

MARKETING

Ad:tech New York Nov. 2-3 is harbinger of makeover for 20-year-old digital conference pioneer

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Panel in progress at a prior ad:tech show

By MICKEY ALAM KHAN

The ad:tech conference brand stood for innovation and excitement in the late 1990s and early 2000s as it heralded and introduced new advertising, marketing and media technology and its bold-faced backers to brands, agencies and publishers. Along the way, its position was encroached on by smaller, nimbler tech conferences that chipped away at the edges to create niche digital shows.

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Now, under new French owner **Comexposium**, ad:tech is about to embark on a future that includes a rechristening and honing of focus, while still catering to the good and great of advertising, marketing, media and technology.

"We want to take the brand into the 21st century," said John Durham, managing director of ad:tech and also CEO/managing partner of brand consultancy **catalyst s+f**, San Francisco.

"It is a solid 20-year-old mature brand," he said, "but times call for new thoughts, new ideas, new people, new messages and new media ways and ad:tech will be re-christened after this show to reflect 2020 as we go forward in this wide industry."

The **ad:tech New York show** runs Nov. 2-3 at the Jacob Javits Center, chockfull of sessions contemplating the future of advertising, marketing and media technology as influenced by digital and social media.

The event boasts 186 speakers for 68 sessions under the overarching theme of "Shift, experience, reimagine."



Crowds on the showfloor of a previous ad:tech

Here is an interview with Mr. Durham as he talks about the changes afoot in advertising, marketing, media and technology and ad:tech's place in the firmament.

The world of advertising technology is evolving at a rapid pace. What do you think are the key drivers?

I think the drivers are simple. We just can't stop innovating and asking why and why not, pushing every sense in every way, challenging every assumption, business model and thought.

Is ad:tech New York going to reflect the new reality?

Yes, it is reflecting a bit of the current thinking in our industry, but even more reflecting the challenges that brands, agencies, technology partners and publishers are facing in a revenue-challenged market.

What makes this year's New York show different from years past?

Two days of fascinating panels, controversial speakers, demos in VR [virtual reality], AI [artificial intelligence], cars, IoT [Internet of Things]. The content truly reflects where our world is today, and where it is heading.

Who are you targeting for this event?

Anyone that needs to think about talking, reaching and acting with customers, whether in a business or consumer way. It's innovators and communicators.

Why should they attend this show versus the myriad digital events out there?

I believe that they are getting a sense of what can be, making statements about the future of thought in marketing, giving you ideas to ponder, things to see, people to interact with all in a single space over two days.

Under new ownership ad:tech is set for a change. Can you offer some insights into what is to come?

We want to take the brand into the 21st century. It is a solid 20-year-old mature brand, but times call for new thoughts, new ideas, new people, new messages and new media ways and ad:tech will be re-christened after this show to reflect 2020 as we go forward in this wide industry.

What is your goal for next year for ad:tech?

To be the place that 10,000 people gather and see the bold, the different, the challenging, the unexpected amidst our industry and the possibilities.

The agenda for ad:tech New York is available [here](#)

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