

# DCitizens Fostering Digital Civics Research and Innovation in Lisbon

## DELIVERABLE 2.4: Mid-term Report on Joint Events

DCitizens has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe Framework Programme, project call HORIZON-WIDERA-2021-ACCESS-03, grant agreement 101079116

## D2.4: Mid-term Report on Joint Events

### Project Information

Grant Agreement	101079116
Title	Fostering Digital Civics Research and Innovation in Lisbon
Acronym	DCitizens
Funding Scheme	Twinning
Start date	01/12/2022
Duration	36 months
Call	HORIZON-WIDERA-2021-ACCESS-03
Website	<a href="https://dcitizens.eu/">https://dcitizens.eu/</a>

### Deliverable Information

ID	D2.4
Title	Mid-term report on joint events
WP	WP2
WP Leader	UNN
Contributing Partners	UNN, IST-ID
Nature	Report
Authors	Kyle Montague (UNN)
Contributors	Hugo Nicolau (IST-ID)
Reviewers	Hugo Nicolau (IST-ID), Dina Dionisio (IST-ID)
Deadline	M17 (30/04/2024)

### Dissemination Level

PU	Public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
PP	Restricted to other programme participants	<input type="checkbox"/>
RE	Restricted to a group specified by the consortium	<input type="checkbox"/>
CO	Confidential, only for members of the consortium	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Document Log

Version	Date	Author	Description of Change
0.1	02/04/2024	Kyle Montague	First release with document structure
0.2	15/04/2024	Hugo Nicolau	Added section 3
0.3	18/04/2024	Kyle Montague	Added sections 1, 2
1.0	19/04/2024	Kyle Montague	Added section 4; Full draft completed
1.1	26/04/2024	Hugo Nicolau	Review; Integrated all comments and suggestions
2.0	29/04/2024	Dina Dionisio and Hugo Nicolau	Full document review; Final version

## Disclaimer

The content of this document does not represent the opinion of the European Commission, and the European Commission is not responsible for any use that might be made of such content.

## Executive Summary

Work package (WP) 2 focuses on organising joint events between the DCitizens partners: yearly summer schools, an invited lecture series, and international workshops in premier academic venues. The project has achieved all key performance indicators by month 16 with the organisation of the 2023 summer school in Lisbon, nine international speakers in the lecture series, and four scientific workshops. The consortium also organised other events, such as a special interest group at ACM CHI conference, a special-track on citizen-centric AI at the ACM GoodIT conference, an international digital civics exchange in Newcastle, and the organisation of the ACM DIS conference.

The deliverable is organised in four main sections, detailing the organisation of the summer schools, invited lecture series, scientific workshops, and other joint events.

## Table of Contents

1. Summer Schools.....	1
2. Invited Lecture Series.....	2
3. Organisation of Scientific Workshops .....	4
4. Other Joint Events .....	7
5. Conclusion.....	8



## 1. Summer Schools

To support the training and continuous development of (young) researchers, each year, the consortium will host a three-day DCitizens Summer School in Lisbon; and in the final year, we will host an additional Summer School at UNN. DCitizens Summer Schools are free to attend and promoted to postgraduate students and PhD researchers interested in Human-Computer Interaction and Digital Civics. The summer schools are designed to bring together young researchers to provide domain-specific training; promote knowledge exchange and extend their research networks. We adopt a blended approach of Invited seminars from experts in the field; Methods & Skills workshops, and Hands-on Practical Research Activities to provide students with a range of experiences and support their individual development.

Table 1. Summer School 2023 programme details.

From User-Centred to Community-Led Design (2023)		
Day	Activity	Description
1	Invited Seminar	Dr Jon Hook, <i>University of York</i> <b>Responsive Video Media and its Application to Address Societal Challenges</b>
	Skills Workshop	Dr Reem Talhouk, <i>Northumbria University</i> <b>Community-Led Design</b>
	Hands-On Experience	Dr Hugo Nicolau & Dr Kyle Montague <b>Exploring the Problem Space</b>
2	Invited Seminar	Dr Vasilis Vlachokyriakos, <i>Newcastle University</i> <b>Embedded Research &amp; Social Movements</b>
	Skills Workshop	Dr Kyle Montague, <i>Northumbria University</i> <b>Ideation and Engagement</b>
	Hands-On Experience	Dr Hugo Nicolau & Dr Kyle Montague <b>Exploring the Solution Space</b>
3	Hands-On Experience	Dr Hugo Nicolau & Dr Kyle Montague <b>Piloting with Community Partners</b>
	Round-table Discussion	Prof. Pamela Briggs, <i>Northumbria University</i> <b>Reflections and Provocations on Community-Led Design</b>
	Round-table Discussion	Dr Hugo Nicolau & Dr Kyle Montague <b>Commissioning Future Training Events</b>

In 2023, our theme was ‘From User-Centred to Community-Led Design’, which aimed to explore the shift from *designing for* the user to methods and approaches that allow us to *design with* or enable *design by* citizens and communities themselves. We were fortunate enough to have the support and input from the local community partners involved in the commissioned projects and shaped small design briefs for the students to engage directly with the ongoing real-world projects. We had a total of 28 participants, this included a mixture of postgraduate and PhD students from Lisbon. Further details of the programme can be found in Table 1.

In 2024 (M19), we will host our second DCitizens Summer School on ‘*Potential and Limitations of Emerging Technologies*’. Digital technologies are often praised and credited as the solutions to all of life’s problems. For many communities and organisations, there is a strong desire to embrace and leverage these magical black-boxes. Still, their lack of awareness and understanding of how to configure and adopt the tools creates new barriers. Adopting the same blended approach of Expert Lectures/Seminars, Skills Workshops and Hands-On Experience activities, will expose the young researchers to real-world case studies from local and international research contexts and provide them with research methods and skills training; and work with the local community partners to shape a real-world project brief for the groups to get hands-on experience. To increase the potential for students to engage and participate in DCitizens Summer School, we aim to provide remote participation where possible. While registration is open for another 2 months, we are already seeing an increase in student registrations outside of Lisbon.

## 2. Invited Lecture Series

The DCitizens consortium proposed to establish an Invited Lecture Series that would leverage the staff exchange activities and expert visits to Lisbon to facilitate three invited lectures per year. By month 17, we have hosted 9 invited speakers (2 held in person at Summer School 2023). All of the lectures have been streamed online, and 6 have been recorded (with invited speakers’ permission) and published via the DCitizens’ Youtube channel and project website (see Table 2 for details)

Table 2. Details of all invited speakers, talks, attendance, and online resources.

Year	Date	Invited Speakers	Attendance	Online Resources
1	11/07/23	Dr Jon Hook, <i>University of York</i> <b>Responsive Video Media and its Application to Address Societal Challenges</b>	28	N/A
	12/07/23	Dr Vasilis Vlachokyriakos, <i>Newcastle University</i> <b>Embedded Research &amp; Social Movements</b>	28	Slides
	27/11/23	Dr Firaz Peer, <i>University of Kentucky</i>	34	Video

		The Operational Context of Civic Data		
2	10/01/24 (M13)	Dr Faheem Hussain, <i>Arizona State University</i> <b>Redesigning Mobility Aid for Challenging Environments</b>	25	Video
	01/02/24 (M14)	Prof. Alan Dix, <i>Swansea University</i> <b>AI, Social Justice, and Challenges for Digital Civics</b>	71	Video
	01/02/24 (M14)	Dr Miriam Sturdee, <i>University of St Andrews</i> <b>The Odd One Out: Creative and Unusual Methods in HCI</b>	71	N/A
	12/02/24 (M14)	Dr Eleonore Fournier Tombs, <i>United Nations University</i> <b>Global AI governance: towards addressing global inequality and citizen participation</b>	30	Video
	21/03/24 (M15)	Dr Dilrukshi Gamage, <i>University of Colombo</i> <b>The Complex Societal Effects of AI-Generated Content</b>	23	Video
	17/04/24 (M16)	Dr Katta Spiel, <i>Vienna University of Technology</i> <b>Putting Humility at the core of Participatory Design.</b>	36	Video

At our month 12 Project Meeting, we agreed to run more regular Invited Lectures by hosting speakers online, which has enabled us to engage with a wider range of Digital Civics researchers and increase our academic engagements. From our registration demographics data, we can see that attendees have joined from 30 countries (see Figure 1); and we are engaging with a broad academic audience with respect to Age (Figure 2) and Gender (Figure 3).

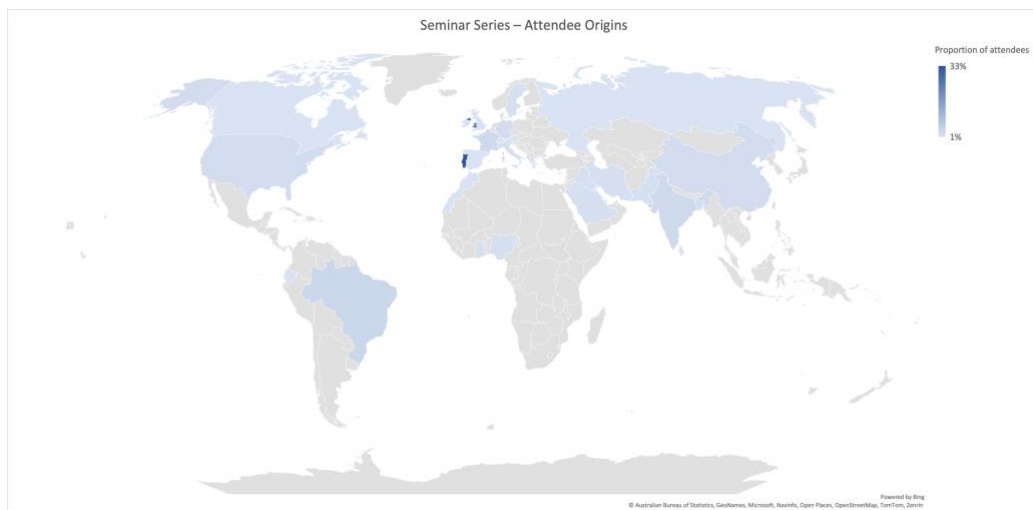


Figure 1. Map illustrating the countries of origin of the DCitizens Lecture Series attendees.

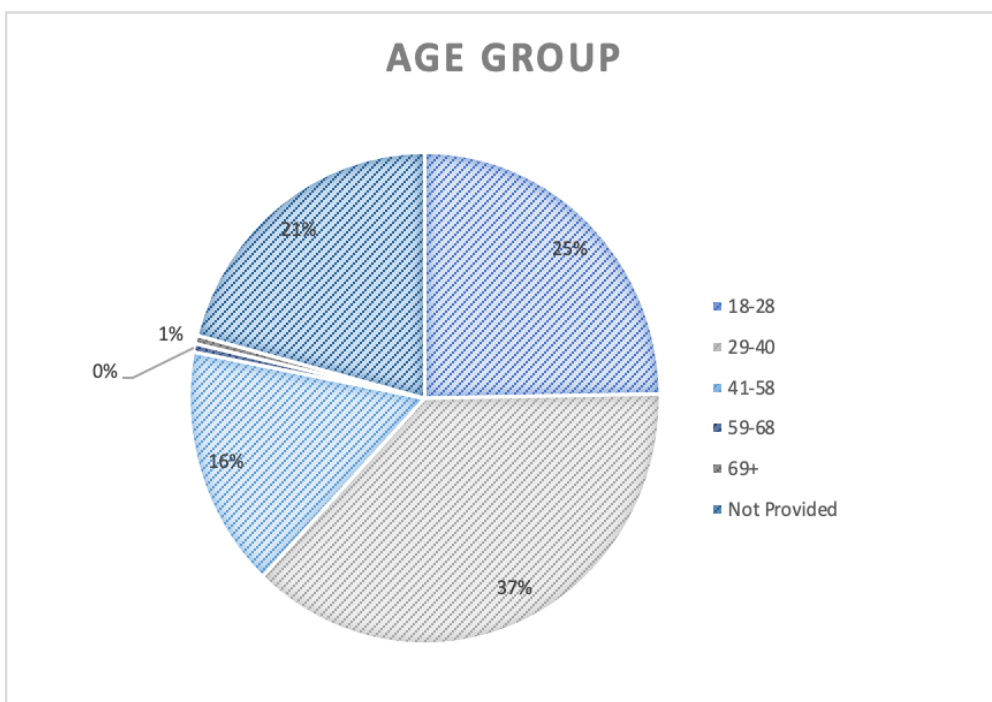


Figure 2. Pie Chart illustrating the Age Group distributions of DCitizens lecture series attendees.

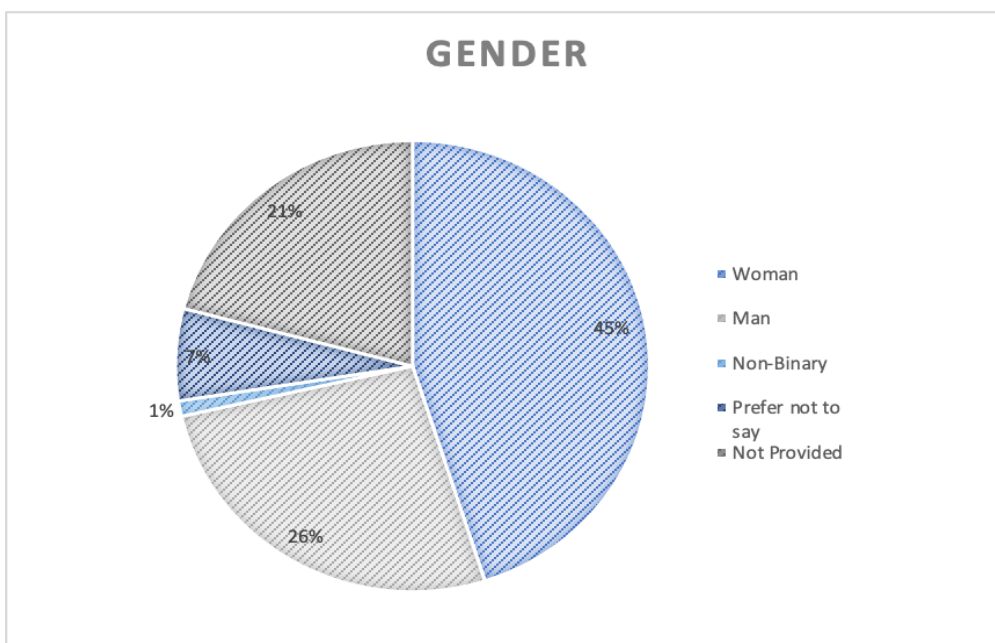


Figure 3. Pie Chart illustrating the Gender distributions of DCitizens lecture series attendees.

### 3. Organisation of Scientific Workshops

According to the DCitizens Grant Agreement, the consortium proposed submitting two workshop proposals to premier academic venues. By month 16, we submitted

four workshop proposals and one special interest group proposal. All proposals were accepted at their respective academic conferences and will occur in 2024.

1. DCitizens Roles Unveiled: SIG Navigating Identities in Digital Civics and the Spectrum of Societal Impact. Anna R. L. Carter (UNN), Kyle Montague (UNN), Reem Talhouk (UNN), Shaun Lawson (UNN), Hugo Nicolau (IST-ID), Ana Cristina Pires (IST-ID), Markus Rohde (USi), Alessio Del Bue (IIT), and Tiffany Knearem (Google). *Special Interest Group at the 2024 ACM CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems.*

Special Interest Groups (SIGs) provide an opportunity to attract a group of conference attendees who share a common interest and engage them in face-to-face discussions. We will organise the DCitizens SIG at the premier conference for Human-Computer Interaction (i.e., CHI), aiming to navigate ethical dimensions in forthcoming Digital Civics projects, ensuring enduring benefits and community resilience. Additionally, it seeks to shape the future landscape of digital civics for ethical and sustainable interventions. As we dive into these interactive processes, a challenge arises of discerning authentic intentions and validating perspectives. This exploration extends to evaluating the sustainability of future interactions and scrutinising biases impacting engaged communities. The commitment is to ensure future outcomes align with genuine community needs and address the ethical imperative of a considerate departure strategy. This dialogue encourages future researchers and practitioners to integrate ethical considerations and community-centric principles, fostering a more sustainable and responsible approach to technology-driven interventions in future urban regeneration and beyond.

2. Participatory Design with Young Children: Failures, Challenges, and Successes. Katharina Buckmayer (IST-ID), Filipa Rocha (IST-ID), Elisa Rubegni (Lancaster University), Reem R. Talhouk (UNN), Hugo Nicolau (IST-ID), and Ana C. Pires (IST-ID). 2024. *Workshop at the 2024 ACM Interaction Design and Children.*

This joint workshop at IDC'24 introduces hands-on activities centred on participatory design (PD) approaches tailored for engaging young children in technology design. Although previous efforts have highlighted the advantages of engaging young children in PD, research has overlooked their involvement as co-designers, leading to a lack of exploration and understanding of their unique perspectives and challenges in the design process. Through an interactive session and collaborative activities, this workshop will facilitate discussions surrounding challenges, successes, and lessons learned through PD with young children. By evaluating and exchanging experiences, we aim to enhance our understanding of PD and refine its methodologies for this particular population. By synthesising the shortcomings, difficulties, and successes of past experiences, the workshop will bring together researchers and practitioners to initiate efforts toward closing this research gap. Together,

we will establish the groundwork for enhanced approaches and a deeper understanding of how to involve young children in PD, which will enhance future efforts in the field of child-computer interaction.

3. **Envisioning Collaborative Futures: Advancing the Frontiers of Embedded Research** Anna R. L. Carter (UNN), Kyle Montague (UNN), Reem Talhouk (UNN), Ana Henriques (IST-ID), Hugo Nicolau (IST-ID), Tiffany Knearem (Google), Ceylab Besevli (University College of London), Firaz Peer (University of Kentucky), Clara Crivellaro (Newcastle University), and Sarah Rüller (USi). Workshop at the 2024 Participatory Design Conference.

Participatory design initiatives, especially within the realm of digital civics, are often integrated and co-developed with the very citizens and communities they intend to assist. Digital civics research aims to create positive social change using various digital technologies. These research projects commonly adopt various embedded processes, such as commissioning models. Despite adopting this process within a range of domains, there is not currently a framework for best practices and accountability procedures to ensure we engage with citizens ethically and ensure the sustainability of our projects. This joint workshop at PDC'24 aims to provide a space to start collaboratively constructing a dynamic framework of best practices, laying the groundwork for the future of sustainable embedded research processes. The overarching goal is to foster discussions and share insights that contribute to developing effective practices, ensuring the longevity and impact of participatory digital civics projects.

4. **Fostering Feminist Community-Led Ethics: Building Tools and Connections.** Ana Henriques (IST-ID), Hugo Nicolau (IST-ID), Anna R. L. Carter (UNN), Kyle Montague (UNN), Reem Talhouk (UNN), Angelika Strohmayer, Sarah Rüller (USi), Cayley MacArthur (University of Waterloo), Shaowen Bardzell (Georgia Institute of Technology), Colin Gray (Indiana University Bloomington), and Eleonore Fournier-Tombs (United Nations University). Workshop at the 2024 ACM Designing Interactive Systems.

This workshop at DIS'24 advocates for a dynamic, community-led approach to ethics in Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) by integrating principles from feminist HCI and digital civics. Traditional ethics in HCI often overlook interpersonal considerations, resulting in static frameworks ill-equipped to address dynamic social contexts and power dynamics. Drawing from feminist perspectives, the workshop aims to lay the groundwork for developing a meta-toolkit for community-led feminist ethics, fostering collaborative research practices grounded in feminist ethical principles. Through pre-workshop activities, interactive sessions, and postworkshop discussions, participants will engage in dialogue to advance community-led ethical research practices. Additionally, the workshop seeks to strengthen the interdisciplinary

community of researchers and practitioners interested in ethics, digital civics, and feminist HCI. By fostering a reflexive approach to ethics, the workshop contributes to the discourse on design's role in shaping future interactions between individuals, communities, and technology.

5. Designing for and with the '*Digital Citizen*'. David S. Kirk (Newcastle University), Suzan Boztepe (Linköping University), Jorn Christiansson (IT University of Copenhagen), Amalia De Gotzen (Aalborg University), Nils Ehrenberg (Aalto University), Erik Gronvall (IT University of Copenhagen), Shaun Lawson (UNN), Per Linde (Malmö University), Joanna, Saad-Sulonen (LUT University), Vasilis Vlachokyriakos (Newcastle University). Workshop at the 2024 ACM Designing Interactive Systems.

Longstanding practices of participatory co-design have sought to engage communities in the development of shared resources, services, and technologies. However, approaches such as Citizen-Centered Design and Digital Civics bring these design methods to bear on the development of digital technologies in support of civic and third-sector organizations in particularly complex and rapidly changing socio-technical landscapes. Such endeavors frequently need to engage marginalized, under-served and hard to reach communities. In these design spaces, the '*Digital Citizen*' becomes a contested concept, deserving of deeper exploration.

This one-day workshop will bring together the DIS community, industry practitioners and third sector representatives to mutually explore the concept of the *Digital Citizen*, its boundaries and opportunities, and in response to a rapidly changing environment of smart digital services, how design methods might be evolved to better support designing for and with these *Digital Citizens*.

Although workshop proposals are joint efforts between partners, it is noteworthy that they also include authors from outside the consortium. This enables partners, particularly the widening institution (IST-ID), to access existing excellence networks in Digital Civics (e.g., Google, Georgia Institute of Technology, United Nations University, University College of London, Indiana University)

#### 4. Other Joint Events

Through the DCitizens Project Meetings, Staff Exchanges, Summer Schools and Online Interactions, we have identified further opportunities for collaboration and leverage the expertise within the consortium to organise additional joint events with our extended research networks and wider academic communities.

Following the project Kick-off meeting in M2, the UNN and IST-ID discussed a shared interest in Digital Civics approaches towards the design of responsible Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies. As a result of these discussions, a submission was

prepared to facilitate a special-track on 'Citizen-Centric AI' at ACM Conference on Information Technology for Social Good (GoodIT) 2023, Lisbon. We assembled an international programme committee, including researchers from Portugal, Finland, the United Kingdom, and the United States, to curate the submissions. The Special Track received 8 paper submissions, 4 appearing in the main GoodIT conference.

Moreover, members of the DCitizens consortium are organising one of the major conferences in interactive technologies, the 2025 ACM Designing Interactive Systems (DIS'25). The organisation will be led by Nuno Nunes (IST-ID) in collaboration with Hugo Nicolau (IST-ID), Valentina Nisi (IST-ID), and Reem Talhouk (UNN).

Building on the increased international student interest in the DCitizens Seminar Series and Summer Schools, DCitizens is co-organising a two-week 'Digital Civics Exchange' event (<https://www.dcx.events>) to be held in Newcastle upon Tyne (M17). The event will leverage an existing student exchange between Purdue and Indiana Universities with UNN and bring together leading Digital Civics researchers and academics from the United Kingdom. IST-ID plans to support four ESR internships with hands-on experience crafting citizen-centric digital technologies, with ESRs joining from IIT (2) and USi (3). The programme will include a range of invited lectures, workshops, and discussion panels; run in parallel with a two-week student design challenge connecting students with local researchers and community groups.

Finally, the ESRs participating in the DCitizens activities have utilised the project's online Discord server to establish monthly online catchups (M12-16). These informal events bring together ESRs from all consortium partners to share and discuss ongoing research activities. In turn, they foster stronger relationships between partners and within individual institutions.

## 5. Conclusion

Overall, the consortium surpassed all KPIs related to joint events (see Table below). We are organising yearly Summer Schools in Lisbon, four scientific workshops in 2024, one special interest group in 2024, and nine invited lectures in the first 16 months of the project.

Organising scientific events has been particularly useful in establishing relationships with other academics and establishing DCitizens partners as key actors in the field of Digital Civics. Thus, The UNN is currently leading a workshop proposal for NordiCHI 2024 on participatory design in digital civics, focusing on how unexpected outcomes and failures in such initiatives can be valuable sources of insight and innovation. By sharing our experiences and lessons learned, we hope to foster a culture of adaptive and inclusive design practices within the Digital Civics community. Moreover, IST-ID is leading the organisation of the 2025 ACM DIS conference.

Regarding the Invited Lecture Series, we plan to continue with the same frequency of invited talks, i.e. 6-9 per year.

Table 3. Key Performance Indicators related to WP2 from Month (M) 1 to 24.

Key Performance Indicators	Target M1 to M12	Result M1 to M12	Target M13 to M24	Result M13 to M16
Organisation of Summer Schools	1	1	1	0
Expected number of attendees per event	>25	>25 (m=30)	>25	>25 (m=43)
Organisation of international scientific workshop	-	-	1	5
DCitizens Invited Lecture Series	3	3	3	6