

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION



Volume 2
Multi-stakeholder
consultation report

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Multi-stakeholder consultation report

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Foreword

In 2016, the Steering Committee for Educational Policy and Practice (CDPPE) of the Council of Europe launched a new intergovernmental project “Digital Citizenship Education”. The aim of this project is to contribute to reshaping the role that education plays in enabling all children to acquire the competences they need as digital citizens to participate actively and responsibly in democratic society, be it offline or online.

Most young people in Europe today were born and have grown up in the digital era and it is the duty of education to ensure that they are fully aware of the norms of appropriate and responsible behaviour with regard to the use of technology and participation in digital life.

Despite worldwide efforts to address issues around the role of education for the development of digital citizenship through specific initiatives undertaken by various stakeholders, there is a clear need for education authorities to adopt a concerted comprehensive approach to digital citizenship education and integrate it into school curricula to ensure that it is effectively implemented.

The Council of Europe’s action with regard to the digital life of children over the last decade has been aimed mainly at their safety and protection in the digital environment rather than their empowerment through education or the acquisition of competences for actively participating in digital society.

Several legally binding instruments define the standards guiding the Council of Europe member states in their action to protect children in the digital age and the European Court of Human Rights has established case law on information and communication technologies (ICTs) and human rights. These instruments include:

- ▶ Recommendation CM/Rec(2009)5 on measures to protect children against harmful content and behaviour and to promote their active participation in the new information and communications environment, which encourages member states, in co-operation with the private sector, associations of parents, teachers and educators, the media and civil society, to promote media (information) literacy for children, young people, parents and educators, in order to prepare them for possible encounters with content and behaviours carrying a risk of harm;
- ▶ Recommendation Rec(2006)12 on empowering children in the new information and communications environment which calls on member states for a coherent information literacy and training strategy which is conducive to empowering children and their educators in order for them to make the best possible use of information and communication services and technologies.

The above mentioned recommendations have been used as references and inspiration for the devising of specific tools for teachers and students, such as the Council of Europe “Internet Literacy Handbook for teachers, parents and students” which explains how to get the most out of the internet and how to protect privacy on websites and social networks.

Building on the achievements of the current programme on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education and the results of the project on Competences for Democratic Culture, as well as co-operation activities with other sectors (Internet Governance and Children’s Rights programme), the Steering Committee for Educational Policy and Practice decided to launch a pan-European project within the new programme of activities 2016-2017 that would encompass at least the following elements:

- ▶ a multi-stakeholder consultation/debate on policy issues regarding the place and better use of online resources and contemporary information technologies (Social Networking sites and Web 2.0 or Educational Web 2.0 sites as well as personal devices) in school settings (curricula and schools organisations) and mapping the administrative and legal responsibilities for school leaders, teachers, students and parents;
- ▶ a review of both formal and informal literature (blogs, wikis and websites). This review would examine the concept of digital citizenship, current digital education policies and contemporary digital education practices and challenges in schools;
- ▶ the drafting of policy guidelines to further support national authorities in devising digital citizenship education policies to address learning issues and the needs of students and to provide guidance in policy development to help protect students working in open, collaborative, online environments;
- ▶ the promotion and sharing of best practices from member states on effective interactive programmes for the acquisition of digital citizenship competence for students, through the curriculum, and for teachers, through initial and in-service education;
- ▶ a set of descriptors for digital citizenship education competence and guidance for the integration of such descriptors in current citizenship education curricula;
- ▶ development of partnerships with other sectors of the Council of Europe with regard to cross-cutting contemporary educational and legal issues that school authorities face today, such as cyberbullying, including cybermisogyny, cyberbullying of teachers, privacy, sexting, digital addiction, student teacher relationships through social media (Facebook), digital safe schools, freedom of expression online and the human rights of students in digital settings.

The consultation process, which was among the first activities conducted under the project, was carried out by Janice Richardson and Elisabeth Milovidov, both members of the Council of Europe expert group on Digital Citizenship Education. I would like to express my special thanks to them. The findings and recommendations of this overview will guide the expert group in its future work and the development of new activities.

The Council of Europe is well positioned to develop new policy orientations and approaches at pan-European level to meet the challenges schools and society will increasingly face in terms of education. The Council already possesses an important set of standards and tools related to legal issues, rights and responsibilities, children, data protection, media literacy and, most importantly, the Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education. The *acquis* and expertise accumulated over the last 10 years of citizenship education and the current work on the implementation of the charter will serve as a solid basis for the development of a new dimension of citizenship education and reaffirm the role of the Council of Europe as the leading organisation in this field.

Villano Qiriaz

Head of the Education Policy Division
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Executive summary

For more than two decades, the Council of Europe has strived to protect children's rights and safety in the digital environment. More recently, it has complemented this work with action for the education and empowerment of children as active digital citizens, within a framework closely linked to the Competences for Democratic Culture model, which aims to prepare citizens for "living together as equals in culturally diverse democratic societies".

To this end, the Steering Committee for Education Policy and Practice set up a Digital Citizenship Education Working Group (DCEWG) comprising eight members from six different countries and wide-ranging backgrounds to undertake several tasks over the coming years. These tasks are underpinned by a literature review of the concept of digital citizenship as well as a multi-stakeholder consultation on policy issues, which sought out good practices regarding digital citizenship education and the gaps and challenges in formal and informal learning contexts. The present report is a result of the latter action. It looks at the role of development of digital citizenship competence in education, considers the types of online resources and contemporary information technologies being used in educational settings, and maps the administrative and legal responsibilities for school leaders, teachers, students and parents.

These investigative activities will be followed by the development of a framework concept of digital citizenship, policy guidelines and a glossary of terms for the promotion and sharing of good practices. This is intended to lead to the adaptation of the Competences for Democratic Culture descriptors to respond to the needs of digital citizenship education, in order to guide and facilitate the integration of such descriptors in education curricula for digital citizenship.

This multi-stakeholder consultation report on policy issues presents the findings of six months of research, conducted from July to December 2016. More than 200 organisations and experts were contacted in the 47 member countries and three affiliated countries of the Council of Europe over that period, and were requested to complete an online questionnaire on digital citizenship initiatives in their country. This was followed up by a second questionnaire focusing more specifically on competences, in addition to interviews with children, parents and experts from education and social and mobile media sectors, as well as with the respondents who had reported on the most relevant projects. This report will be complemented by a literature review and further consultations with various stakeholders.

There were 62 responses to the initial questionnaire to identify good practices across Europe in the area of digital citizenship, 42 of which focused on children and young people. Analysis of the responses shows that good practice generally:

1. has a positive impact on individuals and/or communities;
2. has been proven through implementation to be effective in realising a specific objective;

3. can be reproduced and is adaptable to different contexts;
4. responds to current and future needs of the target population;
5. is technically, economically and socially feasible and sustainable;
6. contributes to an inclusive society and is adaptable for individuals with special educational needs; and
7. is a participative process that can generate a feeling of ownership in those involved.

The second questionnaire on competences was sent to national contact persons for the 42 projects targeting children in order to: clarify the level of focus being placed on the 20 competences in the four areas of the Competences for Democratic Culture grid; detect areas or competences of greater or lesser focus; and identify any apparent clusters of competences across the different projects.

It is this second questionnaire – the Competence Grid Survey – that provides the most interesting results of the consultation. The differences in the level of focus on the four areas of competences (values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge and critical understanding) raised questions that need to be addressed when developing an educational framework for digital citizenship. The question of how all four areas can be incorporated into effective digital citizenship themes warrants further examination; also, there is a need for further investigation of how the innovative tools and resources detected during the consultation can be replicated across countries and sectors in a way that will promote the development of digital citizenship competences for all children in formal, informal and non-formal learning situations. The consultation was conducted mostly in English. One recommendation would be to conduct a similar consultation in other languages, in order to understand more clearly the impact that social and cultural contexts may have on the concept of digital citizenship. The authors of this consultation report make seven further recommendations:

1. clearly define digital citizenship and other relevant terms, as well as expectations;
2. map the administrative and legal responsibilities for school leaders, teachers, students and parents;
3. make greater efforts to engage families in digital citizenship initiatives;
4. appoint a digital policy officer in schools;
5. publish lesson plans and illustrate learning opportunities based on the most interesting resources;
6. implement solid monitoring mechanisms in order to detect emerging trends and positive and negative secondary effects; and
7. conduct research to better understand the developmental windows for the teaching and inculcation of values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge and critical understanding.

Introduction

Digital citizenship means that we help each other to have a better world, against famine, global warming, deforestation, to help animals that face extinction...

Solène, 11-year-old primary school pupil, France.

Digital citizenship can be described as the capacity of individuals to master and exercise the range of competences required to participate effectively in a culture of democracy online. The multi-stakeholder consultation conducted in the framework of the Council of Europe's DCEWG has four major objectives:

1. to gather sufficient information to enable the development of policy guidelines to support national authorities in developing digital citizenship education policies to address learning issues as well as the needs of students, and to provide guidance to help protect students working in open, collaborative, online environments;
2. to promote and share best practices from member states on effective interactive programmes enabling students to acquire digital citizenship competence through the curriculum, and for teachers, through initial and in-service education;
3. to conduct an analysis of current focuses and gaps in competency development; and
4. to prepare the ground for developing and validating descriptors for digital citizenship.

More specifically, the consultation was conducted using a survey methodology combined with obtaining anecdotal evidence from a range of different target groups to analyse what digital citizenship competences could be, and how they are being developed and assessed across the 47 member countries and three affiliated countries of the Council of Europe.

The consultation ran from June to December 2016, and as well as investigating the types of projects being implemented, in which countries and by whom, it aimed to extract and validate the constructs or building blocks of effective digital citizenship projects and the most successful strategies in developing the necessary competences for specific age groups.

Part I

Methodology and parameters

The methodology of the project

Aims and objectives of the project

The aim of this project is the empowerment of children through education or the acquisition of competences for learning and active participation in digital society. In order to initiate the project, a preliminary literature review was performed to identify and learn from the experiences, findings and resources from various existing programmes and initiatives related to digital citizenship.

This allowed the DCEWG to map the differences in digital citizenship in terms of national policies and countries, as well as to identify emerging trends and challenges. Once the literature review had been completed, the multi-stakeholder consultation could then formally identify good practice projects, both through a survey and from our own research into good practice models, as well as by consulting with various stakeholders and closely exploring the competences.

A two-phase methodology

The terms of reference for the multi-stakeholder consultation were divided into two phases. The first phase was designed as a fact-gathering mission to determine the scope and define the parameters of the research. The second and more in-depth phase was designed to concretise the fact-gathering and supplement the initial project concepts.

A first phase to build a framework

The first phase specifically included the following tasks:

1. to determine and set up appropriate tools and the platform to be used for consultation and reiteration;
2. to request national contact points for DCEWG members in preparation for data gathering;
3. to define potential recipients and broader orientations for the consultations;
4. to seek out unusual/innovative uses of online resources and contemporary information and communication technology (ICT);
5. to prepare the terrain for developing a better understanding of competences; and
6. to formulate draft descriptors for digital citizenship.

The DCEWG created an initial document collection in anticipation of the literature review to be undertaken on a collaborative basis. The books, reports and related documents were divided into five categories: analysing definitions, actors and frameworks for digital citizenship; differing perspectives on digital citizenship education; practices; emerging trends; and challenges. Based on the findings, the group proposed the 10 digital domains to be used in the project, as explained in the methodology. An initial survey was then created to gather information on digital citizenship-related projects being implemented at the time. The survey content was discussed and approved by the DCEWG before being disseminated to the national contact points.

National contacts were proposed by several DCEWG members, and the final list contained more than 200 contacts across Europe. The national contacts received by email an explanatory letter and a questionnaire containing 13 key questions, inviting them to record examples of good practice in digital citizenship in their country. See Appendix A for a copy of the questionnaire.

A second phase to concretise and enrich the findings

Following analysis of the 62 responses received to the good practices questionnaire, it became apparent that for the 42 projects mainly targeting children and young people, it would be useful to have further information in order to: clarify the level of focus being placed on the 20 competences within the four areas of the competence grid; identify any apparent clusters of competences across the different projects; and detect areas or competences of lesser focus. A second questionnaire, the Competence Grid Survey, was sent to the national contact persons for these projects, and was completed for 25 projects. See Appendix B for a copy of this questionnaire.

Figure 1: Countries responding to one or both of the two Good Practice Survey consultation questionnaires

