

- A SPECIAL REPORT BY -  
**Trade Show Executive**

# In **Real Time**

What You Need to Know About  
Registration & Lead-Retrieval for 2015

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BY DANICA TORMOHLN, *editor-at-large*

Everyone wants to have access to their data in real-time – whether it's exhibitors who want to gather and immediately follow-up on leads or attendees who want up-to-the-minute show and exhibitor information at their fingertips. Show organizers may soon have the opportunity to gather valuable attendee data – such as traffic, density, leads generated, session attendance and much more – in real-time for the first time at an affordable price without intruding on privacy.

In fact, CTIA - The Wireless Association had a real-time view on where attendees at Super Mobility Week were gathering and how long they were spending in each area. In what was touted as the world's largest deployment of indoor mobile sensors, CTIA partnered with MEXIA Interactive to install more than 130 sensors around the show floor, enabling a first-of-its-kind event hall experience at the Sands Expo Center in Las Vegas.

"The genesis of the idea was to showcase big data and the real-time collection of that data and its impact on business," said Heather Lee Landers, assistant vice president, marketing and sales, CTIA. "As the leading show for the mobile eco-system, our goal was to be reflective of what's going on in the industry. We wanted to be the first to showcase big data and mobility at work."

The inaugural Super Mobility Week in September brought together two CTIA trade shows — CTIA 2014 and MobileCon — as well as 4G World and the Competitive Carriers' Association annual conference. The combined events drew 1,100 exhibitors and 40,000 attendees.

Supporting Apple's iBeacon and Android devices through an Bluetooth low-energy (BLE) antenna, the platform allowed CTIA to instantly monitor and analyze locations of mobile devices on site in real-time. CTIA also had the ability to deliver contextual proximity messages to attendees who downloaded the show app and opted-in to receiving notifications.

"About 30% of attendees downloaded the show app," said Landers. "In this

first year, we issued directional alerts to notify attendees of food or other activities that were close by. Next year, we will definitely look at delivering exhibitor alerts."

CTIA worked with many of its suppliers, including its registration company, ITN International, to gather the data in real-time and display a heat map on its Big Data Wall, a 16-by-9-foot wall with a giant screen that was placed outside the exhibit hall. "In addition to the heat map, we had information about what was trending on social media, man-on-the-street interviews and more," said Landers.

This cutting-edge deployment offers a glimpse into the possibilities . . . which are truly endless. How can show organizers use this data to drive traffic to different areas of the show floor? How can exhibitors use it to deliver personalized content to prospective customers who are in or near their booth?

This is just one example of how much information will be available in the near future. But it's one thing to collect the data and another to do something with that information. The question is: How can we use this data to improve the customer experience? Registration and lead-retrieval companies are leading the way when it comes to improving the customer experience for both attendees and exhibitors.

So what's hot right now and what's new for 2015? Trade Show Executive talked to leading show organizers, as well as registration experts, to get some insight on the latest techniques and technologies that are trending in 2014.

Social Marketing Platform by InGo



## what's WORKING NOW

- **Single Sign-On (SSO).** A user logs in once to register and gains access to all systems – like a membership database or CRM system – without being prompted to log in again.
- **Social Tools.** Companies like InGo are making it easier for attendees to invite people in their social networks to your event. InGo has partnered with a number of the major registration companies to integrate its social networking tool with registration.
- **Bring Your Own Device (BYOD).** Exhibitors are getting more comfortable with using their own smartphones or tablets to gather leads. "100% of our lead-retrieval is done through BYOD or rental of mobile devices," said Shawn Pierce with Experient.
- **Mobile Apps for Lead-Retrieval.** At the International Manufacturing Technology Show (IMTS), 1,300 apps were deployed in 2014, compared with 820 apps in 2012. "Show organizers can see leads by exhibitor, scans by attendee, or international vs. U.S. in real-time," said CDS's David Lawton.
- **Data Integration.** "Customers now want vendors to integrate their systems and pass information back and forth between vendors. It's been a major trend for the past 18 to 24 months, but it's as hot as it's ever been," said Chris Williams with CompuSystems.

## Real Time, Big Time

"I'm really excited about real-time data collection," said Arnie Roberts, president and CEO, SMART-reg International. "For example, attendees can tap their badges and you as the show organizer will know instantly key data about them on a dashboard. You will know how many people are eating lunch or how many attended the keynote, and you can act on that information."

Convention Data Services (CDS) launched a real-time session tracking app earlier this year. "One of the biggest benefits is the real-time numbers for reporting," said David Lawton, executive vice president, sales and marketing. "Show managers don't have to wait for units at the session door to be downloaded. They can get a picture in real time." One show used the real-time data to print certificates while attendees were in the session to hand out afterward, he said.

Lead data can also be directly integrated into exhibitor CRM systems in real-time. Some of the bellwether exhibitors are already doing this, but some require custom solutions to gain access to the lead data in real-time on the show floor and have it sent back into their CRM system. "It's becoming standard to integrate lead-retrieval with leading CRM systems," said Lawton.

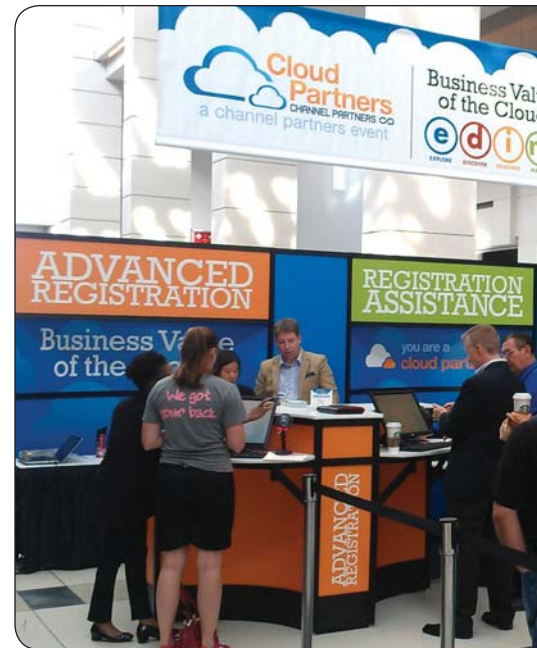
## Mobile Everything

Mobile adoption is on rise. "If you look at lead-retrieval over the last three years, mobile adoption by exhibitors has continued to increase dramatically like a hockey stick on a chart," said Shawn Pierce, division president, registration & housing. "It's really spiked in 2014." In fact, more than 31,200 mobile lead-retrieval apps have been activated through Experient in 2014 as of late October, compared with 16,364 activations last year and 7,000 in 2012.

At the same time, mobile registration is also increasing. "Exhibitors and attendees are registering from their devices," said Lawton. "Since April, 24% of page views have come from mobile devices across the 75 events we worked on in the last six months. This represents 770,000 unique visitors who are accessing registration from smartphones and tablets. That's pretty impressive. In the six months prior to that, only 13% accessed registration from mobile devices."

CompuSystems is seeing the same trend. "We see mobile registration creeping up every year," said Chris Williams, senior vice president. "We are seeing an average of 20% of registrations coming from mobile devices. All user tools going forward will need to be mobile-friendly with responsive design that's device agnostic."

Across all its shows in North America, Reed Exhibitions is reporting that an average of 4.3% of attendees register via mobile device, compared with an average of 3.3% last year. "As more of our customers register via mobile devices, we have to be responsive to whatever device they are using," said Liz Irving,



VP, attendee experience and acquisition, Reed. "We are focused on the customer experience, and registration is often the first entry point for the brand experience. We want it to be smooth, efficient and valuable for the customer."

## Multiple Registration Sites

In an effort to make registration faster and easier for attendees, some shows are offering remote registration and badge pick-up outside the convention center. Show managers are hoping to decrease long lines at registration. This has become even more critical as shows continue to reduce or eliminate the mailing of badges.

For the first time in 2014, International CES completely eliminated mailed badges. Attendees were asked to bring a copy of a registration confirmation email or QR code, along with a government-issued ID, to pick up their NFC-enabled badges.

"We had over 30% of people pick up their badges at remote locations that we set up at the airport or the 15+ official hotels before they even arrived at the show," said Laurie Lutz, vice president, operations for the Consumer Electronics Association. That's more than 46,000 attendees.



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# what's HOT

**Smooth Sailing.** Advances in registration technology by Experient are making long lines at the convention center a thing of the past.



"It was amazing seeing so many people step right off the shuttle buses or taxis with their badges and be able to walk right into the show," said Lutz. CES will be increasing the number of remote locations for badge pick-up in 2015, said Ivan Lazarev, owner, ITN International.

Remote pick-up sites also mean that shows can have a smaller registration area on site. "Show organizers don't want the mega-registration areas that sit empty for two-thirds of the show," said Pierce. "Organizers are asking us to convert that space to offer additional services or other revenue-generating opportunities after the big rush on opening day."

For the NAB Show, Experient's year one goal was to have 20-25% of attendees pick up badges outside of the traditional registration area. "We exceeded that by achieving 32% outside of the North Hall registration in 2014, and we are shooting for 40-45% in 2015," said Pierce. "Show organizers want attendees to be able to pick up their credentials wherever it's convenient for them." For example, Experient used mobile carts outside of the Las Vegas Convention Center to register attendees as they were coming off the shuttle buses.

• **In-App Lead Fulfillment.** Suppliers are rolling out new features that make it easier for exhibitors to follow up with leads. In August, ITN launched a new feature for its lead management mobile app BCARD Reader that allows exhibitors to view, select and send targeted sales collateral at the moment of capture. Most of the major registration suppliers have introduced in-app lead fulfillment. "Exhibitors are focusing more on lead follow-up at the show," said CDS's Lawton.

• **Responsive Web Design (RWD).** Basically, RWD provides users with an optimal viewing experience across a wide range of devices, from smartphones to desktop computer monitors. RWD web sites make it easy for the reader to navigate with a minimum of resizing, panning and scrolling. "All products in development need to be mobile friendly, and all will be web responsive going forward," said Lawton. "It should be a common and standard deliverable now for a show of any size."

• **iBeacons.** iBeacon is Apple's implementation of Bluetooth low-energy (BLE) wireless technology to provide location-based information and services to iPhones and other iOS devices. iBeacon is built into Apple devices and the iOS7 mobile operating system, and it's estimated that 200 million iOS devices can already serve as transmitters and receivers. Third-party manufacturers have built beacons that can send iBeacon messages to Apple devices. Apps installed on iPhones listen out for the signal transmitted by these beacons and respond when the phone comes into range.

• **Beacons.** Beacons are small, inexpensive Bluetooth transmitters that can be placed throughout the exhibit hall. Several organizers, such as Reed Exhibitions, are testing Beacon technology at their shows. "We used close to 300 beacons at the National Hardware Show, JCK Las Vegas and Global Gaming Expo (GZE) in 2014," said Randy Field, Reed's vice president of customer success group & operations technology. Reed

worked with Sherpa Solutions to offer geo-location services to attendees who were engaged and logged into the show app. "Attendees could get turn-by-turn directions on the show floor in real time," said Field. "If they opted in, attendees could also be alerted to new products and show specials." Attendees could find exhibitors and products using the "near me" button in the app. "At this point, our goal is to make it easier to navigate the show floor," he said. Reed is planning to roll out the technology at additional shows in 2015.

• **Lead-Retrieval Integration with CRM Systems in Real-Time.** "One of our largest exhibitors did this in 2014," said Mark Kennedy, director, exhibition sales, AMT - The Association For Manufacturing Technology. "Basically, it gives the booth sales rep live information on site. It's not just pulling the demographic information from registration but also the customer's history with the company. Bigger companies are starting to do this with customized interfaces."



## By the Numbers

Show organizers can expect to spend the same budget on registration in 2015. Prices are holding steady. Most of the major registration companies told TSE they are not planning to increase prices in 2015. Most continue to see increasing revenue on the exhibitor side.

Registration companies are investing in new technologies and enhanced features to keep pace with the ever-increasing demands of show organizers. Despite increased enhancements, most are value-added to an overall registration package.

“Pricing is stable, but the trend is to bundle more services, like a mobile app, as part of the total package,” said Lazarev. “So clients are getting more for less.”

For CompuSystems, the same is true. “Pricing has stabilized since of the recession,” said Williams. “It’s more predictable. We are seeing 5% to 6% growth in lead-retrieval in 2014.”

Pierce agrees. “Pricing has stabilized, but it’s still very competitive. On the exhibitor side, we are seeing an uptick in leads and sponsorship. In 2014, we are continuing to see 7% growth in exhibitor revenue for same show year-over-year.”

## New Services and Revenue

“We are focused on the attendee experience, and registration is just one part of the overall experience,” said Pierce. “Our customers want a unified attendee experience, from registration and housing, to lead and mobile apps. They want the attendee data from the pre-show planning process to be available through registration and then carry that through on site. We can no longer sit in silos. We have to make that experience as seamless as possible.”

To respond, some registration companies are expanding their services. For example, Experient launched the Engage Mobile Platform earlier this year. “Users have the ability to purchase within app itself,” said Pierce. “It’s not as easily done with third-party vendors. We already have their credit card information on file, so they can make the purchase in the app.”

CDS launched eReg, a do-it-yourself registration system three years ago. “Our customers want a single platform for events of all sizes,” said Lawton. “We have two registration solutions — a full-service system for large trade shows and a DIY solution for smaller events.” In 2013, 90 events used the DIY eReg system in 2013, and CDS is projecting to increase that number to 140 events this year.

“We can get real-time tracking and demographics for both our small and large events,” said Carrie Aho, registration manager, Cygnus Business Media, which uses CDS’s full-service registration services for some of its larger events and licenses eReg for its smaller events that range from 300 to 1,200 attendees. “We get the same reporting system, which is important to our marketing group.”

CompuSystems has been “building out its eco-system that fosters the buyer-seller relationship.” The company launched Event IQ earlier this year, where organizers can market directly to specific groups in the registration database. CompuSystems is hoping to consolidate the number of tools and vendors that show organizers need by offering a comprehensive package of services. “We are focused on building tools that make it easier and more efficient for show organizers,” said Williams.

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# what's NOT

- **Hardware Rental.** In 2012, 40% of IMTS exhibitors rented desktop units for lead-retrieval. This year, that number dropped to 25%. “In 2016, no desktop units will be available at our show,” said Kennedy with IMTS. “We will only be offering mobile devices rentals or BYOD.”
- **Plastic Badge Holders.** Driven by sustainability concerns, plastic badge holders are slowly declining in popularity for some of the larger trade shows. More shows are printing on card stock, eliminating the need for a plastic badge holder. Plus as color badge printing on site gets more popular, color-coded plastic badge holders won’t be necessary. Having said that, a majority of shows still use plastic badge holders and will probably continue to use them for the foreseeable future.
- **Mobile-Enabled Web Sites.** As RWD becomes more mainstream, it will eliminate the need for mobile-enabled web sites. That’s good news for show organizers. Why? Instead of having to develop and manage content for multiple web sites, shows with responsive sites can take a unified approach to content management because they have only the one responsive site to manage.
- **Mailing Badges.** Like last year, fewer shows are mailing badges before the show. If you need proof, look no further than No. 1 show on the Gold 100 list. For the first time in 2014, International CES decided to forego mailing registrants their badges before the show.



## *Suffering from Data Anxiety?*

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*Possible side effects of using Event IQ may include (but are not limited to) feelings of overwhelming awesomeness and pride, an affinity for numbers and data, significantly better knowledge of exhibitor and attendee needs, and more free time to spend with family, friends and loved ones. You may start to enjoy work again and see an increase in productivity. In extreme cases, Event IQ has been known to prevent hair loss and reduce wrinkles caused by stress.*



# My *experient*<sup>™</sup> was incredible!



Jim Wulfekuhle  
VP Sales & Marketing  
International Woodworking Fair



*Why would I want to use the same provider for both registration and housing? This is what I asked myself when Experient suggested there'd be benefits to unifying the two. They've never steered me wrong before. So I agreed to give it a shot.*

This year International Woodworking Fair unified registration and housing with Experient and saw our attendance grow by more than 1,000. That was great. But we also saw an increase in room nights of over 20%—now that was incredible!



To unify with Experient, visit [experient-inc.com](http://experient-inc.com) and email Jeff Fugate at [jeff.fugate@experient-inc.com](mailto:jeff.fugate@experient-inc.com).



## PERFECTING THE EVENT EXPERIENCE



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