

Technology industry gears up for IFA Berlin 2019 and beyond

A global platform for retailers, manufacturers, innovators, media and consumers, as IFA's Global Press Conference give a sneak peek at the world's top tech show.

Andalusia/ Berlin, 27 April 2019 – Connectivity, artificial intelligence, voice control and 5G are the big trends driving innovation for consumer electronics and home appliances this year, and they will all be on show across the whole network of global IFA events this year – from the world's largest technology show, IFA Berlin, to IFA events like CE Week in June in New York and CE China in Guangzhou in September.

IFA Next, the innovation hub at IFA Berlin, continues its success with strong growth. This year, IFA Next announced Japan as its first official Global Innovation Partner. IFA also released the names of its first two keynote speakers at IFA Berlin 2019: **Richard Yu**, the Chief Executive Officer of **Huawei**, and **Christiano Amon**, the President of **Qualcomm**.

IFA also has its first **IFA Global Audio Partner** in **Sennheiser**, a company that has been exhibiting at IFA for the past 69 years. Sennheiser will support key IFA events with its range of professional audio gear and support journalists with equipment and technical support.

The technology industry, however, has not been without challenges during the past year. Despite this "techlash", the technology sector continues to be the most trusted industry, even though consumers are deeply concerned about how new technologies will affect their future, said **Margot Edelman**, who presented the findings of the **Edelman** Trust Barometer at the IFA Global Press Conference.

Messe Berlin CEO **Dr Christian Göke** highlighted the reasons for IFA's unrivalled international success. More than ever before, "co-innovation" was at the heart of the IFA experience, he said: "No industry operates in isolation, but only at IFA can you see the true breadth of it, because co-innovation is not just electronics companies competing with each other. Tomorrow's Smart Homes are being innovated today by companies from the consumer electronics sector, health and wellness, white goods and many more ... and the only place where you can see them all come together is IFA Berlin."

Innovation, said Dr Göke, needs a platform as a showcase, to be trusted, to inspire others, to be inspired by others, and to be seen by people who would otherwise never encounter a company and its innovation: "And that's exactly what IFA is and does: we are a trusted platform, that grows with and powers the growth of all our partners."

"IFA Berlin is now part of a global network connecting retailers, media and consumers like no other convention in our industry," said Dr Göke.

Connectivity is key

Hans-Joachim Kamp, Chairman of the supervisory board of **gfu** Consumer & Home Electronics, the organiser of IFA, said that “the consumer electronics and home appliance industries are continuously focusing on connectivity. More and more products use artificial intelligence which enables them to improve their performance over time. In addition, voice controlled systems upgrade the devices’ skills and expand their possible use cases. Thus, both industries are highly innovative as IFA in Berlin will show once again. At the world’s most important trade show for consumer electronics and home appliances all innovation is on display. Furthermore, IFA is the perfect common platform for the industries, the trade, visitors and media as the outstanding order volume of more than €4.7bn indicates.”

“In 2018 the global market of Technical Consumer Goods (TGC) generated a turnover of more than one trillion Euros for the first time, an increase of 3.3%. For 2019 we again expect an increase in turnover of 1% up to €1.052tn. Especially Europe, North America, Middle East and Africa are growth markets. For consumer electronics, we forecast a stable development, while home appliances are expected to grow again”, Mr Kamp concludes.

A showcase for Japan’s technological excellence

On 28th and 29th of June 2019, the leaders of the G20 will gather in Osaka, as Japan hosts its first ever G20 Summit. During its presidency of the G20 Summit, the Japanese government is determined to carry out strong leadership in advancing discussions toward resolving the myriad issues now facing the international community. Underlining this renewed dynamism, Japan will be the first IFA NEXT Global Innovation Partner in its history.

“Japan is a country that was the main driver to create the world of consumer electronics as we know it today, and that – once again – has become an incredible hub for industry research, thought leadership and start-up innovation,” said Dr Christian Göke.

Keita Nishiyama, the Director-General of the Commerce and Information Policy Bureau at Japan’s Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (**METI**), addressed the media on the key issues at stake heading into the future, in particular when it comes to new data governance models. He was accompanied by Genichiro Shimada, Director Cross Value Innovation Project External Relations Department, Panasonic Corporation, and Takashi Sato, Managing Director, Unipos Europe.

“The Osaka G20 will, I believe, and as stated by our Prime Minister, long be remembered as the summit that started world-wide data governance”, said Mr Nishiyama. “The time to do so is ripe, as it will be digital data that drives our economy forward.”

With more than 2.5 quintillion bytes of digital information circulating each day, Mr Nishiyama called for the establishment of “DFFT” – or Data Free Flow with Trust, for non-personal data. He said that while personal data and intellectual property need to remain under careful protection, on the other hand, the free flow of medical, industrial, traffic and other highly useful non-personal data must be allowed to flow freely across borders.

The result will, he says, be “Society 5.0”, which this fourth industrial revolution will bring about, thanks, in part to new collaboration between entities such as the OECD, WEF and G20.

Dr Göke said “we partner with Japan because we want to give our visitors a deep dive into a highly innovative industry hub, including entrepreneurs and visionary speakers, and a start-up world like never before.”

The eyes... and the EARS of the industry

While IFA has always been visionary, ever since the days when Albert Einstein addressed the event, it is also the ultimate showcase for audio technologies. That’s why IFA and Sennheiser announced their Official Audio Partnership at the IFA Global Press Conference.

As the official IFA Global Audio Partner, **Sennheiser** will not only participate at IFA in Berlin, but also support the international outreach of the show, said **Dr. Andreas Sennheiser**, Co-Chief Executive Officer of Sennheiser: “With a continuously growing market in China, Sennheiser is looking forward to participating in CE China and the opportunities we can leverage in that vibrant environment,” says Dr Sennheiser. “At IFA in Berlin we are especially excited to become part of IFA Next, where we will demonstrate our AMBEO applications in the field of Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality – one of the trend topics for this year’s IFA.”

Trust is one of the biggest issue facing the technology industry in 2019, and Margot Edelman, Vice President in the Silicon Valley office of Edelman, the world’s largest public relations firm, highlighted the fragile foundations of trust in the industry. While the tech sector continues to be the most trusted in the world, the public is skeptical about a broad range of new technologies – from blockchain and artificial intelligence to self-driving vehicles and robotics. “Trust gives companies the license to operate,” said Ms. Edelman, but overall, “many people feel left behind by the pace of innovation; 47% of the people we surveyed believe that technical innovation is happening too quickly, and will lead to changes that are not good for ‘people like me’.” Tech companies now had a clear mandate to play a bigger role in society, especially to help people gain emerging skills.