

CASE STUDY

AI Festival Guide Case Study

WOWza, the talking AI guide, at the FTI festival 2026

Nekkerhal, Mechelen, Belgium. Oct 19 to Nov 7, 2026.

Lean Mean Learning Machine (LMLM) with Technopolis, the Flemish science center.

SUMMARY

A talking AI guide in a festival hall, measured from the logs

At the FTI festival in Mechelen, Belgium (Oct 19 to Nov 7, 2026), Lean Mean Learning Machine and Technopolis placed WOWza, a talking AI guide, on kiosks in the Nekkerhal. Visitors pressed a button and asked their question out loud, in Dutch or English. WOWza answered 38,346 questions in 15,152 conversations.

20
festival days

986
questions in one hour

51%
of conversations had 2 or more questions

1,454,929
words spoken by WOWza

Key facts

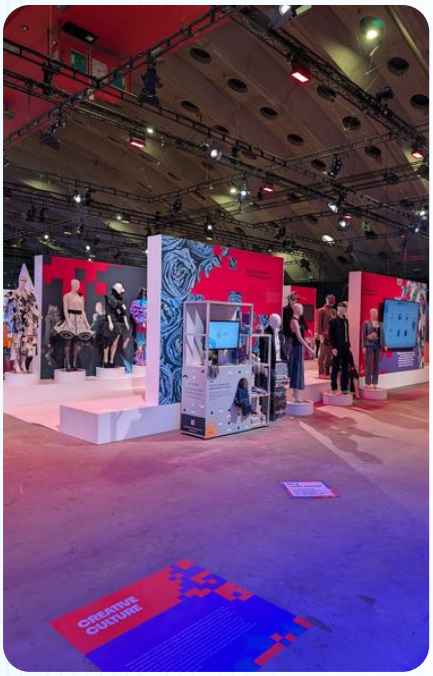
What	WOWza, a voice AI festival guide on kiosks, built on the LMLM product Talking Points
Where	The FTI EXPO in the Nekkerhal, Mechelen, Belgium
When	Oct 19 to Nov 7, 2026
Built by	Lean Mean Learning Machine with Technopolis
Languages	Dutch and English, chosen with a button on the screen
Source	The kiosk logs: every question, answer and timing

THE CHALLENGE

Guiding an estimated 95,000 visitors through one big hall

The **FTI festival** (Flanders Technology & Innovation) fills the Nekkerhal, a large event hall in Mechelen, with research labs, universities, companies and shows. The FTI EXPO splits the hall into 4 themed worlds: Planet Solutions, Creative Culture, Future Living and DigiTech. An estimated 95,000 visitors of all ages walk in: families, school classes, students and professionals.

That makes a lot of questions. Where is the show? Which stand shows robots? Where are the toilets? And the bigger ones: how do you make a microchip, can we get energy from waste? A host cannot know every stand by heart, a floor plan does not answer back, and a sign only helps the visitor who already knows what to look for.



Creative Culture stands



Prototypes on display



A nature exhibit

The question for organizers

Does an AI guide that talks work with a real festival crowd? Do visitors use it, what do they ask, and does it keep up in the busiest hour? This case study answers those 3 questions with the logs of the whole festival.

THE SETUP

How WOWza, the AI festival guide, works





Left: a kiosk next to the fashion area, with the NL and EN buttons on screen. Right: a visitor asks a question while WOWza thinks ("Give me a moment...").

WOWza is a cartoon character on a tall kiosk screen: a talking AI guide that knows the festival. **Lean Mean Learning Machine** (LMLM), a Belgian company that builds talking AI installations, made it with **Technopolis**. WOWza runs on **Talking Points**, the LMLM product for talking kiosks.

1. **Pick Dutch or English on the screen.**
2. **Press the green button and ask your question out loud.**
3. **WOWza answers by voice and, where it fits, points to a stand or a world of the hall.**

Kiosks stood between the stands of the 4 worlds. WOWza's knowledge came from the festival's own content: the exhibitor sheets, the program and the floor plan. A visitor needs no app, no account and no phone, just a voice.

93.5% Dutch **6.5% English**

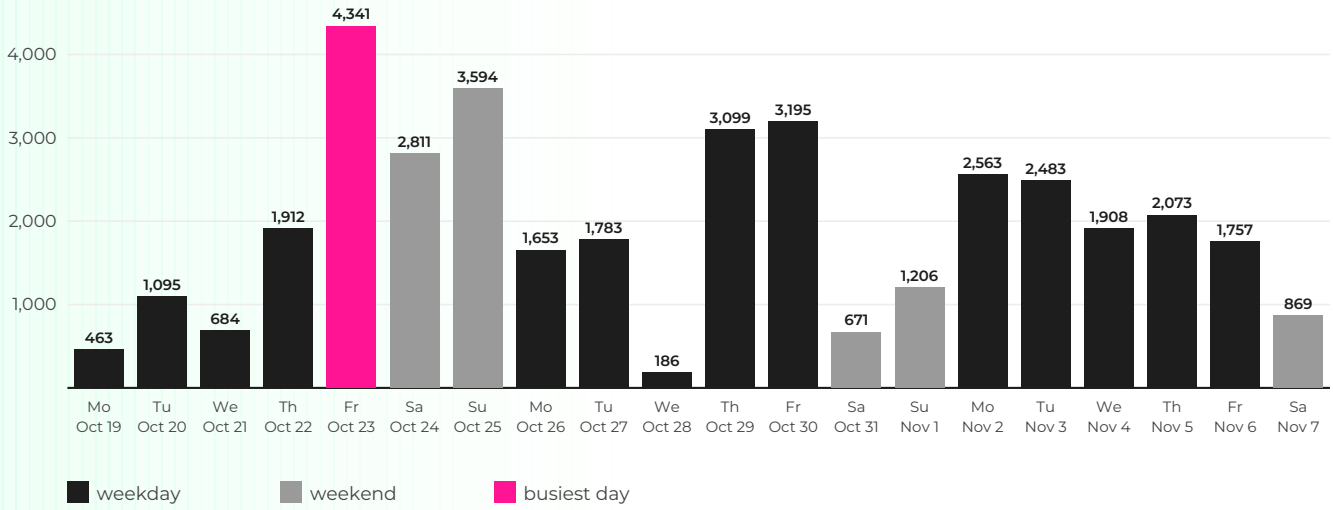
Language of the questions, from the button the visitor pressed. Only these 2 languages were offered.

RESULTS

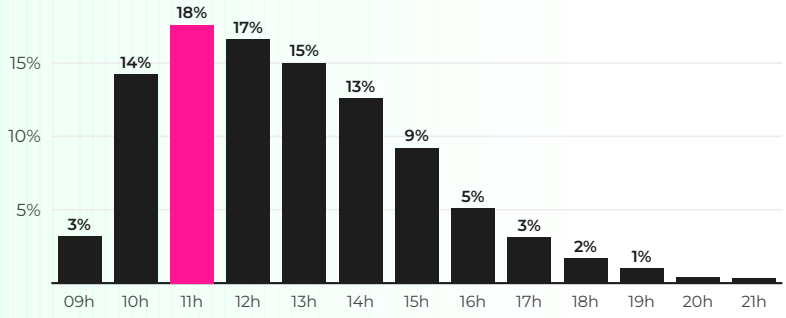
WOWza kept up on the busiest day

The busiest day was **Friday Oct 23** with **4,341** questions, more than twice an average day (1,917). In the busiest hour **986 questions** came in, one every 4 seconds, and **every one got an answer**. The kiosks answer at the same time, so nobody has to wait until a host is free. The quietest day was Wednesday Oct 28 with 186 questions.

Questions per day



When in the day: share of all questions per hour



85% of all questions came between 10:00 and 16:00, with the peak from 11:00 to 12:00. Outside those hours the kiosks were much quieter.

2.53
questions per conversation, on average

12.5%
of conversations had 5 or more questions

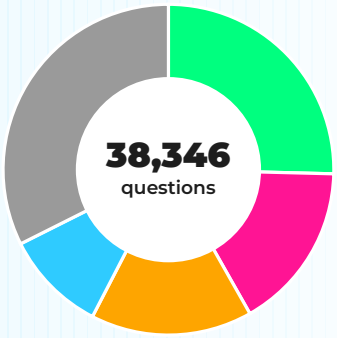
55
questions in the longest conversation

A conversation starts when someone presses a language button and ends after a pause. It stands for a visitor or a small group at the kiosk, not for one person.

WHAT VISITORS ASKED

People ask about a topic, WOWza answers with a place to go

What the questions were about



Science and technology	25%
WOWza itself and AI	16%
Small talk and jokes	16%
Directions, program and exhibitors	10%
Hellos and unclear speech	32%

Keyword rules on the transcripts, one topic per question, so the shares are estimates.

Ask where the robots are and WOWza names the world, the color of the zone and the stand, while a short video of that theme plays on its screen. Many visitors ask about a topic, not a place: how a microchip is made, how we get energy from waste. WOWza explains it and names the stand that shows it. **11,427 answers (29.8%)** named an exhibitor or a world of the hall, and **106 different exhibitors** came up.

Exhibitors WOWza named most often (answers)

imec	1,201	VUB	661
VIVES	1,173	VIB	488
Aquafin	903	VITO	468
ILVO	820	Inagro	453
UAntwerpen	725	HOGENT	365

3 real questions and answers from the logs

A QUESTION ABOUT A PLACE

"Where can I find the robots?" WOWza: "Robots! You'll find them in the DigiTech world, the purple zone. Look for the Robotics area, where imec, Brightlab and BruBotics show the anatomy of a robot."

A PRACTICAL QUESTION

"Where are the food trucks?" WOWza: "For a snack or a drink, go to the red world, Creative Culture. All the way on the left you'll find a food and drink stand. Enjoy!"

A QUESTION ABOUT A TOPIC, ASKED BY MANY VISITORS

"Why must chips be made dust-free?" WOWza: "Chips are so tiny that one speck of dust works like a boulder and ruins the whole chip. That's why imec works in a spotless cleanroom. See it at their stand in the DigiTech world."

Translated from Dutch and shortened. No names or personal data.

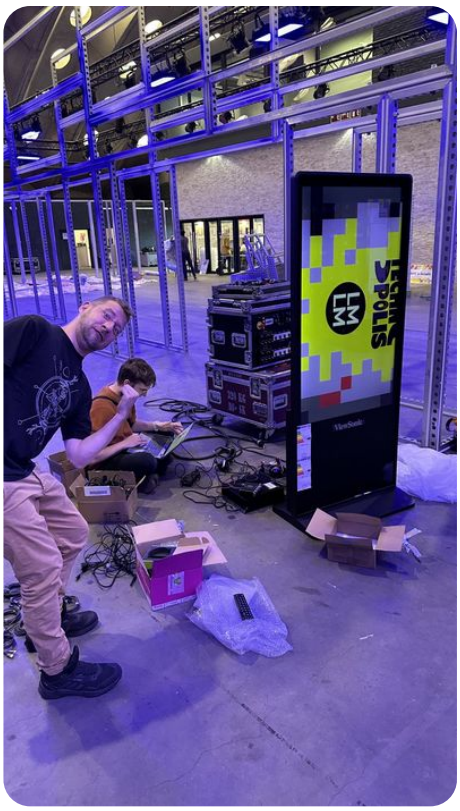
LESSONS

What we learned for the next fair or festival

LESSON 1

People talk rather than scan

The same AI was also open as a web chat. It answered 222 questions, so the kiosks took 99.4% of all questions. In a busy hall, visitors walk up and speak. They do not take out their phone.



The LMLM team sets up a kiosk in the Nekkerhal before the doors open.

LESSON 2

Good answers need good content

Only 1.1% of answers said WOWza had no information, and they show where the content fell short: missing stand numbers, empty exhibitor sheets, shows missing from the program and a floor plan described in different ways. Ask exhibitors for complete sheets well before the doors open.

LESSON 3

Read the logs every day and fix during the event

Every question is in the logs the same day. Missing exhibitors and shows were added while the festival was open, often the same day. Plan someone who reads the logs daily, it pays off within hours.

LESSON 4

Visitors will play, so let the guide play along

"What's your name?" came up 682 times and "Will AI take over the world?" 60 times. Play is how people test a talking guide before they trust it with a real question. A friendly answer keeps them asking.

CONTACT

Organizing a fair, festival or event?

Lean Mean Learning Machine builds talking AI guides for venues: fairs, festivals, event halls, cities, museums and science centers. We are happy to show you how WOWza worked at the FTI festival and what it would take at your venue.

lean-mean-learning-machine.com

Read the story online
https://lean-mean-learning-machine.com/portfolio/ai-festival-guide-fti-case-study/

Lean Mean Learning Machine (LMLM) is a Belgian company that builds talking AI installations. **Technopolis** is the Flemish science center in Mechelen. **Talking Points** is the LMLM product WOWza runs on.

How we counted

Source: the WOWza kiosk logs, Oct 19 to Nov 7, 2026, Europe/Brussels time, pulled Nov 19, 2026. A question is a logged visitor question that received an answer. Speech-to-text pings and "I did not hear you" replies are not counted. Kiosk questions only; the web chat is counted apart from them. Conversations are kiosk sessions, not people; the logs do not count visitors. Topics come from keyword rules and are indicative. Quotes are translated and shortened, without names.