



New record for WMF - We Make Future: over 70,000 attendees from 90 countries to chart a new direction for the future

The curtain has fallen on the 2024 edition of WMF - We Make Future, marking an unprecedented success for the International Fair and Festival on AI, Tech & Digital Innovation conceived and organized by Search On Media Group. For the first time, it was held in the city of Bologna. Over the course of three days, more than 70,000 attendees were recorded, alongside the participation of over 700 exhibitors and sponsors, 3,000 startups and open innovation stakeholders, 1,000 speakers across 90 educational stages, and over 130 institutional representatives. The event raised the bar and reaffirmed its role as an international benchmark in innovation. Various topics were addressed, from Artificial Intelligence to tech transfer, aerospace, legality, sustainability, creator economy, accessibility, and global innovation policies. The event saw great success with guests like Enrico Mentana, Milena Gabanelli, Floriana Bulfon, Nestor Maslej, and Alec Ross. The event was supported by MAECI - Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and ICE - Italian Trade Agency.

Bologna, 06/18/2024

The 2024 edition of [WMF - We Make Future](#), the International Fair and Festival on AI, Tech & Digital Innovation, held from June 13 to 15 at BolognaFiere, has concluded. Conceived and organized by **Search On Media Group**, the three-day event was confirmed as a **global epicenter** of opportunities and future development: an unmissable event for **big tech, brands, startups**, professionals, NGOs, and **innovators**, registering **over 70,000 attendees** from **more than 90 countries** and bringing together **700 exhibitors and sponsors**, **over 1,000 speakers**, more than **130 institutional representatives**, and **over 3,000 startups and open innovation stakeholders**.

"Year after year, WMF increasingly operates as a global platform for meeting, exchanging, and building the future. It is a tool and an opportunity that is in demand internationally, and the record success of this edition proves it," explains **Cosmano Lombardo**, Founder and CEO of Search On Media Group and creator of WMF. "Many actors involved in the event asked for opportunities to engage with markets and entities otherwise difficult to reach. Together with each of them, we worked to build a platform that truly connects the entire world, creating new synergies at every latitude," he concludes. "It was clearly a significant investment for us at Search On, both in terms of effort and resources and economically, but we are happy to have kept the event here in Italy, in our country, making it a crucial global hub of innovation for these three days. We hope this record edition is the beginning of an increasingly shared and collective journey."

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WMF, the **only certified international fair on innovation in Italy**, had **Ford Italia** as its **Main Sponsor** and enjoyed the patronage of the Emilia-Romagna Region and entities such as Rai Regione Emilia-Romagna, the Regional School Office for Emilia-Romagna, ADCI - Italian Art Directors Club, with the Ministry of Tourism and Visit Emilia-Romagna as Main Partners.

Three days marked by **knowledge sharing** and **global business**, with **participants from Europe, Africa, North and South America, Asia, and the Middle East**, also focused on **future development perspectives** driven by technological and digital innovation, with artificial intelligence at the forefront. Hundreds of events including **educational sessions, business meetings, networking, shows, and entertainment** engaged participants and companies to explore opportunities in various markets and synergies in the international innovation ecosystem.

An annual must for big tech, companies, startups, and open innovation stakeholders

Confirmed as an essential annual event for brands, startups, companies, and entities active in the global innovation market, WMF 2024 hosted **more than 700 exhibitors and sponsors**, generating fruitful **business meetings** among **over 90 participating countries**. **14 international pavilions** showcased national innovations and collaboration opportunities, including pavilions from **Germany, the Dominican Republic, Ukraine, Africa, France, Albania, the UK, Bulgaria, Spain, and Switzerland**, which was awarded Innovative Country of the Year. Additionally, on the startup front, **over 3,000 startups** and open innovation stakeholders benefited from significant visibility, development, and business opportunities offered by the event. Each pavilion provided spaces and moments dedicated to **showcasing innovative projects** through dedicated stages and **exclusive networking events**, as well as B2B areas that hosted hundreds of **business meetings between startups and investors**, investment funds, and incubators. Additionally, **over 80 delegates** were involved in the event by **ICE - Italian Trade Agency**, thanks to the synergy of more than **16 foreign offices**. **17 Italian chambers of commerce abroad** were also present at the fair, including **Mendoza, Houston, Lyon, and Dubai** with the **Assocamerestero** inter-chamber stand.

The Global Innovation Policy Summit: over 130 institutions involved

Institutional participation at WMF 2024 was extensive, featuring involvement from figures such as **Adolfo Urso**, *Minister of Enterprises and Made in Italy*, who delivered a video message from the Mainstage, **Deputy Minister of Enterprises and Made in Italy Valentino Valentini**, *President of the Emilia-Romagna Region* **Stefano Bonaccini**, *EU Special Representative for the Gulf region* **Luigi di Maio**, *Honorable* **Brando Benifei**, and the *Mayor of Bologna* **Matteo Lepore**. Thanks to the **GovTech Summit**, the three-day event provided a productive meeting and discussion space for institutions, civil society, companies, and startups. Notable institutional participants included the **Directorate-General CONNECT** of the **European Commission**, the **European Investment Bank**, the **Italian Data Protection Authority**, and the **European Parliament**, which engaged in a panel

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discussion with big tech companies **OpenAI** and **Google** on the hot topic of **Data Protection & AI**. The expo area also featured **MIMIT - Ministry of Enterprises and Made in Italy**, **MiC - Ministry of Culture**, as well as the Calabria, Puglia, and Basilicata regions, and **Data Valley**, the innovative ecosystem of the Emilia-Romagna region.

Access to the Future, thanks to the vision of over 100 innovators on the Mainstage

As always, the Mainstage captured the primary moments of discovery and cultural dissemination, projecting participants into an ever-closer future. Topics explored this year included **Artificial Intelligence**, with experts like **Nestor Maslej**, **Alec Ross**, and Emma Redmond from **OpenAI**, robotics with **ErgoCub**, the robot born from the collaboration between IIT and Inail, legality with investigative journalist **Floriana Bulfon** and prosecutors **Nicola Gratteri** and **Giuseppe Lombardo**, and sustainability, accessibility, the creator economy, and journalism, discussed with guests such as **Enrico Mentana**, **Milena Gabanelli**, and **Alan Friedman**.

There were also entertainment moments with artistic performances by the group of deaf dancers **The Silent Beat**, LIS Performers from **RAI Accessibility**, and the **Psycodrummers**, as well as authoritative voices from the music world, with artists like **Manuel Agnelli**, **Fatoumata Diawara**, **Dardust**, **GAIA**, **Colapesce Dimartino**, Kenobit, Santino Cardamone, and Mimmo Cavallaro. The Mainstage also hosted numerous representatives from companies and entities such as **OpenAI**, **Intel**, **Stanford University's AI Index Institute**, **IIT - Italian Institute of Technology**, **Google**, the **European Commission**, **Monge**, **3Bmeteo**, **WWF**, **Emergency**, and many others, all offering a prospective vision of the future we are building as a global ecosystem through innovation tools.

Reference for AI & Digital - Tech sector education

More than 700 educational sessions were offered over the three days, with **over 1,000 speakers** from around the world participating. Among the core values that have always guided WMF's actions, **education played a central role** again this year, confirming the event as an international reference for the **development of the AI & Digital - Tech sector**. On the **over 90 educational stages** of WMF 2024, **translated into 10 languages** and dedicated to analyzing all major themes of technological and digital innovation as well as social issues, experts like **Matt Navarra**, **Artur Mosiak** (Google), Sergio Barile (La Sapienza), Jean Gabriel Ganascia (Sorbonne University), **Abran Maldonado** (OpenAI), Donata Columbro, Umberto Basso, Matteo Mille, and **Aliya Grig** shared their insights. Topics covered on the stages included artificial intelligence, aerospace, coding, digital marketing, tourism, advertising, data and analytics, machine learning, cybersecurity, investment and fundraising, open innovation, social media, work & HR, smart cities, and much more.

Among the sponsors and exhibitors of WMF 2024 were Ford Italia, Main Sponsor of WMF 2024, MiC - Ministry of Culture, MIMIT - Ministry of Enterprises and Made in Italy, HAI (Human-Centered AI Institute) of Stanford University, Intel, ESA - European Space Agency, Amazon, Monge, Qonto, Bocconi, Invitalia, Globant, PwC Italia, Exelab, Aruba, TikTok, Emergency, Rai Pubblica Utilità, Serverplan, Clust - ER,

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Basilicata Region, Amperry, IT.COM, SAP, Netval and Knowledge Share, PNI, LegaCoop, EURID, Netsons, 3b METEO, Data Valley, Opstart, Fondazione Amaldi, Sensation Profumerie. Media partners included Studio 54 Network, RDS, RDS Next, and IgersItalia.

The next edition is already scheduled to take place again in Bologna at **BolognaFiere** on **June 5, 6, and 7, 2025**.

Useful Link

- [WMF - We Make Future](#)
- [Search On Media Group](#)

WMF - We Make Future - International Fair and Festival on Tech and Digital Innovation

On June 5-7, 2025, the WMF - We Make Future returns to BolognaFiere, the only certified international fair entirely dedicated to the world of innovation. This globally renowned event annually brings together the best in digital and social innovation, featuring major international players, startups, scaleups, investors, institutions, universities, and non-profit organizations. In 2024, it attracted over 70,000 attendees from 90 countries, with more than 700 sponsors and exhibitors, over 1,000 speakers and guests from around the world, 3,000 startups and investors, and over 90 educational stages. WMF is the premier international fair for the world of innovation.

Search On Media Group

Since 2004, the company aims to spread digital culture by managing communities, supporting sharing activities, and providing strategic and operational consulting through Search On Consulting, in the field of Digital Marketing and Digital Transformation for large companies. From the experience and professionalism of Search On Media Group also come the Business Unit Education - which organizes the WMF and other educational events - and the ibrida.io platform - managing online, hybrid, and offline events in a customizable and flexible way.

For information and materials

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