European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025

International Poster and Short Film Competition on Digital Citizenship

Terms and conditions

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Context and background

Context

The Standing Conference of Ministers of Education of the Council of Europe member states designated the year 2025 as the "European Year of Digital Citizenship Education" at its 26th session on 29 September 2023. This initiative aims to address the urgent need for increased efforts and investment in digital citizenship education to effectively respond to challenges and opportunities that have emerged or been amplified by digital technologies and environment.

The European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025 stands as a unique opportunity to enhance the visibility and impact of digital citizenship education and reaffirm its value. This designated year will provide a strategic platform for key stakeholders from the public, private and civil sectors to work together, set common goals and share sense-making practices. It will also provide a concise yet impactful space for measuring achievements and collectively defining a road map for the future of digital citizenship education. Through streamlined efforts, this initiative is expected to propel digital citizenship education forward, ensuring its resilience and effectiveness in the ever-evolving digital landscape.

The Council of Europe will deploy an ambitious plan to bring this initiative to life, in particular by organising international events, implementing innovative social media campaigns and working closely with various stakeholders including Ministries of Education, educators, learners, academics, the private and civil sector organisations and youth organisations.

This pan-European initiative is open to everyone, with the aim of raising awareness and taking collective action to promote informed and responsible digital citizenship.

The European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025 aims to

– **raise awareness of the value of digital citizenship education for citizens:** Increase public and stakeholder awareness of the critical role digital citizenship education plays in empowering learners to thrive ethically, responsibly, and effectively in a digitally connected world;

– **enhance stakeholders' understanding of the Council of Europe's digital citizenship education framework:** Support education stakeholders to better understand Council of Europe's digital citizenship education framework, highlighting its contributions to meaningful and inclusive digital transformation;

– **establish digital citizenship education as a long-term policy priority:** Foster a shared commitment to making digital citizenship education a central focus in education policies and practices across member states, supported by a strategic road map for implementation from 2027 to 2031;

– **promote cross-sector collaboration in digital citizenship education:** Encourage meaningful partnerships and initiatives among public, private, and civil society stakeholders at local, national, and international levels to drive innovation and effectiveness in DCE;

– **advance access to resources and innovative practices in digital citizenship education:** Support the development and dissemination of high-quality educational resources, creative teaching methods, tools and practices that enable effective and inclusive DCE across diverse contexts.

Background

The Digital Citizenship Education (DCE) initiative was launched by the Council of Europe in 2016 as a response to the wide-ranging changes, including in education, brought about by digitalisation. Digitalisation profoundly affects all aspects of contemporary life and affects all

citizens and society. Digitalisation brings many new opportunities and benefits but can pose new ethical questions and concerns. Citizens need a broad range of new skills – including digital literacy – to successfully avail of the many opportunities that digital society offers and to negotiate challenges that are likely to arise. Importantly, new citizenship skills are needed if citizens are to participate fully in the life of society and to flourish in the digital environment.

The Council of Europe's concept of digital citizenship education builds on the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture, that outlines 20 key competences essential for effective participation in a democratic society, covering values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge and critical understanding. These competences must be learned, highlighting the crucial role of education.

Aim and scope of the competition

The challenges brought about the rapid proliferation of disruptive technologies like ChatGPT have further emphasised the importance of the critical issues addressed by Digital Citizenship Education (DCE). Topics such as disinformation, digital literacy, cyberbullying, digital etiquette, online hate, speech, tolerance, personal data usage, and digital security are among the fundamental challenges individuals face in today's digital world. This situation underscores the urgent need to intensify efforts and investments in Digital Citizenship Education to effectively address these evolving threats.

This competition is organised within the framework of the "European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025", an initiative led by the Council of Europe, designated by the Ministers of Education at the 26th session of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education in September 2023. The European Year 2025 aims to highlight the value of digital citizenship education in shaping the digital future, helping build inclusive and democratic societies. Through the development of core competences including key skills, values, attitudes and knowledge, citizens can learn, connect, engage and thrive together in the digitally enriched world.

In this context, artists, designers and videographers are invited to select any of the goals of the European Year of Digital Citizenship Education 2025 and domains of the Council of Europe's concept of digital citizenship education and create posters or short films. These works aim to bring diverse perspectives to digital citizenship topics and raise awareness in society.

Following the competition, exhibitions may be organised to further amplify the impact of the competition. The catalogue of the exhibition may also serve as educational materials, thereby contributing to the sustainability of the project.

These designs may be featured in dynamic website interfaces, email signatures, inspirational year-round calendars, special event postcards, large-scale murals that colour city walls, and outdoor advertising billboards. Additionally, these works maybe utilised in mobile app interfaces, social media campaigns, educational materials, and even wearable products (such as t-shirts, bags, and accessories), reaching a broad audience. Designs will also be displayed in public spaces like public transportation vehicles, airports, and train stations, further enhancing the project's impact. The top 30 selected designs may be showcased in international exhibitions across various countries and cities, spreading digital citizenship awareness worldwide and elevating the project's visibility. Through educational kits, corporate identity materials, and promotional products, the project will create a lasting impact, leaving a meaningful legacy in both daily life and educational spheres.

Digital citizenship education concept

Digital citizenship education is an educational programme that empowers learners with the competences they need to be active as democratic citizens in a digitised world. It focuses on the societal impact of digital technology, both good and bad. It is relevant to all learners, in all phases of education, beginning from their earliest encounters with the digital world.

A digital citizen is someone who develops a broad range of competences to actively, positively, and responsibly engage in online and offline communities at local, national, and global levels. Digital citizenship encompasses activities such as creating, consuming, sharing, socialising, learning, and working, all while respecting human rights and intercultural differences.

To be as comprehensive as possible, the conceptual model of digital citizenship education specifies 10 digital domains that underpin the concept of digital citizenship The domains are intended to capture in a flexible manner the multiple digital activities undertaken by citizens (and learners) and the diverse contexts in which they engage with the digital environment in the course of their everyday lives. For presentation purposes, the 10 domains are further grouped into three clusters as follows:

Being online: domains related to competences needed to access the digital society, freely express oneself and use digital tools creatively and critically.

Well-being online: domains related to competences needed to engage positively in the digital society and develop a healthy relationship with technology.

Rights online: domains that relate to competences regarding the rights and responsibilities of citizens in complex, diverse societies in a digital context, where privacy is protected, and active participation is empowered.

Being online	Well-being online	Rights online
- Access and Inclusion - Learning and Creativity - Media and Information Literacy	- Ethics and Empathy - Health and Well-being - e-Presence and Communications	- Active Participation - Rights and Responsibilities - Privacy and Security - Consumer Awareness

In brief, the 10 digital domains incorporate the following areas of focus, each of which relates to specific competences.

Access and Inclusion: This domain concerns issues of access to the digital environment without discrimination, and participation in digital spaces open for diversity of any kind.

Learning and Creativity: This domain concerns the willingness and the attitude towards learning in the digital environment over the life course and prepares to use technology in creative ways for personal and professional development.

Media and Information Literacy: This domain concerns the ability to understand critically and interpret digital media and use them for self-expression.

Ethics and Empathy: This domain concerns online interactions with others. It shows how to recognise the feelings and perspectives of others in online interactions, sets standards of ethical behaviour and constructive reactions to cases of violation of rights.

Health and Well-being: This domain concerns various positive and negative impacts of digital technology, including, but not limited to, online addiction, distressful content, ergonomics and posture, and excessive use of digital and mobile devices or health apps.

e-Presence and Communication: This domain refers to the development of personal and interpersonal qualities that support citizens in building a positive, coherent and true online identity and maintenance of positive online interactions.

Active participation: This domain relates to establishing conscious online interactions in various groups and digitally enriched communities online and offline, making informed decisions and taking effective actions.

Rights and Responsibilities: This domain concerns education about basic rights of digital citizens, like privacy, security, access, inclusion or freedom of expression and responsibilities that guarantee those rights to others, such as ethics, empathy or transparency.

Privacy and Security: This domain refers to the ability to ensure personal protection and proper management of one's own and other's online information while using digital technology, filters, passwords, antivirus, but also tagging others and sharing their information.

Consumer Awareness: This domain concerns understanding of the implications of commercial reality on digital transformation, including issues of sustainability, and is focused on supporting learners to maintain autonomy in the online space influenced by it.

Overview

Key dates

Competition opens	1 July 2025
Deadline for submission	14 September 2025 (23.59 CEST)
Pre-selection	15 - 25 September 2025
Final selection	26 September – 10 October 2025
Finalists announced	16 October 2025
Results announced	22 October 2025
Exhibition dates	18 - 19 November 2025

Competition jury

Posters and short films participating in the competition will be evaluated by a jury appointed by the Council of Europe. The competition will be judged by an international jury composed of professional and academic designers working at both local and global levels. The jury will serve as a bridge between the creative works of participants and broader audiences.

Distribution of awards (Posters and Short films)

1st Prize: Invitation to the exhibition opening and award ceremony in Ljubljana, Slovenia, with all travel, accommodation, and meal expenses covered, plus a Certificate of Achievement (First Prize).

2nd Prize: Invitation to the exhibition opening and award ceremony in Ljubljana, Slovenia, with all travel, accommodation, and meal expenses covered, plus a Certificate of Achievement (Second Prize).

3rd Prize: Invitation to the exhibition opening and award ceremony in Ljubljana, Slovenia, with all travel, accommodation, and meal expenses covered, plus a Certificate of Achievement (Third Prize).

Exhibition

The exhibition will feature the top 30 posters, and 5 short films selected by the jury in alignment with the competition's objectives. The Secretariat reserves the right to adjust this number as necessary. The award ceremony and exhibition will take place in Ljubljana, Slovenia. More details will be given in due course.

Terms of participation in the competition

The competition is open to both professional and none professional designers and short film makers who are nationals or residents of one of the 46 member states of the Council of Europe, as well as the Holy See and Kazakhstan.

The participation in the competition is free.

Only poster and short films that align with the specified topics and fall within the aim and scope of the competition will be evaluated. Participants may submit up to three entries per category (poster or short film) and must be the sole authors of their work. Submissions must not have been previously awarded, exhibited (including social media platforms, YouTube, online, etc.) nor participated in any other competition.

If the entry features any person, the participant must obtain the relevant consent, ensure the entry does not infringe on any third-party copyrights, and comply with any other applicable legislation when producing their posters or short films.

The Council of Europe retains the right to withdraw an entry which in any way does not respect the competition rules, goals of the European Year and principles of human rights, democracy and the rule of law of the Council of Europe.

Participants retain the copyright to their entries. By participating in the competition, participants accept to grant a royalty-free licence to the Council of Europe to publish and/or exhibit their entries in any format. Such posters and short films may also be used to promote future events as well as for awareness-raising purposes for the work of the Council of Europe. Participants accept to enter into a licence agreement with the Council of Europe for the above purposes. Whenever the Council of Europe makes use of the posters or short films to illustrate materials of the Organisation, the competition and the name of the author will always be mentioned.

Use of AI is permitted provided that the participants explain in their entries how they have used AI, specifying whether it was used to generate content, enhance content, etc., mentioning the software and tools used.

Poster submissions for the preliminary evaluation must be prepared in A4 size, with a resolution of 150 DPI, and in either RGB or CMYK colour mode. Selected posters for exhibition or awards will be required in 70x100 cm dimensions, 150 DPI resolution, CMYK colour mode, and in PDF, TIFF, or JPEG format.

Preliminary short film submissions must be in 1280x720 pixels resolution, in MP4 format, with a duration between 1 and 5 minutes, and a maximum file size of 50 MB. Final versions of selected films must be submitted in 1920x1080 pixels resolution, MP4 format, RGB colour mode, with a duration between 1 and 5 minutes, and a maximum file size of 500 MB. Submissions that do not comply with the specified technical requirements will not be considered for evaluation.

Files submitted should respect the following naming convention:

Posters	Short films
Surname_Name_Poster_1	Surname_Name_Video_1
Surname_Name_Poster_2	Surname_Name_Video_2
Surname_Name_Poster_3	Surname_Name_Video_3

While there are no restrictions on the use of colour and technique, the colours used in the work must not exceed those achievable with four-color (CMYK) offset printing technology.

Original designs must be saved uncompressed in CMYK mode, with fonts converted and at a resolution of at least 300 dpi.

Only the logos determined by the Council of Europe may be included in the works and they should be placed according to the given dimensions.

Works can include a message (title, slogan, etc.) that supports the visual design. The messages on designs submitted to the competition must be in English or French. Designs in any other language will be excluded from the competition.

The proposed design must not be used for banner design, logos or images for commercial purposes. It should also not contain symbols nor images that are contrary to the principles of the Council of Europe namely respect for human rights, rule of law and democracy.

If it is determined that the application design has been already exhibited and/or participated in any other competition, the nomination/application of the relevant work will be cancelled immediately. If this is discovered after an award has been granted, the candidate will be obliged to return the award and the certificate of achievement/participation.

The top 30 posters will be published on the websites of the Council of Europe. The designs will be displayed publicly for 3 business days to allow for objection. Only registered participants and authorised third parties may submit objections or claims of similarity in writing via email (digital.citizenship@coe.int) within the 3-day display period. Upon receipt of a valid objection or similarity claim, the design in question will be removed from the list of finalists and replaced by a design from the reserve list. A subsequent objection period of 2 business days will be granted for the newly added design(s) under the same terms. If no objections are raised during this second objection period, the final results will be formally announced. If an objection is made regarding the added design(s), the Secretariat will decide whether the process will continue or not. The Secretariat's decision shall be final, and no further appeals will be allowed.

The Secretariat may change the competition programme or cancel the competition at any stage if it deems it necessary.

All participants in the competition will be considered to have accepted these terms of participation in the competition.

For any matters not expressly outlined in the terms of participation or in the event of ambiguity, the Council of Europe reserves the right to make the final decisions.