European Digital Skills Awards: discover the winners of the 2023 edition

The wait is over! The winners of the European Digital Skills Awards 2023 have been announced: 6 projects from around Europe bring back the trophy for best practices in the 5 awards categories.

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During the EDSA23 awards ceremony, June Lowery-Kingston, Deputy Director and Head of Unit at DG CNECT, European Commission, handed out the awards to 6 outstanding projects that are successfully supporting Europeans in getting the fundamental - and advanced - digital skills they need.

“The level of the 330 entries in 2023, European Year of Skills, was extremely high, across all 5 categories. There are so many engaging projects happening all across Europe showing that digital skills are for everyone – regardless of age, gender, dis/ability, and location. Each of these award-winning projects is making a real difference in innovative and effective ways, offering potentially life-changing opportunities for girls, children, those with intellectual disabilities, and non-tech professionals.”

June Lowery-Kingston, Deputy Director and Head of Unit at DG CNECT, European Commission

Among the winners are very different projects and organisations: from private-public partnerships to local grassroots projects, from citizen organisations and local schools to EU consortia putting together high profile technical universities, this year’s winners show a lively picture when it comes to digital skills in Europe.

The winners are:
Empowering Youth in Digital

**UBBU - Learn to code (Portugal)**

Ubbu is a computer science and programming platform that teaches kids, aged 6 to 12, how to code through game-based lessons. Kids learn to solve logical challenges and develop problem-solving skills while learn the Sustainable Development Goals.

It was developed by the Portuguese education and social impact startup Ubbu and its implementation in public schools in Portugal is supported by the Ministry of Education, the Foundation for Science and Technology, the University of Aveiro, Altice foundation, Santa Casa da Misericórdia Lisboa, Montepio bank and Siemens Portugal.

The project was chosen as the winner of this category for its capacity to scale and have a wide impact in multiple countries, and for its attractive format. It is a platform specifically conceived to be used by families, teachers, and people with no coding experience, therefore making it a formidable tool for children and adults to learn together. Additionally, Ubbu’s business model makes it highly sustainable over time.

**Digital Skills for Education**


Open the Box was launched in 2020 in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic with the goal to build a scalable and effective media literacy project. It focuses on tackling online disinformation, and targets teachers and educators to enhance the digital skills of students between the ages of 11 and 18.

Dataninja is the leading organisation behind this project, working together with partners such as SkyTg24, Meet Digital Culture Center - Fondazione Cariplo, Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo, Fondazione Agnelli, Sapere Digitale, Provincia Autonoma di Bolzano, Liceo Peano di Cuneo, Istituto Avogadro, Capgemini.

The Jury selected Open the Box as the winner based on the project’s sustainability and scalability. After the initial 3-year pilot phase in secondary schools, the initiative plans to expand its reach to primary schools teachers and educators. It also aims to collaborate with NGOs and educators working in disadvantaged areas, as well as with public libraries, cultural centres and foundations, thereby ensuring accessibility for marginalised groups, vulnerable people, people with special needs. The future step for Open the box is to expand the project in other European languages and countries.

Pix is an online public service used to assess, develop, and certify digital skills in France, Belgium, and across Europe. Over the course of 6 years, PIX has helped +4,5 million students per year improve their digital skills through fun and challenging tests, but also teachers monitor digital literacy of students. The project is led by the French Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Higher
Pix was selected as the winner for its particular scope and impact on students, teachers, and schools. It has played a crucial role in enhancing digital literacy not only in France and Belgium but also across Europe. With its mission to support the digital skills of young learners, Pix has been instrumental in improving digital skills and fostering lifelong learning opportunities for individuals.

Inclusion in the Digital World


Digi-ID is a pan-European multidisciplinary project funded by EIT Health, launched by Trinity College Dublin, together with National Learning Network/Rehabcare, Brothers of Charity, Avista, St Michael’s House, Central Remedial Clinic, Stewarts Care, MADoPA, Karolinska Institut, University of Zagreb. It focuses on health, education, and technology for individuals with intellectual disabilities (ID). Building upon the experiences and activities with over 500 people with ID, the team developed “DigiAcademy”: an accessible digital skills education platform.

The project stood out as a deserving candidate for the award due to its co-design and co-development process involving people with ID. By prioritizing accessibility, user-friendliness, and tailoring the platform and content to the specific needs of the target audience, DigiAcademy offers a unique and valuable resource for digital skills education.

Women in ICT Careers


Launched in 2014 in Italy, Girls Code It Better is a free digital creativity and entrepreneurship project that brings girls closer to tech and STEM careers. The project is led by Officina Futuro Fondazione W-Group.

There are two key reasons for selecting Girls Code it Better as a winner of EDSA23. Firstly, the project promotes not only digital but also entrepreneurship paths for girls and secondly, the initiative's impressive reach and impact played a significant role in its selection. With 522 clubs established across 223 secondary schools and over 10,000 girls participating from 17 Italian regions, Girls Code It Better demonstrates its scalability and effectiveness in engaging girls and nurturing their interest in ICT and STEM careers.

Digital Upskilling @ Work


The Master in Artificial Intelligence for Public Services (AI4Gov) is a higher education programme funded by the European Union and developed by four leading European universities in the fields of
digital, technology, and engineering science (Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, Spain, Politecnico di Milano, Italy, Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, Germany and the Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia). Participants acquire the expertise to revolutionize public service delivery through ethical and impactful AI implementation.

The project has been selected as winner of the Awards for representing innovative approach to higher education, combining the fields of AI, public services, and digital transformation. The project pioneers a unique educational pathway that addresses the growing demand for AI skills in government and administration.

**Working together with the National Coalitions for Digital Skills and Jobs: the winners and the jury of the EDSA23 co-create solutions and concrete actions for digital skills**

Representatives from the winning projects were invited to receive the awards during the dedicated ceremony in Brussels, but also took part the following day in an interactive workshop together with the National Coalitions for Digital Skills and Jobs.

Both winners and three of the jury members, Alice Bougnères, Stefano Kluzer and Veronica Stefan, put their hands-on experience and expertise to the service of the Europe-wide network of Coalitions: local national organisations that are supporting and promoting digital skills at all levels in their own countries.

During the workshop challenges were identified and interesting solutions were co-created together, and these will inform potential future initiatives in European countries.

**About the European Digital Skills Awards**

The European Digital Skills Awards aim to recognise the outstanding projects and initiatives that are helping Europeans grow in digital. From basic skills, such as using a computer or a tablet, to training ICT specialists in emerging technologies like AI, Blockchain and Data, there is a very lively crowd of organisations, trainers and teachers that are improving Europeans’ digital skills. The European Commission has organised the Awards in 2016, 2017 and 2018 with the support of the Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition. In 2023, the EDSA are organised by the team of the Digital Skills and Jobs Platform.

**About the Jury of the EDSA23**

The Digital Skills and Jobs Platform of the European Commission, who organised the Awards, received 330 applications from all European countries. The 6 winners were selected from a list of 28 finalist applications by a jury composed of 5 experts: Alice Bougnères (Square), Stefano Kluzer (All Digital and Joint Research Centre), Keith Quille (TU Dublin), Veronica Stefan (Council of Europe and Digital Citizens Romania) and Juliane Reppert-Bismarck (Lie Detectors).

**About the Digital Skills and Jobs Platform**

The Digital Skills and Jobs Platform (DSJP) (https://digital-skills-jobs.europa.eu/en) is the home of digital skills and jobs initiatives in Europe and the heart of the Digital Skills and Jobs Community. Created as one of the initiatives launched under the Connecting Europe Facility Programme, the
Platform contributes to the DIGITAL Europe Programme – an ambitious EU programme that strives to make Europe more competitive in the global digital economy through digital capacity-building and ensuring a wide use of digital technologies across the EU. The Platform aspires to boost the digital competencies of European society and workforce and offers a wide range of trainings and career development support, an overview of good practices, expert advice, funding opportunities and financial instruments, news, event and much more to enforce digital skills in Europe. In the Digital Skills and Jobs Platform you can find also the information hub on the Cybersecurity Skills Academy, the LEADS project on Advanced Digital Skills and you can take the Digital Skills Test!

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