

Review – Electronic Registration Badges

Summary

An electronic registration badge is a tap-to-connect device used to facilitate networking at events such as conferences, workshops or networking events. The badge is used to make connections by tapping two devices together. When the devices are tapped, they exchange information wirelessly with another device or a hub. This allows event organisers to connect, engage and interact with delegates in real-life and online. It also allows delegates to exchange and store business details without the need for commercial flyers or business cards.

How it works

Prior to the event, delegates are asked to submit personal details via an online form in a web page. All that information is stored in a cloud server. At the event, delegates are given a badge that contains a chip with a unique magic number. The badge can store up to 750 contacts. Instead of exchanging traditional business cards, delegates can tap on each other's device to exchange details. All the connections associated to each tap are stored in the cloud and can be retrieved at the end of the event via a web link.

At the end of the event the organisers upload all the information in a cloud server which sends an email to all attendees with the details about their connections. A web link is also distributed with further information about the conference.

Commercialisation

The badges are commercialised by a small start-up company called Blendology (www.blendology.com) that offers them for rental or purchase as follows (all prices negotiable):

1. Rental Model:

Badges can be rented at a cost of £10 pounds per device per event. This includes a £5 pound deposit that is refunded after the event. There is also a set up server charge. This charge varies:

- £250 pounds per event for organisations running less than 200 events per annum, or
- a one-off charge of £1000 pounds for organisation running more than 200 events

2. Purchase Model:

Badges can also be purchased to either give away at events or to be reused in future events.

- Purchase to give away:
Cost: £15 pounds per badge (including 1 year guarantee) + £250 pounds set up server charge per event
- Purchase to reuse:
Cost: £10,000 pounds per year (negotiable) including access to extra software for a minimum of 200 badges

Recommendations

Electronic badges may represent a more efficient alternative to the cost of printing paper-based promotional literature. They are also more environmentally friendly. Other benefits of using electronic badges include:

- They can be used to help streamline the event registration process
- They provide instant access to contact details and social media connections after an event
- They provide automated distribution of promotional materials and event information

The IT Innovation Centre recommends to buy a yearly license including a few hundred badges plus the managed service for recurrent events organised at the university (e.g.; Teaching and Learning Conference, etc.). Event organisers across the university may also consider buying batches of electronic badges to give away as promotional materials.

Further Information

If you have any questions or comments regarding this product, please contact the IT Innovation Centre at itinnovation@contacts.bham.ac.uk