

Interview - Watt Matters in AI The Conference to Explore Radical Shifts in Energy Efficiency for Artificial Intelligence

1. Please briefly introduce yourself.

Hi, I am Pieter Hermans, part-time Business Developer at Convention Bureau Brainport Eindhoven. With a global network in HighTech – both in the scientific world and in industry – I use my connections to attract or initiate relevant international conferences for the Brainport Eindhoven Region. I live in Nuenen, the village where Vincent van Gogh once lived and painted!

2. How did the idea for Watt Matters in AI come about, and why is now the right time for this conference?

The idea actually started when I saw a documentary about data centers and how much energy AI consumes. It's massive. Everyone's focused on what AI can do – which is great – but we sometimes forget what it costs. Since there's already so much happening around AI here in Brainport Eindhoven, this was the moment to organise a conference on this topic. Together with TU/e, we reached out to Mission 10X, and they were immediately enthusiastic. That's how things started rolling, and they decided to organise the conference under their name. The topic is just super relevant – both for research and for industry.



3. What makes this conference different from existing AI or energy technology events?

Well, when this idea first came up, I looked into whether there were any existing conferences on this topic. And there aren't any. There are plenty of AI conferences, but they focus on applications of AI — how to use AI in technology, marketing, finance, that sort of thing. But none of them focus on how to apply AI to save energy, or, more importantly, how to make AI itself more energy-efficient. So in that sense, it's still a unique conference.

4. Why is this conference such a good fit for the Brainport Eindhoven region?

We're an innovation hotspot in Europe, or even the world. The leading company in chip manufacturing is ASML, but there are also many other companies in the region contributing to the development of technology. A lot is already happening here in terms of chip technology that can be used for AI. On top of that, there's a lot of focus on applying AI in sectors like healthcare, medical technology, and robotics. So, it fits perfectly within the Brainport region and aligns with its profile as a hub for technological innovation.



5. What does Watt Matters in AI say about the position of Brainport Eindhoven in the developments around energy and artificial intelligence?

Watt Matters in AI isn't just a Brainport Eindhoven conference — it's meant to be international. But the fact that the initiative started here says something. It shows that the region wants to be at the forefront, to take the lead and think differently. The Netherlands has a lot of knowledge in both tech and energy, and with this conference, we want to showcase not just what's happening here, but also across Europe. Too often, the focus is on the US or China, but Europe needs to step up too — and Brainport Eindhoven is helping to drive that.

6. Can you tell us about the key themes that will be central during the conference?

The conference takes a holistic approach. We're not just focusing on one part of the puzzle — we're bringing together themes like hardware, software, and data. That includes topics like quantum technology and neuromorphic computing on the hardware side, but also the role of software and how we handle data. These are all crucial areas, and they each attract different types of experts. That's why it's so important to bring them together. The aim is to create a multidisciplinary space where all these perspectives can connect and collaborate — not separate sessions, but an integrated approach.

7. Who is this conference interesting for?

This conference is for anyone involved in AI applications, data centers, and the energy sector. That includes tech professionals, infrastructure providers like data network operators, local and regional energy suppliers, and policymakers at regional, national, and European levels. While the focus is on Europe, international participants — including those from the US or China — are of course welcome. The program is developed by a dedicated committee, and although it's a one-day event, we aim to attract a broad and diverse audience from across Europe and beyond.

8. What has been the role of the Convention Bureau in the development of this conference?

We helped support Mission 10X as the organiser of the conference by providing all available tools. We also helped bring partners like TU/e on board and currently serve as secretary of the steering committee. Additionally, IO+ got involved to manage operations and communications—areas where universities often lack capacity.

This aligns perfectly with our goal at the Convention Bureau to support innovative, unconventional initiatives that reflect the region's strengths.

[Discover more about Watt Matters in AI](#)

