

## International Summer University 2015 Truly Embraced the Digital

*Paris/Cologne, 29<sup>th</sup> June 2015:* Nearly 80 participants from 13 countries gathered at the International Summer University for Trade Fair Management (ISU) to mark UFI's biggest education event.

At the seventh ISU from 24 to 26 June 2015 in Cologne the influence of digitisation on the industry was at the centre of attention: Under the title "Embracing the Digital – Exhibition Industry 4.0?" event and trade fair managers came together with academics, exhibition experts, service providers and visionary thinkers to learn and discuss how the digital is changing the industry and what is yet to come. Paul Woodward, Managing Director of UFI, the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, opened the conference with a trend outlook explaining why digital is already to be considered a commodity just like electricity. Prof. Dr. Detlef Schoder of the University of Cologne completely agreed and identified detailed key trends evolving from this digital breakthrough. One of those is the explosion of the amount of digitized data. Schoder observes that the Big Data phenomenon comes with a move away from always trying to understand the deeper reasons behind how the world works towards being satisfied with simply learning what happened – instead of why.

„ISU is a great opportunity to gain vision and connect with leaders from the industry at an international level, while sharing best practices around current hot topics of the exhibition industry.” Clara Henriquez, Business Platforms Director at Inexmoda (Colombia).

Day two accomplished the transfer of general learnings on digitisation to trade fair related opportunities when Stefan Rummel of Messe Munich proved with his innovation platform that the digital era offers new business models and revenue streams. Arun Madhok, CEO of the well-connected Suntec Singapore Convention and Exhibition Centre, showed how digital developments can have a great effect on the analogue world as well, displaying best practice insights of his digitally transformed venue. When Simon Burton took the stage for his workshop on social media, ISU 2015 had already created quite a buzz on Facebook and Twitter (#ufiisu15). To the Exposure Communications CEO there is no question about the great impact of social networks today and in the future: „If your social media activities do not work, you are doing it wrong“.

On the third and last day, speakers and attendees ventured a look ahead when trend researcher Tessa van Asselt described the addictive potential of digital technology and exemplified vividly what generations Y and Z expect from the exhibition industry. John Welsh of UBM EMEA had opened the last day by presenting two 2020 scenarios for the exhibition business originating from the digital Tsunami that the industry has to cope with today.

ISU was organized by the Institute of Trade Fair Management at the University of Cologne in cooperation with UFI and was hosted by Koelnmesse. Since its first edition organised in 2006, nearly 380 participants from 42 countries participated in the ISU events.

For UFI, the exchange between academics and industry professionals is of high importance. “We are very proud to have been involved in all seven editions of the ISU and look forward to the 2016 edition”, says Dr. Rowena Arzt, Director of Business Development at UFI.

Attached: Group picture participants ISU 2015

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**About UFI - The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry**

*UFI is the association of the world's leading tradeshow organisers and exhibition centre operators, as well as the major national and international exhibition associations, and selected partners of the exhibition industry. UFI's main goal is to represent, promote and support the business interests of its members and the exhibition industry. UFI represents over 650 member organisations in 83 countries around the world. Over 900 international trade fairs proudly bear the UFI approved label, a quality guarantee for visitors and exhibitors alike. UFI members continue to provide the international business community with a unique marketing media aimed at developing outstanding face-to-face business opportunities.*

**For more information about UFI:**

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