



## IFA Opening Press Conference 2026

### Speech Leif Lindner, CEO IFA Management

#### 00 Welcome

Hello, everyone! Also, from my side, a warm welcome to Berlin. Welcome to IFA, the **world's largest tech event** for **consumer electronics**, **home appliances**, and **future tech**.

We are so **proud** to host you for the next five days and to showcase the latest technology from exhibitors around the world.

Our visitors will enjoy top-notch interactive experiences and inspiring lectures from the world's leading experts. And of course, our cultural program, with live concerts on the stage of our Sommergarten.

Our incredible team works year-round to make IFA **the** place where the **future becomes real**. Today, understanding technology and its impact on our society **matters more than ever**.

#### 01 Opening: The Future is Now

We are living through an **extra-ordinary moment**. Technology is transforming our economies and our everyday lives at a speed **we have never seen before**.

AI, drones, humanoid robots: only a few years ago, many of the technologies you will see this week were still science fiction. **Today, they are reality**.

And that reality causes both: excitement and unease. Some people see incredibly powerful tools to solve humanity's biggest problems. Others feel what researchers now call automation anxiety: the fear that technology might take their jobs or reshape their lives faster than they can adapt.

Both reactions are reasonable. And both point to the same fact: **the change is real**.

Global investment in artificial intelligence has already overtaken the combined costs of the Manhattan Project and the Apollo moon landings. And it is still **accelerating**. Forecasts suggest global AI spending could reach more than **2.5 trillion dollars** in 2026.

What makes this moment different is not only the massive scale of change. It is also the **speed** at which it unfolds. For most of human history, the effects of new technologies spread over years, often over generations, giving society time to adapt.

Today, that is no longer the case. Artificial intelligence is evolving in months rather than decades. Almost every week brings new capabilities and new models, way faster than society can fully understand their implications. Entire industries are beginning to **transform in real time**.

Demis Hassabis, Nobel Prize winner and **Chair** of Google DeepMind, has said that what lies ahead could be ten times bigger and ten times faster than the Industrial Revolution. Whether that prediction proves exactly right or not, one thing is already clear: we are **entering a new technological era**.

This scope and speed of change create a new challenge: helping society keep up.

That is why IFA **matters more than ever** in its long history.

From radio to TV, personal computers, and now AI and robotics, for more than 100 years, IFA has been **the** place where society first encounters new technology.

But unlike the radio or television revolution, the AI and robotics revolution will not give us decades to catch up. This time, we need to be faster and democratise understanding of what this technology means as quickly and as broadly as we can.

Because technology alone does not create progress. **Understanding does**. This is where IFA helps. People need to engage with technology directly, listen to the experts behind it, and form their own view of where they stand.

The future is no longer something on the horizon.

**The future is now.**

## **02 Why technology matters**

But why does this matter? Why should any of us care?

**Because technology is the driving force of human progress.**

Humanity faces challenges on a scale that no country and no company can solve alone: from healthcare and aging societies to sustainable energy, education, and feeding a growing global population.

The real promise of technology is not simply that we become faster or more efficient. It is that we gain capabilities we have never had before.

Take medicine: An AI system recently helped discover and design a new drug for a fatal lung disease, and it is now showing real results in patients.

Or take a farmer in Kenya using nothing but her phone to check a diseased crop. An AI app now diagnoses it more accurately than a human advisor and reaches half a million farmers every month.

Another field of rapid progress is Materials Science: Google DeepMind's AI has identified 2.2 million potential new materials in a **fraction** of the time it would take human researchers.

Around the world, we see enormous excitement about artificial intelligence, but also growing concern. Recent surveys show that more and more people are uneasy about the pace of AI development, even as they use it every day. This year, graduation speeches celebrating AI were met with boos from students at several universities. And in more and more places, communities and local officials are pushing back against the data centers that make AI possible. Against the power grids. The water use. The sheer physical footprint this technology demands.

This is a signal that people are looking for orientation and for a say in how this transformation unfolds.

That is why democratising technology also means democratising understanding. We need places where people can **experience** technology, not just read about it. Places that help society make sense of the biggest technological transformation of our **lifetime**.

That is what **Innovation for All** means.

And that is what **IFA** stands for.

### **03 From AI to Robotics**

And this transformation is accelerating, from AI to Robotics.

Over the past few years, we have watched artificial intelligence evolve at a remarkable speed. The frontier labs in the US keep pushing the ceiling higher, releasing ever more capable models every few months. But right behind them, open-source models from China - from DeepSeek to Z.AI to MiniMax - are closing the gap faster than almost anyone predicted. A global technology-sprint that is making AI ever more powerful.

First, AI learned to create. Then it learned to reason. Then it began to work alongside us. And now it is taking the next step: it is beginning to act.

Intelligence is moving beyond the screen and into the real world. Research labs and companies around the world are building what they call **world models**: systems that don't just process language but learn how the physical world behaves. How objects move. How a hand grasps a cup. How a room looks from a different angle. This is the foundation for the next generation of robotics.

And it is happening everywhere at once, from Silicon Valley to Beijing to right here in Europe.

Soon, AI-driven robots will greet us at the front door, help us in the kitchen, drive us to work, and support us in caring for an aging population. These humanoid robots can be

experienced here at IFA in the coming days. Our visitors will have the opportunity to watch the RoboCup, featuring autonomous robots competing in live football matches, and Robots on the Runway, where humanoid and entertainment robots will take over the stage to demonstrate how technology, movement, and fun come together to create a live experience never seen before at IFA.

What looks like entertainment is, in reality, cutting-edge research in artificial intelligence and autonomous decision-making.

And at the same time, something else is happening: intelligence is getting smaller. A new generation of energy-efficient AI models is emerging that can run directly on the device in your hand, your car, or your home, without ever calling the cloud. This is Edge AI, bringing intelligence to everyday objects affordably and everywhere.

These developments might cause a new **hardware supercycle**.

As AI becomes more affordable and moves into the physical world, we will see many new kinds of hardware. Sensors, wearables, home appliances, robots, and entirely new devices. **Everything is becoming intelligent.**

#### **04 IFA: Where the future becomes an experience**

IFA is the playground where people can experience these new technologies firsthand and understand what it means for them. They can play with it. Compare products, ask questions. They meet the people behind the technology. And discuss with other like-minded tech enthusiasts.

**Trust cannot be downloaded.**

Trust is built through experimentation, exchange, and experience.

The more digital our world becomes, the more valuable these real encounters become.

**That is what happens here in Berlin.**

This year, more than **220,000 visitors** will come to IFA. They will meet around **2,000 exhibitors** who will present their innovations across almost **190,000 square meters**.

But one number stands out to me: **every second end-consumer at IFA is under 35**. Young people. Students. Families discovering technology together. **Two-thirds return year after year** – and **thousands come for the very first time**.

IFA is where the next generation meets the next technology. They will see groundbreaking product launches from the world's leading technology companies. And it's not only visitors taking notice. This year, IFA was named Best International Show in Europe at the AEO Excellence Awards.

**Today's demonstration is tomorrow's everyday technology.**

## **05 IFA brings the future to life.**

We bring the future to life.

If IFA is the place where people experience technological transformation, then our responsibility goes far beyond organizing a great exhibition.

**Our mission** is to create opportunities for people to discover, understand, and shape the future. Not only for one week in September, but throughout the entire year.

### **We bring technology into culture.**

Through **IFA Moments**, together with partners such as **Fotografiska** and **Volkswagen R**, we take the conversation beyond the exhibition halls and into the city of Berlin. And every September, the **IFA Sommergarten** brings world-class live performances to a technology event like **no other**. This year, some of Germany's most popular podcasts, such as **Fast & Curious**, **KI Update**, **Healthwise**, and **Ronzheimer**, will be recorded live on stage.

### **We bring the innovation ecosystem together.**

Innovation rarely happens in isolation. It happens when entrepreneurs meet politicians and researchers, when startups meet global brands, and when retailers exchange ideas with manufacturers. That is why we continue to expand platforms such as the **Retail Leaders Summit**, our new **Retail Innovation Zone** and **IFA Next**. Throughout this week, you'll hear directly from the companies shaping this transformation. Leaders from AMD and Neura Robotics, among others, will share how AI is moving from research into real products and real industries. And as another example, Volkswagen – one of the world's largest automotive groups – and its brand ELLI will be focusing on mobility in its Tech Talk.

### **We help innovation reach society.**

We collaborate with creators who inspire millions of people every day. Our **IFA Creator Hub** gives more than a thousand creators the opportunity to experience new technologies firsthand and share them with the world. And with the **IFA Innovation Awards**, we are creating a new international stage for the products and ideas that will **define the future**.

### **We believe innovation should benefit everyone.**

Together with partners such as **Cradle to Cradle**, **Lebenshilfe Berlin**, and **Sozialhelden**, we are making IFA more sustainable, more inclusive, and more accessible. Because innovation only fulfills its promise when everyone has **the opportunity** to participate.

## **06 Call to action**

Dear guests and media partners, as you can see, the next five days are packed with highlights. IFA will be the global home for **consumer electronics**, **home appliances**, and **future tech**. Nowhere else does the future feel as real, or as close, as it does here.

And as we enter a new technological era, I see IFA's role not simply as showcasing this transformation, but as helping people engage with it.

Because democratising technology must go hand in hand with democratising understanding.

That is Innovation for All.

So here is my invitation to you: Go into the halls. Experience the future. Touch it. Question it. And tell its story.

**The future is now.**

Thank you.