



The City of Vienna's Guidelines for Digital Child and Youth Work



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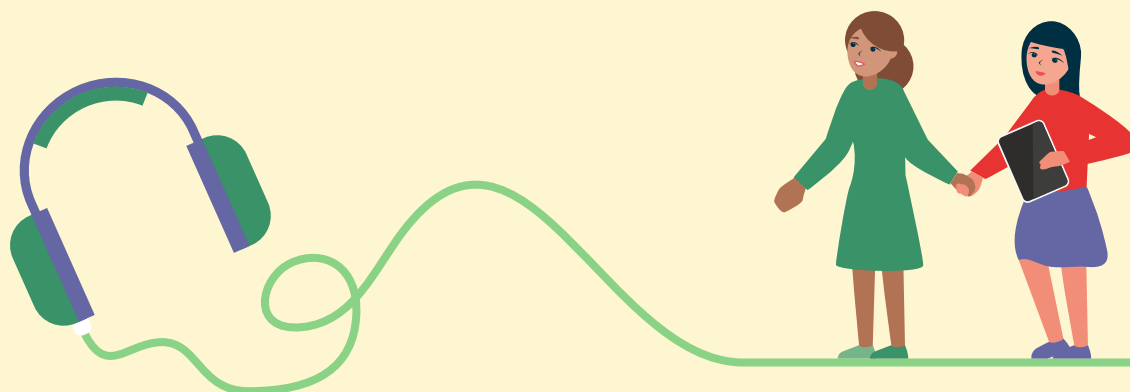
Digital Youth Work is a part of open youth work and includes all activities related to and using digital media and technology.

Digitalisation shapes and changes our everyday life as well as our daily interactions with each other. In order to live a self-determined life in a world which is digitally connected, we need a diverse range of skills. Youth work aims to accompany children and young people as they grow up and to offer them guidance. Likewise, digitalisation has found its way into the Open Child and Youth Work offered by the City of Vienna. Digital Youth Work is an interdisciplinary practice that extends to all of youth work's fields of activity and aims to support equal opportunities as well as opportunities for participation and action of its target groups within a digitally connected society.

Using and communicating via digital media are among the most important leisure activities of children and young people and also influence areas of life such as school, work and family. Therefore, a competent, active and age-specific offer of support for children and young people in the use of or within digital environments (e.g., social media, digital games, individual media productions, ...) by the staff of the Open Child and Youth Work in Vienna is one of their most significant fields of activity.

These guidelines are the result of a participatory process by the Department of Education and Youth - City of Vienna in cooperation with the WIENXTRA-Medienzentrum as well as staff members of the Open Child and Youth Work in Vienna.²

They are intended as a handout to support youth workers, pedagogical directors and managements in fulfilling the goals listed here. They serve to raise awareness within the realms of politics and administration towards the importance of this complex task. We – the project group – have compiled these guidelines as a supporting tool in order to expand existing access, challenge structures, offers, processes and regulations regarding Digital Youth Work and to adapt them if necessary. These guidelines seek to positively support digital work with our target groups such that children and young people may help shape our digital future.



¹ The services by the City of Vienna's Open Child and Youth Work are directed towards children and young people. We have chosen the title of these guidelines accordingly. Throughout this publication and in line with international practices, we have used the term "Digital Youth Work".

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Digital Youth Work

#Definition



Within the context of the "Digital Youthwork" project (digitalyouthwork.eu), European guidelines for Digital Youth Work were developed, which are based on the definition of the EU expert group and which are used by us as guiding points.

Digital Youth Work

- focusses on the digitalisation and digital transformation of institutions, services and practices of youth work.
- includes a broad range of methods and approaches that can be employed in any youth work setting.
- is underpinned by the same goals and ethics, values and principles as youth work in general.
- may happen in any setting, be it on-line or offline, within the space of a youth centre or even at the park.

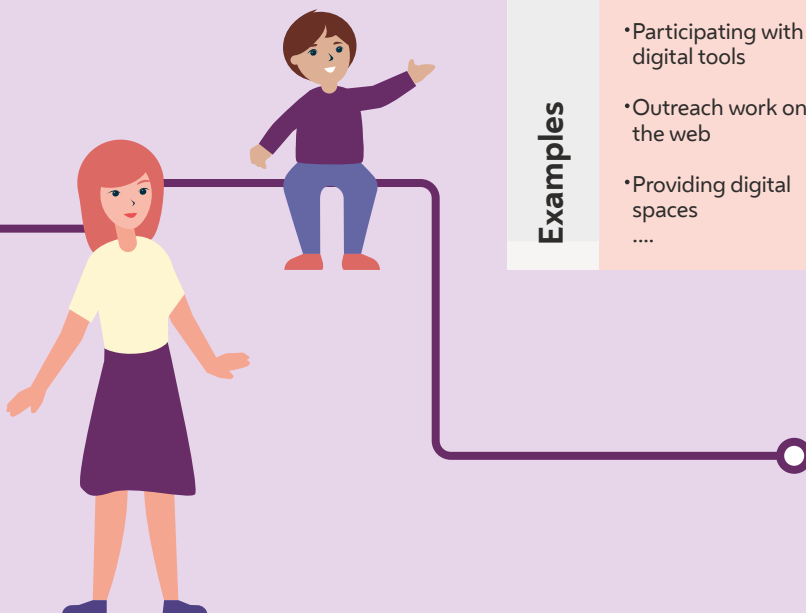
Digital Youth Work means proactively using and/or addressing digital media and technology in open youth work as a **tool**, an **activity** and/or as **content**.

	Tool	Activity	Content
Definition	Online youth work: Open youth work by using digital media and technology	Hands-on activities with digital media	Working on topics introduced by digital environments
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicating with and contacting others via social media • Editing online content • Participating with digital tools • Outreach work on the web • Providing digital spaces • ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making, coding • Gaming, e-Sports • Radio, podcasts • Video, film, TV, YouTube • Photography, photographic studio, shootings • VR • ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting on relationships and social behaviour online • Reflecting on their own media use • Questions regarding digitalisation, such as Big Data, fake news, hate speech, etc. • ...

The boundaries between the three dimensions of Digital Youth Work are fluid.

Further specific and practical examples can be found at:

jugendarbeit.wien

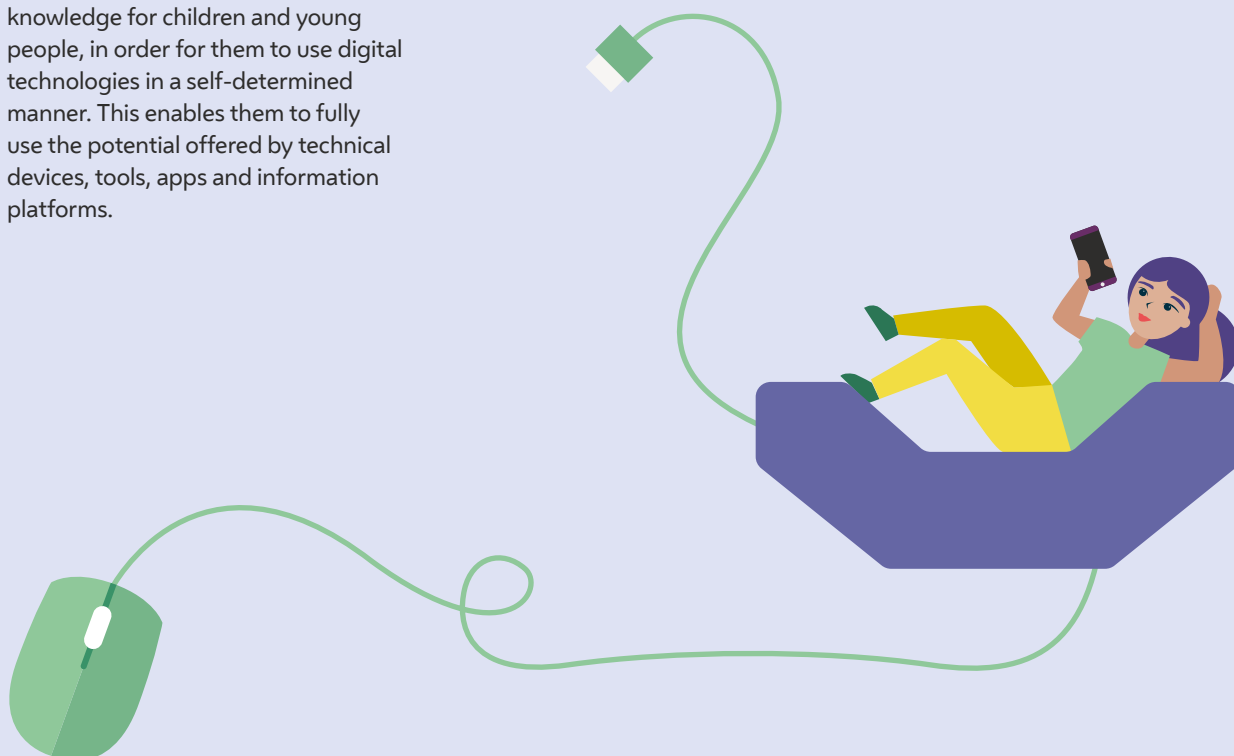


Digital Youth Work

#Goals and Impact

Digital Youth Work is creating educational spaces for autonomous digital learning. By employing Digital Youth Work, we - the staff and organisations of the City of Vienna's Open Child and Youth Work - can achieve a broad range of goals and outcomes:

- We empower our target groups to autonomously and actively use media.
- We accompany children and young people in their creative, independent use of media by creating the space for a fun-filled debate.
- We enable our target groups to develop a reflective approach to the challenges posed by digitalisation. This contributes to equal opportunities and strengthens the participation of children and young people.
- We offer access to a broad range of knowledge for children and young people, in order for them to use digital technologies in a self-determined manner. This enables them to fully use the potential offered by technical devices, tools, apps and information platforms.
- We support our target groups in dealing with hardware and software as well as questions of risk management and data protection.
- We provide children and young people with resources and infrastructure as well as access to digital technologies.
- We create a space for reflecting with the purpose of facilitating a conscious and self-reliant use of media („digital wellbeing“).



Digital Youth Work

#Framework Conditions

Digital Youth Work requires a certain attitude from all its participants, which is based on openness, curiosity and a love for experimenting. Other requirements include resources and framework conditions carried by the entire organisation in order to allow for a sustainable implementation and professional service.

- The organisation's digital development: Digital Youth Work is a pedagogical concept and a process that affects every domain of an organisation. It is essential that all members of staff will address this topic, including all levels of management.
 - Human resources and team organisation: Digital Youth Work is an interdisciplinary practice and its implementation requires many resources, including time to do the actual work, time for preparations, reflective loops and progressions.
 - Material resources and equipment: Suitable equipment is essential (hardware and software, infrastructure such as smartphones, wi-fi, tablets, PCs, VR goggles, 3D printers, etc.). Due to the rapid developments in this sector, a corresponding budget for ongoing maintenance and renewal is necessary after the initial purchase. Possible synergies will be harnessed through cooperating with other institutions (e.g., WIENXTRA-Medienzentrum)
- and also within the organisation itself, in order to allow for efficient and yet innovative access.
- Long-term planning: Based on regional, national and international youth strategies³ and in close communication with funding bodies and policy makers, strategic planning is needed so that Digital Youth Work can be sustainably implemented and further developed in the long term.
 - Quality assurance measures: Action guidelines, sharing and exchanging knowledge with peers, demand-based training opportunities, goal- and impact-oriented reflection as well as evaluation methods can all ensure quality.
 - Create room for innovation: Within any organisation, the opportunity of developing and implementing new projects and ideas is an important principle. A positive error culture will make it possible to try out new things without being limited by expectations.



³ [wien.gv.at/menschen-gesellschaft/kinder-und-jugendstrategie.htm](https://www.wien.gv.at/menschen-gesellschaft/kinder-und-jugendstrategie.htm)
<https://www.frauen-familien-jugend.bka.gv.at/jugend/jugendstrategie.htm>
https://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/youth-strategy_de



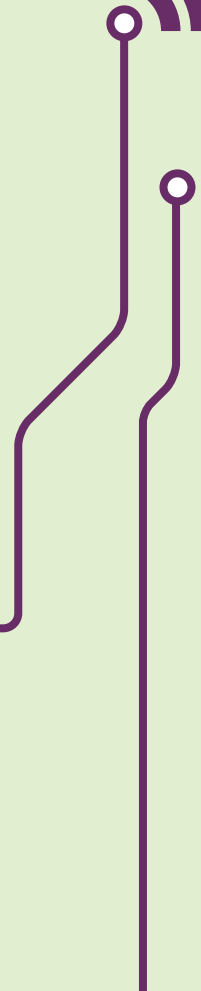
Digital Youth Work

#Positive Attitude

The overall stance of an organisation will influence every staff member's attitude.

As youth workers,

- we will openly engage with children's and young people's worlds of life and we will recognise digital media as indispensable means of communication through our life world-oriented approach.
- we are persons of trust for children and young people, which also extends to online spaces.
- we recognise that children and young people are the experts within their own digital worlds of life and we perceive them as a resource for our own professional course of action.
- we create spaces for participation and develop digital offers and services together with children and young people.
- we are prepared to engage with digital media on an ongoing basis and constantly expand our knowledge and skills in our daily practice.
- we broaden our skills through trainings and by discussing and exchanging knowledge with our peers.
- we reflect upon the use of and the interaction with digital media and social networks individually, but also as a team.
- we are mindful of the fact that we are role models for children and young people.
- we are flexible and quick, like to try new things and are open towards experimenting without pressuring for results.



Digital Youth Work #Networking Goals

The City of Vienna's Child and Youth Work is advancing Digital Youth Work within their own team as well as in cooperation with external partners:

We are

- sharing experiences and knowledge and learning from one another. The blog [jugendarbeit.wien](#) is a common platform to showcase good practice and to network with each other.
- continuing to build on and expand existing professional networks.
- cooperating with educational and training institutions of our target groups.
- building networks with organisations working in specialised digital areas in Vienna (making, moral courage, information literacy, digital games, cyber security, ...) and building bridges from their knowledge and their services to our target groups.
- communicating those educational needs arising through digitalisation in the practical field of youth work.



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