the more they can reduce it, the better.

Will Curran:

And I also do think it's really cool that you can transfer it, but they also need a Dice account, which I think brings in an interesting point related to data as well, because I'm sure there's more in this Dice app than just a picture of your ticket. I'm sure it... They want to collect location data, send you notifications, find out what concerts you're going to, so they can remarket you to other concerts, things like that.

Will Curran:

So I mean there's definitely I think some... A play for sure, reducing ticket scalping, which is I'm sure a big part of it, but also, I'm sure they're getting a little bit more out of the tech as well.

Brandt Krueger:

Absolutely, and as we move toward this mobile first world, it's interesting to see where it's leading. You and I have talked about in our connectivity sessions that festivals were honestly leading the way when it came to just things like providing charging places for people's phones, for attendees. And so, it's interesting to see now this play being moved by a festival.

Brandt Krueger:

Is thing going to... Are festivals now going to lead the charge, just like they have been with attendee charging, just like they have been with cashless payments, just like maybe now they are with ticketing? Is this going to start to expand beyond and really push this forward?

Will Curran:

I think so, definitely. I think there's no reason why we have to print things off anymore, why you have to show up with a physical ticketing sort of way. But I think that it does bring up a serious concern, that I think the article kind of addresses, which is, if you lose your phone or break your phone, or let's say for example you run out of charge like right before the concert starts, what can you do to get your ticket? And they say you can just show your official ID and there'll be like

a door list, which is I think is at almost every corporate event now is like, "Hey, show us your ID and then we'll print you your badge."

Will Curran:

But I think that it's one of these things that also brings up the point though is, what happens for somebody who isn't necessarily technologically savvy? Is this now going to create a new line at the box office that's going to be longer for people who forget, don't have the app, or don't want to download the app, and everything like that, and it ends up causing more time than someone showing up with a paper ticket? Data will only tell over time.

Brandt Krueger:

Well, and it brings up the other thing that I worry about is the digital haves and the digital have-nots, you know? So that, as we are already having issues with, especially in the US, with urban versus rural internet speeds and capabilities and access, when you start to assume that everyone has a smart phone.

Brandt Krueger:

Now I don't know what the target market is for the Primavera Sound festival. I don't know if it's a high end festival or if it's the kind of thing that anybody can afford, but you're taking a pretty big leap there. Assuming that everyone that wants to come to your festival, or at least the vast majority of people that want to come to your event are going to be mobile first.

Brandt Krueger:

And so, anytime you start to make assumptions about your audience, right? Assume, and all of the things that go along with that phrase, you run the risk of alienating a portion of your audience. There may be a certain segment of your audience that doesn't want to bring their phone to an event. They're not the ones that are taking selfies, and for whatever reason, they want to just be there and enjoy the show.

Will Curran:

Yeah, I think you bring up a really good point, and I wanted to share some thoughts around that, related to a recent experience that I had this last weekend. I went to Austin City Limits Music Festival and they do the QR wrist... Not QR, but the RFID wristbands. So you don't have a physical ticket. You literally just tap and if you don't have your wristband, you have to go pick it up at the box office. But they mailed them all out ahead of time.

Will Curran:

But I remember talking to some of my friends and they said, "This is my chance to disconnect. I'm leaving my phone at home." And, for me, I also thought about it as well, I pared down as many things as I could. I had my phone in my pocket, and then I put my ID and one credit card. Even though it was the payment was through the wristband, which I think is a good separate topic to bring up, I tried to have as little on me as possible.

Will Curran:

And, in the course of things, actually in the span of one day, one of our people in our group... And I mean, sample size this out to like 30,000 people... someone in our group of 10 lost their phone. So you can imagine that there's probably 200, 300 lost phones potentially, throughout the entire event that could have happened. Yeah well, what happens if you lose your phone on there, for sure?

Will Curran:

Again, you can go with your ID, but what happens if like you lost... What happens if you're the person who puts your ID in with your phone?

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah, with the little flip, the little flip thing?

Will Curran:

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Brandt Krueger:

Well, and I think back to the early days of mobile ticketing for airlines. For those initial first few years, those first couple of years, I always printed out the ticket just in case. I was trying to use the mobile app and use the mobile check in, and half the time it would work and half the time it wouldn't, but I could always, worst case scenario, reach into my bag and grab the paper ticket.

Brandt Krueger:

It's probably the same kind of thing. You weren't fully comfortable leaving that one credit card behind, even though it was cashless, because you were already bitten by that, and once bitten twice, twice shy. So that'll probably be a crossover phase for us, for a while. That you're going to want to bring that extra credit card. You're going to want to bring your ID. You're going to want to bring that, in addition to your phone, just in case, until this stuff just starts to become more bulletproof.

Will Curran:

Totally. Totally. I do think that it's inevitable, that this is going to happen. There's no way that we're going to keep paper tickets around, and things like that. I mean, everyone thought to themselves, Oh, how long could it last that RFID wristbands are going to happen at these music festivals, and people are going to pay for it? "Oh, people are going to worry about security," things like that.

Will Curran:

What's interesting, and I'm not sure if it's really worth even exploring in this specific episode, but the reactions that we had around ACL Music Festival and the cashless payment system through the RFIDs. But, the thing that was interesting about it is that it was way faster to, for sure, have your card on the wristband. There was a point where we went to go buy food and everyone

tapped with their wristband, had their food within minutes, or seconds. So they paid, gone, walked away, good to go, enter their pin.

Will Curran:

And then for those who are curious, how it ends up doing the security portion, you tap your wristband and you have to set a pin, and then you type that pin in, just to make sure someone doesn't like cut off your wristband, go on a shopping spree.

Will Curran:

But what's interesting about it is that one of our people didn't do it, and it ended up slowing that person down times at least... They went from being paying in seconds to paying... It was like three minutes long, four minutes long. That adds up across a line. So very, very interesting on that aspect as well, across the board, for how quick it made things and how easy it made things, for sure.

Brandt Krueger:

Well-

Will Curran:

Well-

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah, go ahead.

Will Curran:

Oh, I was going to say... Go ahead. I have a thought process wherein the scalping portion too.

Brandt Krueger:

No, no. Yes. So I would agree completely. We took the family to Disney World, and used the magic bands and it's so easy, and so, convenient, and so fast that you're just like, "How did I ever do anything without these things?" To the point where you get home and you take it off and you're like, "Aw," because you're-

Will Curran:

You're afraid to cut it because it feels like a new...

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah, it's been your absolute life for the last week. And just a teaser on that for folks, that we're still working on an episode around the event technology that comes out of Disney. So, a little tease on that for something that we're working on and putting together.

Brandt Krueger:

So yeah, I just wanted to kind of add my 2 cents on that as well, that it is, when it's working great, it really is magic. It's fantastic and it's so easy.

Will Curran:

And talk about reverse, avoiding ticket scalping. So I only went to two days of the festival because we ended up speaking together on the next day. So I had to leave an even extra day early. I was thinking myself and people said this to me, they're like, well, you should just get rid of your bracelet, and just give it to someone, or sell it, or you know, yada, yada. My initial instinct is, I want to give it to someone, so then that way, if they can experience one day of the festival and it didn't cost me anything to help them out, I'd do that. But it definitely made me not give it up.

Will Curran:

And granted, I didn't look too far into this, but because it was attached to my credit card, I didn't want to give it to anybody. Like even though they would have to guess my pin, yada, yada, yada, all these things like that. I was just like, I don't know what data is on this. I was actually even afraid to throw it away in the trashcan because I was like, I don't know what data's on here, what it's tied to, but obviously you need the RFID system and everything like that.

Will Curran:

But talk about, the more you can make it where it's tied to a digital thing and you can't just give it to someone, I think, the better. And it's interesting how something related to cashless payments, ended up deterring me from being able to give my bracelet to someone else, which I thought was just really, really interesting as well.

Brandt Krueger:

It also brings up the point and they mentioned this in, again, in that Verge article, the fact that as bots and AI get more advanced, that's where they're seeing the problems with scalping, right? And so it's, you've basically got bots that are going up and buying tickets as if they were individual users and individual people. How do you fight against something like that, where the second that that show goes on sale, you've got an army of bots going out and buying up tickets, buying up tickets?

Brandt Krueger:

It's something that I've run into, in parallel, when it comes to a domain names, right? So as you're looking to get domain names, there's a whole cottage industry of people... It used to be, okay, if you're smart enough to think, Oh, that could be a good domain name, I'll go out and buy it and hang on it just in case somebody wants to get it.

Brandt Krueger:

But now, it's all done algorithmically where people just have these bots that are, again, waiting for the second those domains expire, or go on sale. The bots run right out and start auctioning on it, and just buying, and you just set an upper limit. So it requires no human interaction

whatsoever, and then they just sit back and put those domains up for resale. I was actually trying to buy my wife's name domain and they wanted like nine grand for it. It's like, first of all, that's illegal, but that's a whole other thing.

Brandt Krueger:

But in this context, we know that's what they used to do for scalping is get an army of people together, all make the phone calls all at the same time. And so, it's just the more technologically advanced, more sophisticated version of doing that, that's really, really hard to combat.

Will Curran:

Totally. And I think one of the interesting things about the bots is that there's been a couple of our systems... I love this art-... This article is really great for someone who is not a publication that doesn't cover event tech very often. They cover a lot of different stuff on there. So, for example, they talk about the US passed an act called a Better Online Ticketing Sales Act, which is ironically called BOTS, that basically made it illegal to use software.

Will Curran:

There's softwares, for example, like Ticketmaster, which is obviously the largest ticket selling organization in the United States for sure, I don't know about the world. They've created this verified fan program, there's a lot of things they've done. This is obviously, this is affecting their entire industry of ticket sales, when it comes to these bots and everything like that.

Will Curran:

But, ultimately too, it's like, we want to get fans in front of artists and allow them to see that, and not make it purely about gouging people on prices and things like that as well. It also brings up a really solid point though too that, what does that reselling market now look like, once there is no ability to resell tickets?

Will Curran:

What's interesting, again, about this article is they talk about Twickets, which is trying to create a marketplace that allows basically to resell tickets, but has a cap on the price. So the idea is like, let's create a place that you can do it, but let's not screw people over necessarily.

Will Curran:

I don't know, it's tough for me too, to look at this. I'd be curious to know our audience's perspective. They probably bought tickets to festivals and concerts more recently than I have, unfortunately. Well, fortunately and unfortunately, I guess in some ways, that I am lucky enough that I haven't had to have that problem, where I don't even remember... ACL, was probably the first time I bought a ticket for a festival in probably seven years because of the event's industry stuff we do.

Will Curran:

I'm curious to know your perspective, audience. So let us know when you email us, tweet us, what your perspective is when buying tickets for music festivals these days. We'd love to hear it.

Brandt Krueger:

I think you're absolutely right. We're going to start seeing more of these authorized resellers. We're already seeing that with sports trying to curb the street side resale, rather than going down to the stadium and hoping that you can get a ticket. Yes, you're going to pay a premium for it or sometimes you're not, depending on what the game is, so using things like StubHub and things like that.

Brandt Krueger:

I do like that idea though that maybe the artist or whoever can put a cap on the maximum amount that you can sell it for, I think that's an interesting way to deal with the situation when it comes to scalping. I wish them all the best of luck.

Will Curran:

I do think that does happen in some ways, for example, a lot of artists do specific things I think, to prevent them being scalped in some way. So for example, a lot of artists nowadays have initial presale tickets that are only available if you're part of a club. I think there's a ton of different ways. And maybe, to be honest, it might even be worth us doing a whole episode on ticketing for music festivals and concerts to talk into the depth about it, a little bit. But I'm sure we are not the pure experts when it comes to ticketing.

Brandt Krueger:

No, absolutely.

Brandt Krueger:

And that's one of the things that I wanted to bring up is, again, we're kind of experimenting with the format here, is the show. So we're also experimenting with doing maybe some shorter episodes, and just these one off, let's talk about this for 20, 25 minutes and then be done with it, rather than trying to stretch things out. Because there are so many of those interesting topics that come along in the time that we've been doing this show, and we look at it and go, that's a good 20 minute conversation, but it's not a one hour conversation. And so, that's something that we want to experiment with here, starting to throw out some of these 20 minute conversations.

Brandt Krueger:

The last thing that I want to bring out of that article... And again, I know we've said it a couple of times, but thanks to The Verge and Dani Deahl, it looks like was the author of this well-written article about the ticketing fees... is this idea that we're running into when it comes to hotels, when it comes to airfare, when it comes to all kinds of things, and that is whether you're breaking out the fees or you're bundling the fees.

Brandt Krueger:

And so, apparently this Dice company got into a little bit of hot water because they were bundling in the fees. Their response, which is actually a pretty good response, is one where they're basically like, "Yeah, it's a what you see is what you get. We wanted to put it all... That's the price."

Brandt Krueger:

And so, there's an argument to be made on either side of that because I know some people are looking at airfare and things like that and saying, "Well, I want to know what all is in that final price." Or, on the opposite side, hotels where they're showing one price, but then there's also a resort fee, and there's a this fee and there's a that fee. And so, the price that you saw online is not at all the price that you wind up paying. So it's an interesting discussion. I think there's right and wrong on all sides of that.

Brandt Krueger:

But I think it's interesting that they mention, again, in this article that that's something that Dice has gotten in trouble with. As a result, the tickets on Dice are looking a lot more expensive than a lot of the other ticket brokers. And so, people were like, "Whoa, why is this more expensive?" Well, because it's all, that's the final price. And that's exactly the argument that hotels and airlines make is that, Hey, if we show this price but then bundle it all together, it makes us look more expensive. So we're showing the base price and then tacking all this stuff on after it.

Will Curran:

Yeah. I couldn't agree more. I think that a lot of the times it's a mix of others, and that can be definitely applied to things like to the AV industry. Everyone says, "Hey, should you line item your prices? Or what should it look like?" You know, everything like that, so probably for a future episode, for sure.

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah, fantastic. Further things to discuss, let us know out there, how do you come down on that? Do you feel like hotels, airlines, festivals, do you think the price is the price and it includes all taxes and fees, or do you like to see that breakdown? Or, is it somewhere in between where the price is the price and you see the total, but if you want to click in and know it's this amount, and this amount, and a resort fee, and all. I think that might be where the happy medium is, that you see the price is the price, but at the same time you have the ability to know there's a \$5 airport charge, and there's a this charge, and that thing. So, somewhere in between.

Brandt Krueger:

But what do you think? Let us know, #eventtechpodcast, or shoot us that email, eventtechpodcast@helloendless.com. Also let us know, is this something that you're interested in, these kind of short take, news of the day type articles, where we just give you the hot take on some of the latest news? That's something we'd like to know as well. Is that something you're interested in, as well as these shorter episodes? Is an hour long, too long, not long enough? Let

us know. Or is it the kind of thing where we just let it roll and however long the conversation goes is however long the conversation goes?

Brandt Krueger:

You can find out more about this show at eventtechpodcast.com. We've got all of the show notes there, the links to the resources shared. We'll definitely throw a link into this Verge article that we've been talking about today. Transcripts of the show, all the um's and ah's there in all their glory. The links to subscribe in your favorite podcast apps, whether that's iTunes...

Brandt Krueger:

The new Google podcast app has actually been really impressing me lately, so be sure and check that out if you haven't looked at it in a while. It's got a lot of features like multiple speeds and cutting out dead space, so when we pause for a really long time, that gets cut out all throughout the episode-

Will Curran:

You just freaked out.

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah, people were like, wait a second.

Will Curran:

And saying regularly.

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah, yeah, exactly.

Brandt Krueger:

Yeah. And so, yeah, really check it out. And then of course Pocket Cast, my personal favorite, is still leading the charge. So yeah, check us all out there. You can subscribe. Please be sure to do and rate us on those platforms. It does help with discoverability the more ratings that we have, so take a moment and give us those five stars. If we don't get those five stars, take a moment and let us know, again, eventtechpodcast@helloendless.com, what we can do to earn those five stars. Thank you all for listening. We'll see you next time on another edition of the Event Tech Podcast.

Speaker 1:

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Will Curran:

Event Tech out.

Brandt Krueger:
Out. Out.

Will Curran:
Event Tech it out. Event Tech it out.