



By: *Elise Quevedo*

Courage, Curiosity, Collaboration: What Web Summit 2025 Revealed



It is hard to believe that ten years have passed since I entered the Dublin Web Summit as a member of a startup. I recall the enthusiasm. I recall the excitement of founders pitching in packed halls. In 2015, 42,000 people showed up. Ten years later, Web Summit Portugal had over 71,000 guests.

2025 felt like stepping into a new era. The scale is bigger. The ambition is sharper. The influence is global, and it's fantastic to see how far the tech community has come with it.

This year broke records for **investment**. 1,857 investors attended, a 74% surge from last year's 1,066. According to Crunchbase, nearly 200 startups from the 2024 Startup Programme at Web Summit secured post-event investment, with total funding reaching \$715.5 million. It will be interesting to see how many deals close in the next few months after all the conversations.

That alone tells you everything you need to know about where the global mindset is heading. Even in a world dealing with uncertainty, innovation continues to move forward. Investors are not stepping back. They are accelerating.

Web Summit 2025 confirmed that momentum is building for those who create, lead, and shape technology that serves real human progress.

It's A New Era On The Horizon

This year was a collective push toward a future built on action and resilience. Founders who were solving issues in health, climate, education, finance, and AI safety. Each one understood how 2026 and beyond will belong to leaders who stay focused on human impact.

Record investor attendance made the headlines. It also showed that the tech industry is entering a phase where ideas alone are no longer enough.

Infrastructure, partnerships, and talent now define who wins. Web Summit reflected it with

conversations that were deeper. Pitches were smarter, and expectations were higher.

Web Summit CEO Paddy Cosgrave said on opening night, "Ten years ago it already felt like the world was changing fast, but it's nothing compared to how fast the world is changing today. It's been 10 years since a tiny three-person startup called Revolut showed up at Web Summit. Today, Revolut is Europe's most valuable private tech company. I've no doubt that there's another Revolut at Web Summit, maybe several. Two or three people with a tiny stand and a huge idea."

A Decade of Growth

I remember my first experience in Dublin. Smaller stages. Packed rooms and hungry founders. The same sparks continue in Lisbon, only amplified. Portugal has become a strong destination for global innovation.

The country has invested in talent, regulation, digital infrastructure, and international partnerships. It shows in the numbers. It shows in the confidence of the investors who attended in record-breaking numbers.

The Web Summit remains a platform where women can step forward, lead, and shape the future of tech

I also noticed an increase in women building products powered by advanced AI. Women are rebuilding industries once closed to them. Founders who are shaping solutions that support sustainability across Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.

It reminded me why representation will always matter. It shapes culture. It shapes outcomes. The Web Summit remains a platform where women can step forward, lead, and shape the future of tech.

The Highlights That Stood Out

to Me

This year, every talk focused more on reality than hype. Speakers went straight into what works, what scales, and what creates opportunity for society. I paid attention to three themes.

AI meets global infrastructure. Founders discussed infrastructure as the foundation for the next decade. Data centres. **Energy grids.** Connectivity. Tools for AI safety. This trend is visible across Europe, the Middle East, and Asia.

Climate technology moves into mainstream investment. Investors seek scalable solutions that address energy, water, and sustainability challenges. Some of the strongest pitches I saw were built around climate resilience.

Portugal's role in the future of innovation. The conference showed how much the country has committed to growth. The Algarve is rising as a hub for digital investment. Lisbon is strengthening its position as a global hub for technology. The confidence is strong and deserved.

My Personal Takeaway From This Year

Web Summit 2025 reminded me why I am eager to keep an eye on this summit. It brings people together who care about progress. It creates a space where founders can learn, leaders can reflect, and the next generation can find their voice. Watching young founders take the stage made me excited for everything that was to come next.

Watching women step into leadership roles made me proud. We are still fighting to be heard, and Web Summit has only continued to support more women each year.

Future-ready leadership will always be built on courage, curiosity, and collaboration

Future-ready leadership will always be built on courage, curiosity, and collaboration. You need the courage to build and create in uncertain times. You need curiosity to learn fast. You need collaboration to scale your vision.

Web Summit gave us a clear picture of how fast the world is moving and how much opportunity still lies ahead for those who take action.

The Defining Year For 2026

2026 will reward leaders who can create value fast. Companies with strong AI strategies will move ahead. Countries with modern infrastructure and policy support will attract the most talent.



Ten years ago it already felt like the world was changing fast, but it's nothing compared to how fast the world is changing today - Paddy Cosgrave

Women who step forward with bold ideas will shape the next wave of innovation.

Entrepreneurs and executives must prepare for the even more rapid adoption of AI tools across every sector. Investors will follow teams who understand security, privacy, sustainability, and global scalability.

For Women in Tech

Let me remind you that you belong in these rooms. You belong on these stages. You belong in leadership roles. Every time I visit Web Summit or catch online sessions, I feel

encouraged by the many women who step forward with expertise and vision. Your voice matters. Your ideas matter. Your leadership shapes the future of this industry.

If you want to enter the tech industry, this is your moment. If you are in tech and want to lead, the world is ready for you. You have space. Please take it.

Ten years after my first Web Summit, the opportunities are now bigger, the challenges are clearer, the impact is deeper, and the power of people who build, question, and lead with intention and purpose is more evident.

Technology and leadership keep evolving. What role will you play in shaping the next decade of innovation? I look forward to seeing what Web Summit has in store for 2026.

P.S. I'll be keeping an eye on the official closing investment figure and report back in due course.