



# Five Speaker Trends to Watch in 2024

Jennifer Best, AAE Speakers Bureau





## Jennifer Best, VP of Marketing, AAE Speakers Bureau

20+ years in Marketing (digital, marketing automation, comms, brand strategy)

15+ years working in, on, around events

**Favorite quote:** “Be the change” – I’m an active volunteer for a few organizations.

**Fun fact:** I started my current role at AAE on Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup> of 2020.

# About AAE Speakers Bureau



DURHAM, NC



22

YEARS IN BUSINESS

12,000

EVENTS

\$300M

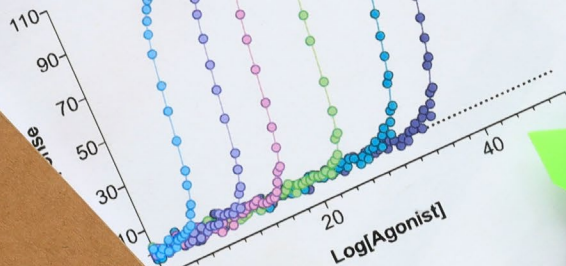
BOOKINGS





# Trends 2024

Nonlinear Regression



Three groups



A B C D







# Trend #1: More Strategic Budget Decisions



AAE asked:  
“What are your  
biggest event  
industry predictions  
for 2024?”

And, event pros said\*:

- Rising costs - business is back!
- Hotel costs will continue to rise
- Drawing attendees with this economy may be difficult.

\*Source: 2024 Speaking Industry Survey



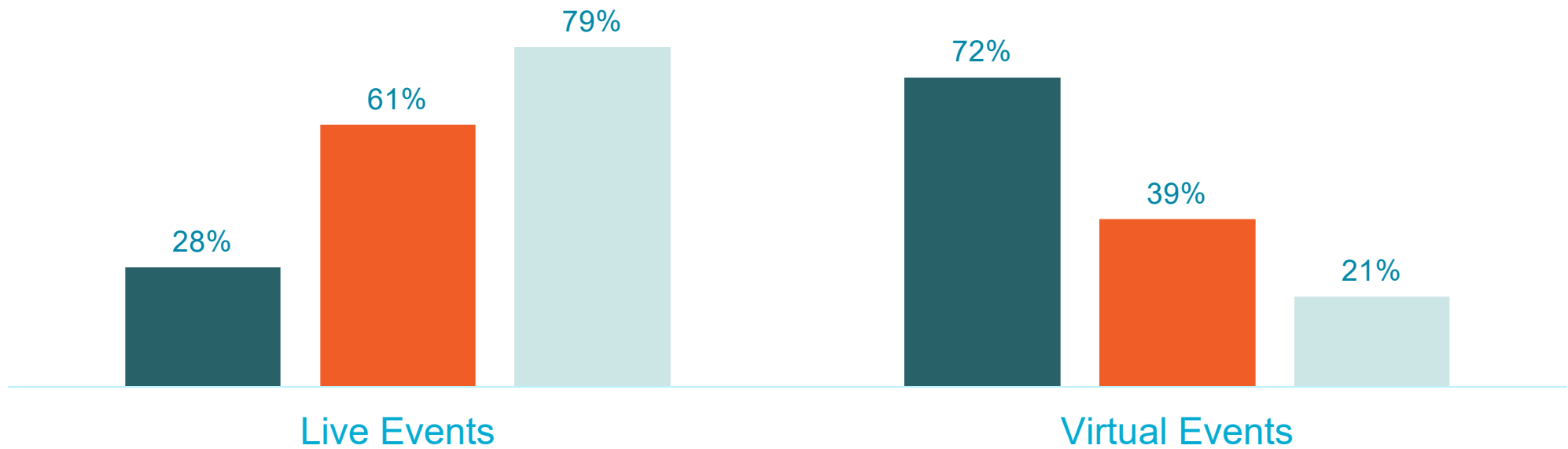


Trend #1: More Strategic Budget Decisions

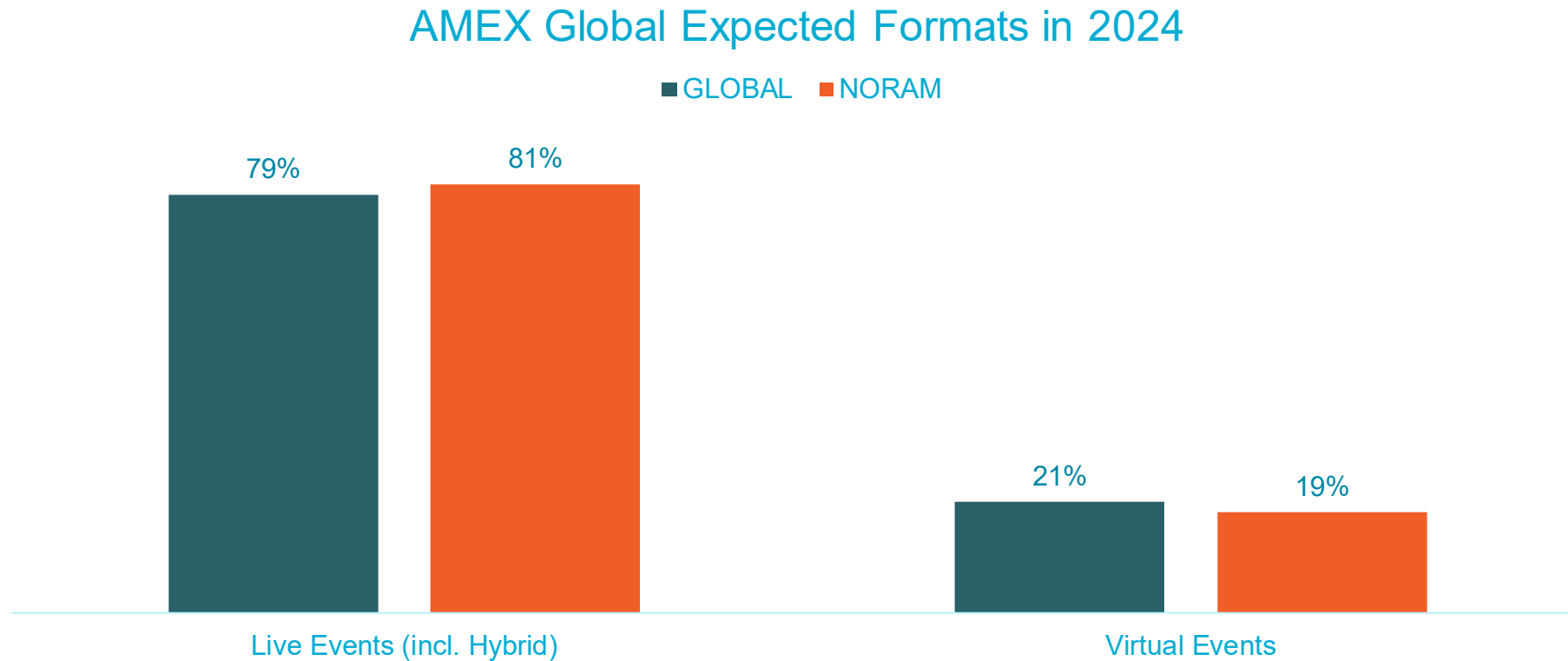
# We're Back, Baby!

## AAE Live vs. Virtual

■ 2021 ■ 2022 ■ 2023



# The Return of In-Person Events





# Experiencing a Triple Threat in 2024



More  
In-Person  
Events



Increased  
Costs to Host  
Events



Rising  
Speaking  
Fees + Travel

# Over 75%



of speakers do NOT include their travel expenses in speaking fees in 2024



# Budget Decisions and Speaking in 2024:

- ✓ An increase in **smaller and regional meetings** is already replacing larger events for some organizers.
- ✓ Booking **local speakers** to help reduce the transportation cost of booking them, freeing up budget for non-negotiables.
- ✓ **Speakers will be selected more on outcomes, engagement, and relevance** than celebrity alone.
- ✓ Speakers looking to stay competitive should also **keep their pricing competitive**.



## Trend #2: Event Sentiment is Positive(ish)



# We're Conflicted



**Higher attendance** with digital transformation and AI. They want to stay informed.

**Folks are ready** for in person events and we can expect to see higher attendance rates.

Live events **will still struggle** to see the same number of attendees as previous.

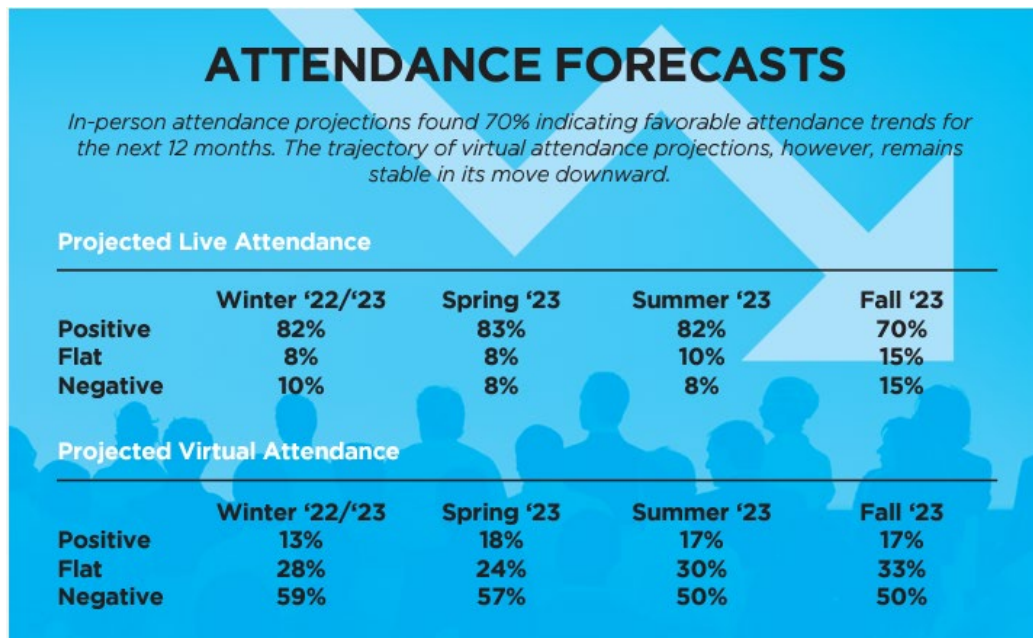
**Lower audience turnout**, but increased virtual attendance

We had a very high in-person turnout in 2022, then dropped about 30% in 2023. I think 2024 will land somewhere in the middle.



\*Comments and responses from the 2024 AAE Speaking Industry Benchmark Survey

# MPI's Fall 2023 Forecast



Sentiment about live attendance is positive, but **at its lowest level** since Winter 2022. (dropping 12pts to 70%)

Projected virtual attendance sentiment is holding steady even with the decrease in number of events expected.

# US Positive Sentiment Reflected in Job Retention

## American Express Global Meetings & Events Forecast\*

How likely are you to look for a new job in the next 12 months?

	GLOBAL	NORAM
Likely	25%	16%
Neutral or Not Sure	28%	28%
Unlikely	46%	56%

84%

\*Grab this data at <https://www.amexglobalbusinesstravel.com/meetings-events/research-insights>



## Positive(ish) Sentiment and Speakers in 2024:

- ✓ Speakers are excited about events in 2024. They are confident it will be a great year.
- ✓ Some are still recovering from the pandemic economically, so 2024 is seen as a year of rebuilding and opportunity.
- ✓ Speakers are seeing increased competition for business. Talent buyers will benefit from this in two ways:
  1. Great speakers thrive when faced with challenges, and
  2. Some speakers may be more flexible in negotiations.



## Trend #3: Bringing Us Together

# Trending Topics in 2024



Source: AAE Speakers



# Themes to Watch in 2024:

- Neurodiversity and Accessibility
- Artificial Intelligence
- Belonging and DEI
- Mental Health
- Corporate Culture
- Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability (ESG)
- Politics, Human Rights, and Economics



# We Want More Opportunities to Connect

Eventbrite Trends 2023\*:

63% of Americans agree that attending an in-person event makes them feel less isolated/lonely.

57% of respondents wanted more networking events in 2023



<https://www.eventbrite.com/blog/press/newsroom/eventbrite-trends-report-2023-predictions/>





Trend #3: Bringing Us Together

## Will 2024 Be Another Divisive Year?



# The Programming Challenge

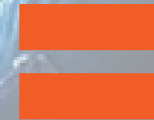
Keeping  
the  
Peace



Staying  
Informed



Feeling  
Heard



Uniting  
Divided  
Communities

# DE&I: Strong Demand & Softer Messaging

## June 2023

Supreme Court ruled to prohibit race-based affirmative action, impacting minority admission to colleges.<sup>1</sup>

## November 2023

Tech layoff wave heavily impacted DEI-focused roles in large organizations like Amazon and Meta, and open job roles focused on DEI were reportedly down 19%.<sup>3</sup>

## August 2023

A flood of lawsuits were filed against large corporations, including McDonalds, Kellogg, Activision Blizzard, and others, alleging that DEI programs are discriminatory practices and therefore illegal.<sup>2</sup>

## January 2024

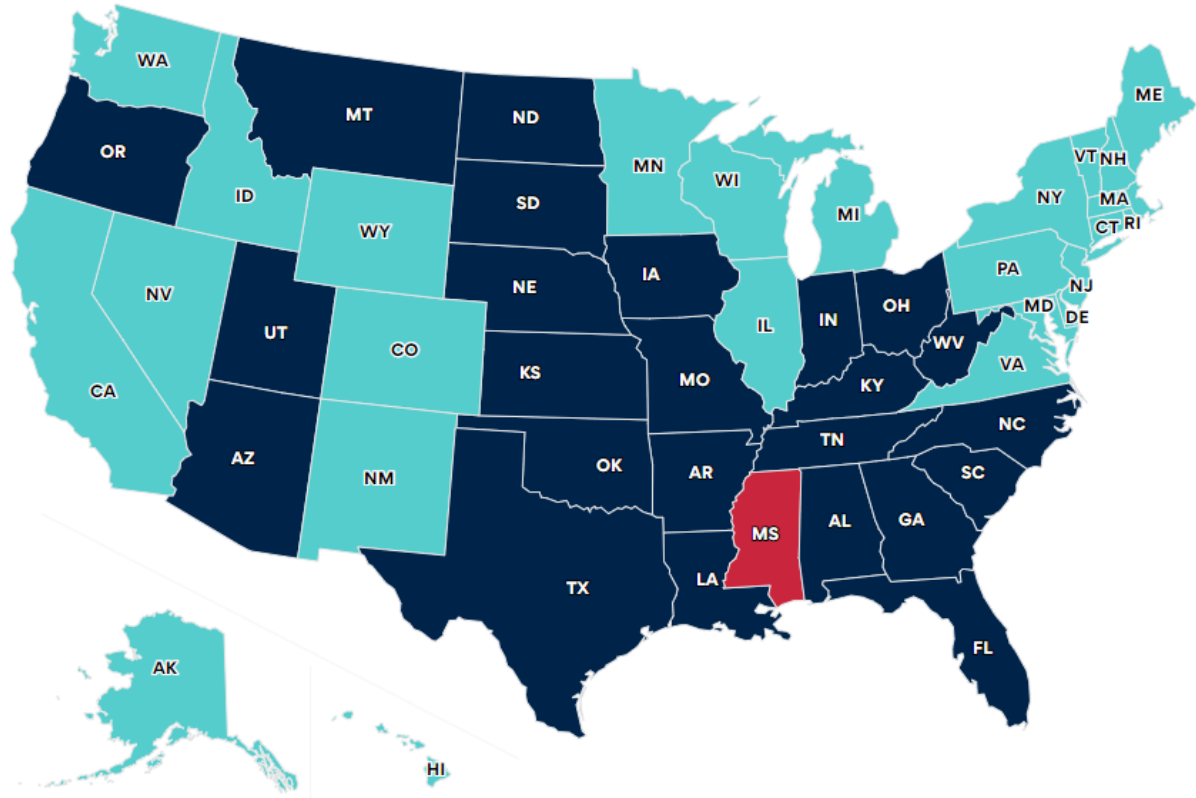
Texas law passes preventing public universities from having DEI offices and supporting DEI programs, including university-led student support groups. Similar laws being monitored in many other states.<sup>4</sup>

1. <https://hbr.org/2024/01/dei-is-under-attack-heres-how-companies-can-mitigate-the-legal-risks>  
2. <https://www.foxnews.com/us/prominent-us-firms-face-allegations-workforce-discrimination-diversity-efforts>  
3. <https://factorialhr.com/blog/dei-teams/>  
4. <https://www.texastribune.org/2023/12/28/texas-new-laws-dei-ban-colleges-universities/>

# DE&I Legislation Map: Impacting Public Higher Education

■ On Watch ■ Bills Introduced or Approved ■ No Bills

Trend #3: Bringing Us Together



Via Best Colleges



# Inclusive Event Efforts Persist

## American Express Global Meetings & Events Forecast\*

The two largest ways that event organizers plan to incorporate DE&I practices at events are:

1. Choosing diverse/minority speakers, emcees, or entertainment (44% NA)
2. Providing an option to attend the meeting or event virtually (40% NA)

\*Grab this data at <https://www.amexglobalbusinesstravel.com/meetings-events/research-insights>

## Sustainability and DE&I

### Incorporating DE&I

Percent of respondents

Providing the option to attend an event virtually and choosing diverse speakers are the top two ways respondents say they incorporate DE&I.

How does your organization or client actively strive to incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion into its meetings and events? Please select your organizations top 3 focus areas.

	GLOBAL	NORTH AMERICA	EUROPE	LATIN AMERICA	ASIA PACIFIC
Providing an option to attend the meeting or event virtually	40%	40%	43%	38%	37%
Focusing on accessibility (wheelchair-friendly venue and activities)	33%	32%	31%	40%	28%
Building in alternative forms of communication (e.g., sign language, sub-titles, translator, etc.)	32%	29%	30%	38%	34%
Using diverse / minority-owned suppliers (hotel, F&B, DMC, ground transportation, audiovisual (AV) / production)	31%	31%	28%	35%	36%
Choosing diverse / minority speakers, emcees, or entertainment	37%	44%	35%	31%	34%
Within meeting or event content (topics and presentations)	34%	36%	39%	27%	30%
Through a charitable giving element of the meeting or event	21%	23%	21%	13%	27%
Including gender pronoun preferences in meeting registration sites and virtual/ physical name badges (e.g., she / her, he / him / his, they / them etc.)	26%	26%	23%	28%	28%
Support accessibility needs (e.g. close captioning)	24%	20%	24%	30%	28%
Nursing / lactation rooms	11%	9%	11%	15%	7%
Prayer / multi-faith rooms	9%	6%	14%	6%	7%
My organization does not actively strive to incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion into its meetings and events	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other; please specify	2%	3%	1%	1%	1%
Don't know	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%



Trend #3: Bringing Us Together





## Bringing Us Together and Speaking in 2024:

- ✓ Belonging on the rise
- ✓ More neurodiversity and disabled representation
- ✓ DEI won't go away, even as language around DEI softens
- ✓ More online event communities



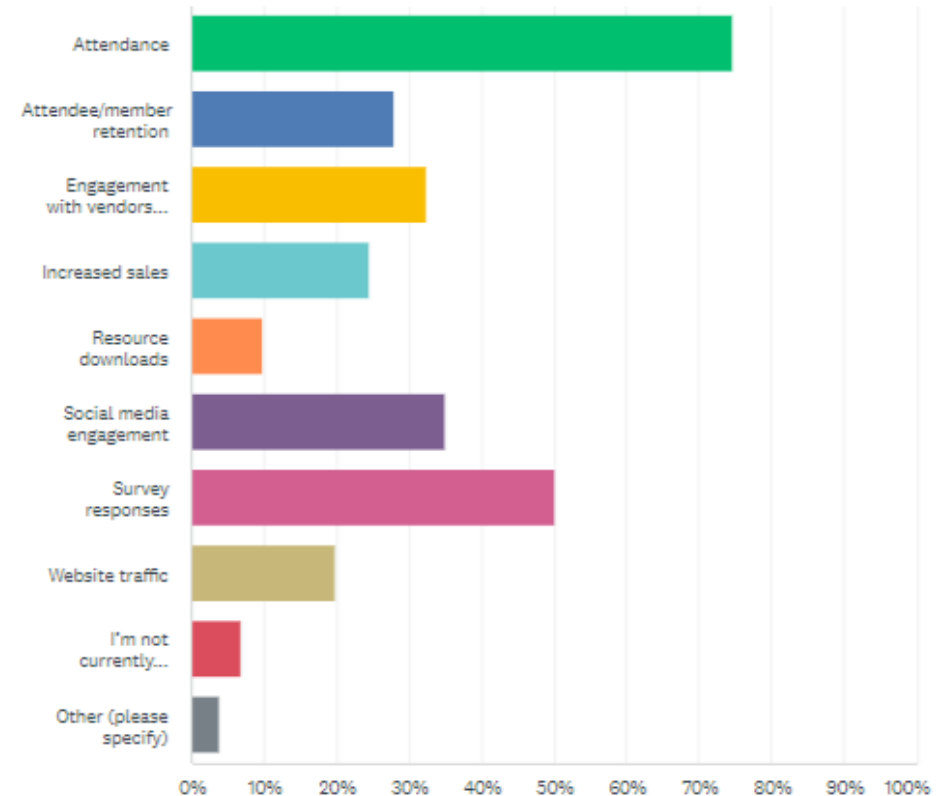


## Trend #4: Shifting Our KPIs

# What KPIs Matter Most in 2024

1. Attendance
2. Survey responses
3. Social media engagement

How do you measure the success of your event?\*



\*Based on 300+ early responses to the 2024 AAE Speaking Industry Benchmark Survey

# Why is Attendance the #1 KPI in 2024?

Event attendees are more selective than ever before.

## Challenging Financial Environment

- Rising costs to attend and travel
- Uncertain economic and political outcomes

## Perceived Value of Your Event

- Delivering the desired outcome (for attendees)
- Importance of a clear and unique offer


## Time and Location Fits Their Personal Preferences

- Work-life balance matters more than ever before
- Increased travel distance impacts cost and time



# When Will We Be Back to Pre-Pandemic Levels?

## American Express Global Meetings & Events Forecast\*



	GLOBAL	NORAM	EMEA	LATAM	APAC
Our attendee numbers already match or exceed this	28%	<b>35%</b>	30%	24%	12%
In 2024	42%	42%	35%	52%	43%
BACK BY EOY	70%	77%	65%	76%	55%

\*Grab this data at <https://www.amexglobalbusinesstravel.com/meetings-events/research-insights>

# What do Event Organizers want most from Speakers?\*

## Delivering a message that resonates

\*Source: 2023 AAE Internal Client Survey



# What These KPIs Mean for Speakers in 2024

- ✓ Speaker recognition can drive attendance, but **you don't always need a celebrity** to deliver a great and memorable experience.
- ✓ More pre-event publicity for and by speakers to demonstrate to attendees **why they don't want to miss your event**.
- ✓ Having relevant and motivating content along with an engaging delivery style that stays with an audience are what event planners are looking for most right now. **Think experience.**
- ✓ Emerging speakers will leverage video and technology to help **introduce themselves to audiences** ahead of an event.





## Trend #5: Yes, Technology

# Introducing...

## AI Sharon



# Hey AI - Are We There Yet?

## Speakers

50% are currently using AI

Another 25% plan to start in 2024

## Event Organizers

33% are currently using AI

Another 33% plan to start in 2024

\*Based on 300+ early responses to the 2024 AAE Speaking Industry Benchmark Survey



# AI is Facing a Copyright Battle

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IP Law




Photo Illustration: Jonathan Harts/Bloomberg Law; Photos: Getty Images

Jan. 29, 2024, 5:06AM EST

## Creatives Battling AI Companies Over Copyright Turn to Congress

Oma Seddiq Tech Policy Reporter

Isaiah Poritz Legal Reporter

Diego Areas Munhoz Reporter

- AI sparks copyright, job replacement concerns for artists
- Lawmakers propose ideas as courts consider the technology

In 1908, the Supreme Court ruled that "piano rolls," a new and increasingly popular technology that automatically played songs without a human musician, didn't violate copyright law—a blow to the music industry. Songwriters and composers felt their livelihoods threatened but had no grounds to demand royalties from piano-roll makers that copied their sheet music.

That was until Congress stepped in the following year, amending the law to address piano rolls and ensure musicians were paid royalties.

More than a century later, musicians—along with other creatives—are yet again fearful an emerging technology could disrupt their industries: artificial intelligence.

Copyright holders ranging from newspapers to novelists to artists have brought the top AI companies, including OpenAI Inc., Stability AI Ltd., and Meta Platforms Inc., to court over alleged infringement of their works in new AI products. Musicians, actors, and other creatives also warn that the surge in deepfakes, which clone their image, voice, and likeness, jeopardize their creations and their jobs.

**Related Stories**

[Understanding Deepfakes And The Taylor Swift Images: QuickTake](#)  
Jan. 26, 2024, 11:35AM EST

[OpenAI Faces Existential Threat In New York Times Copyright Suit](#)  
December 29, 2023, 12:47PM EST

[AI-Faked Drake, The Weeknd Song Amps Music Industry's IP Alarm](#)  
May 2, 2023, 4:50AM EST

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Jan 2, 2024 - Technology

## Copyright law is AI's 2024 battlefield

Megan Morrone

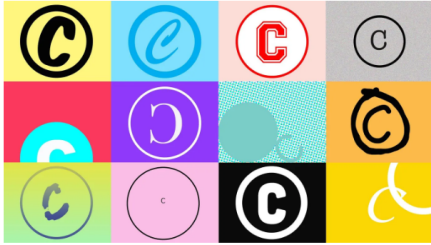


Illustration: Sarah Grillo/Axios

Looming fights over [copyright in AI](#) are likely to set the new technology's course in 2024 faster than legislation or regulation.

**Driving the news:** The New York Times [filed a lawsuit](#) against OpenAI and Microsoft on December 27, claiming their AI systems' "widescale copying" constitutes copyright infringement.

**The big picture:** After a year of [lawsuits from creators](#) protecting their works from getting gobbled up and repackaged by generative AI tools, the new year could see significant rulings that alter the progress of AI innovation.

**Why it matters:** The copyright decisions coming down the pike — over both the use of copyrighted material in the development of AI systems and also the status of works that are created by or with the [help of AI](#) — are crucial to the technology's future and could determine winners and losers in the market.

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[Home](#) | [Updates](#) | AI industry faces threat of copyright law in 2024

9 Jan 2024

## AI industry faces threat of copyright law in 2024

*The AI sector in 2024 is at a crossroads with existing copyright laws, particularly in the US. The legal system's reaction to these challenges will be critical in striking the correct balance between preserving creators' rights and promoting AI innovation and progress.*



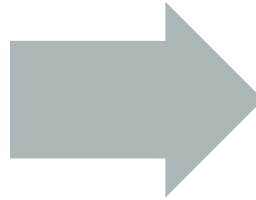
Copyright laws are set to provide a substantial challenge to the artificial intelligence (AI) sector in 2024, particularly in the context of generative AI (GenAI) technologies becoming pervasive in 2023. At the heart of the matter lie concerns about the use of copyrighted material to train AI systems and the generation of results that may be significantly similar to existing copyrighted works. Legal battles are predicted to affect the future of AI innovation and may even change the industry's economic models and overall direction.

According to tech companies, the lawsuits could create massive barriers to the expanding AI sector. On the other hand, the plaintiffs claim that the firms owe them payment for using their work without fair compensation or authorization.

# The AI Discussion is Evolving

2023

- Speakers about the general impact of AI on society



2024

- Speakers on how to apply AI to industries

# What Technology Means for Speaking in 2024

- ✓ Continued demand for AI-related topics and speakers who can speak to applying AI within an industry or on the ethical and legal implications of AI.
- ✓ More AI Sharons. Watch for AI-based voice simulations, expanding the possibilities for speaking sessions to reach global audiences in multiple languages.
- ✓ We're all getting there – there are great tools to improve efficiency for all of us in the event industry, saving time and money.





*Thank you!*

# Questions?



Don't forget to review this session!

## Like Free Stuff?

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**PLUS!** Get an advance copy of the 2024 Speaking Industry Benchmark Report when its published!

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