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Presseinformation

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Digitalization for existing buildings

An important foundation for successfully transforming construction

- **Data-based refurbishment with economic relevance**
- **From the analog inventory to the digital building model**
- **Forward-looking exhibitor solutions and innovation-driven supporting program**

Renovating and maintaining our buildings presents the construction industry with complex tasks. After all, it's barely possible to implement the diverse requirements for resilient existing buildings without the comprehensive digitalization of planning and construction processes. digitalBAU, which will be held in Cologne from 24 to 26 March 2026, will address these tasks with the focus topic "Digitalization for existing buildings". Taking center stage are technologies that make data acquisition, a holistic energy evaluation, and implementing refurbishment projects more precise and scalable.

While the new construction sector is currently facing complex economic challenges, existing buildings are developing into a key future market for the construction industry – in Germany and beyond. The certainty that ambitious climate targets cannot be achieved without a comprehensive transformation of the building sector is dominating the industry today more strongly and sustainably than ever before.

Data-based refurbishment with economic relevance

The importance of maintaining and revitalizing our existing buildings is further underpinned by current market figures. In its current brochure "Digitalization and Building in Existing Contexts", the German Federal Chamber of Architects puts the proportion of construction measures in existing buildings in Germany at

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around 70 percent. This high proportion clearly shows that the refurbishment of existing buildings is no niche topic but an industry-wide practice with huge economic significance. Prominent experts also stress that data-based tools in particular are an essential requirement for this. With their help, energy-efficient refurbishments can be implemented efficiently and economically. Analyses in the context of deep retrofit models, a holistic approach to the extensive energy refurbishment of buildings, show that complex refurbishment projects only become scalable when they are based on precise digital data. This forms the basis for all subsequent planning steps in the project. Digitalization is therefore becoming a key enabler for a future-oriented realignment of our existing buildings.

Building bridges – from the analog inventory to the digital building model

digitalBAU 2026 offers an impressive range of innovations that are already significantly shaping and will continue to revolutionize how existing buildings are dealt with, as Exhibition Director Cornelia Lutz points out: “Building in existing buildings is no longer a niche topic but a market of the future. In view of the high need for renovation, digital approaches are needed to preserve buildings, use resources efficiently, and make sustainable solutions visible – ideas that we will discuss at digitalBAU.”

One key element, for example, is the scan-to-BIM method, which uses laser scanning and photogrammetry to generate precise digital images of the built reality. These point clouds serve as the basis for further BIM models with a depth of information that goes far beyond geometric data. In addition, there are innovative approaches such as simulating refurbishment scenarios, which enable various energy-optimizing measures to be calculated accurately, compared, and weighed up before the start of construction.

The relevance of the circular economy is also growing thanks to digital solutions and tools. They allow the materials used in the building to be identified and documented in a digital building resource passport for further consideration. Data-driven approaches like these allow existing buildings to be regarded as a

valuable store of materials for the future, to reinforce resource conservation, and improve sustainability in the building life cycle.

Forward-looking exhibitor solutions and innovation-driven supporting program

The exhibitors at digitalBAU 2026 will be presenting practical products that can be used to integrate the technological possibilities directly into the day-to-day work of architects, planning offices, construction companies, and specialist trades companies.

BRZ (Hall 8, Stand 428) will be showcasing solutions to digitize business and project-related processes in construction companies, with a focus on the use of artificial intelligence. Fields of application include projects in existing buildings, which are often characterized by complex tenders, incomplete as-built documents, and tight deadlines. In addition to already established AI-supported cost estimation, BRZ will be presenting a new assistance solution that provides project-related information and supports simple tasks in the system.

FARO Focus is a 3D laser scanner for digitally recording existing buildings. It enables the rapid capture of precise 3D data, which can be processed directly and integrated into digital planning and analysis processes (Hall 8, Stand 320).

With ALLPLAN, the NEMETSCHEK Group (Hall 8, Stand 402) will be presenting solutions for digital work in existing buildings – from recording existing buildings to automated reconstruction and energy analysis. In addition, FRILO and SCIA cover structural calculations and optimizations for existing structures, for example, when upgrading timber and concrete elements or adding stories with reduced materials and carbon emissions.

PlanRadar (Hall 8, Stand 318) will be demonstrating the efficient implementation of digitization processes in existing buildings. The platform allows defects, tasks and inventory data to be recorded directly on site using mobile devices and distributed in real time to the respective trades. Renovation progress, quality and deadlines can thus be tracked transparently and problems rectified at an early stage.

digitalBAU is accompanied by a top-class supporting program on the various stages such as the Main Stage or the Neo Stage. Here, experts will discuss best practice examples, show options for digitizing existing buildings, and underscore the importance of the topic for public and private property owners and operators.

René Hommel from the planning and consulting company Arup will give a presentation on the hybrid demonstration model DEEP, which illustrates energy efficiency measures in existing residential buildings (Wednesday, March 25, 2 p.m., Main Stage). Also on the second day of the trade fair, Sarah Dungs, chairwoman of the Association for Building Renovation, will speak on the topic of “Existing Buildings as Standard” (Wednesday, March 25, 3:30 p.m., Main Stage).

digitalBAU will thus not only provide a comprehensive market overview but also promote valuable expert discourse in order to establish digital construction processes in the refurbishment sector.
The supporting program will be available on the digitalBAU website from February.

You can find more information about digitalBAU at: www.digital-bau.com

About digitalBAU
digitalBAU is the trade fair for digital products and solutions for the construction industry and represents the entire value chain related to the digital planning, construction and operation of buildings. The trade fair is primarily aimed at planners, architects, engineers, construction companies and tradespeople. It is a part of the BAU exhibition network and is held in partnership with the German National Association for Construction Software (BVBS). digitalBAU 2024 was host to around 280 exhibitors and more than 10,000 visitors. The next digitalBAU will be held from March 24 to 26, 2026 in Cologne.

Messe München
As one of the world’s leading trade fair organizers, Messe München presents the world of tomorrow at its around 90 international trade fairs. Its portfolio comprises trade fairs for capital and consumer goods, as well as for new technologies. These include 14 of the world’s leading trade fairs such as bauma, BAU, IFAT and electronica, cooperative events such as the IAA MOBILITY, and numerous guest events.
With an international network of affiliated companies and foreign representatives, Messe München is active worldwide. Together with its around 1,200 employees in the group, it organizes trade fairs in China, India, Brazil, South Africa, Türkiye, Singapore, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Thailand, the U.S., and Saudi Arabia.
Around 150 events held annually attract more than 50,000 exhibitors and around three million

visitors in Germany and abroad. That makes Messe München an important economic driver, triggering purchasing power effects in the billions.

digitalBAU partner:
German Association for Software and Digitalization in the Construction Industry (BVBS)
Planning, construction, operation – the right software helps to work in a structured manner, avoid errors and comply with deadlines and budgets over the entire life cycle of a building. Since the foundation of the association in September 1993, the members – leading software and IT companies – have pursued their mutual goal of enhancing the performance and innovative strength of the construction industry through the use of construction software. The association now represents more than 90 companies (as of November 2018) with more than 250,000 users throughout the construction sector. The members of BVBS e.V. are software providers and IT service providers and represent the fields of architecture, technical planning, civil engineering, construction, manufacturing and IT services.