

DCitizens Fostering Digital Civics Research and Innovation in Lisbon

DELIVERABLE 6.2: Mid-term Report on Dissemination

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

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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	https://dcitizens.eu/

Deliverable Information

ID	D6.2
Title	Mid-term report on dissemination
WP	6
WP Leader	IST-ID
Contributing Partners	IST-ID, UNN
Nature	R: Document
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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	Hugo Nicolau	First release
0.2	10/04/2024	Daniel Ribeiro	Added section 1
1.0	17/04/2024	Hugo Nicolau	Added sections 2 and 3; Document review; Full draft completed
1.1	19/04/2024	Kyle Montague	Updated sections 1 and 2; Document review.
1.2	26/04/2024	Hugo Nicolau	Integration of all comments and suggestions
2.0	29/04/2024	Dina Dionisio and Hugo Nicolau	Full document review; Final version

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Executive Summary

The deliverable reports on the major communication and dissemination activities of DCitizens. Furthermore, to evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of these activities, we present key performance indicators previously proposed in the “Communication, Dissemination, and Exploitation” plan (Deliverable 7.3).

Overall, DCitizens achieved all proposed key performance indicators for the first 16 months, and it is on track to achieve all goals by the end of the project successfully. In terms of communication, both online and offline reach is surpassing expectations. These results are due to the combination of frequent online events, such as the seminar series, social media posts, press releases, and in-person public events. Regarding dissemination of research towards other academics, the DCitizens is focused on leading the establishment of a Digital Civics research community by organising multiple events at premier scientific venues, disseminating research results at such venues, and inviting world-class academics to engage with the project through the seminar series.

The deliverable is organised into two main sections that describe the major activities and outputs related to 1) Communication and 2) Dissemination.

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1. Report on Communication

DCitizens has a dedicated Communication Manager responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the Communication and Dissemination Plan (see Deliverable 7.3 for full details).

Regarding communication, the project aims to reach two main audiences: 1) the local community in Lisbon (local government, NGOs, private sector, and citizens) and 2) the academic community. All communication is grounded in establishing IST-ID as a pole of excellence in Digital Civics in Europe. We defined two key messages: the first targeted at the local community in Lisbon, and the second message towards the academic community.

1) DCitizens is aiming to close the Research and Innovation gap in Portugal, better preparing the research community to develop solutions that will allow more active citizen participation in shaping research agendas.

2) DCitizens is committed to fostering social inclusion through the digital economy, particularly in the least engaged and marginalised communities, such as people with disabilities, migrants or citizens in low socio-economic situations.

The project has five communication channels that combine online and in-person efforts:

1. Website: <https://dcitizens.eu/>
2. Social media: [Facebook](#), [X](#) (former Twitter), and [Instagram](#)
3. Online newsletter
4. Outreach events
5. Press

The table below shows all communication activities of DCitizens between the kick-off (Jan 2023) and its 16th month (March 2024).

Table 1. Communication activities for DCitizens (W=website, SM=social media, N=newsletter, P=press, E=event).

Month	Activity	Communication Channel				
		W	SM	N	P	E
M2	DCitizens Kick-off Meeting	x	x	x		
M2	Civic Workshop	x	x	x		x
M4	Call for Collaborative Projects	x	x			
M6	LARSyS seminar	x	x	x		x

M7	DCitizens project video	x	x	x		
M8	DCitizens Summer School	x	x	x		
M8	Staff Exchange: Newcastle	x	x	x		
M10	Citizen-centric AI at GoodIT conference	x	x			
M10	European Researchers' Night 2023	x	x	x		x
M11	Participation in ASSETS 2023	x	x			
M11	Visiting researcher at Umeå University	x	x			
M11	Interactive Technologies Institute Open Day		x			x
M12	Project meeting in Siegen	x	x	x		
M12	Técnico Taguspark Open Day 2023	x				x
M12	Seminar Series: Firaz Peer	x	x	x		
M13	Research dissemination: DiversiBots		x	x		
M13	Opinion article by Hugo Nicolau		x	x	x	
M13	Yearly Newsletter			x		
M14	Seminar Series: Faheem Hussain	x	x			
M15	Seminar Series: Alan Dix and Miriam Sturdee	x	x			
M15	Seminar Series: Eleonore Fournier-Tombs	x	x			
M15	Civic and Inclusive Education Workshop	x	x			
M16	Seminar Series: Dilrukshi Gamage	x	x			
M16	Research dissemination: Robotic ostracism				x	
M16	Seminar Series: Katta Spiel	x	x			

Overall, the project had 1,3 communication activities per month. Major activities include the public and open reporting of the project's progress, such as meetings, civic events, open days, staff exchanges, invited seminars, and summer school. Additionally, the communication efforts highlighted the research development of the project by sharing the presence of the project's researchers at reputable conferences and producing press releases about some of the research studies, which resulted in articles in both national and international press. In July 2023 (M8), during the summer

school, the project kicked off its regular seminar series. The invited seminars have been shared through the project’s communication channels and later saved on the [Interactive Technologies Institute’s public YouTube channel](#). Overall, DCitizens hosted nine invited seminars by the 16th month (full details in D2.2 - Mid-term Report on Joint Events)

To evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of our communication activities, we defined yearly Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for each communication channel. Below, we report the proposed and achieved KPIs for years one and two. Notably, this deliverable was written during month 17 of the project; thus, the second year’s performance should correspond to 30% of the proposed KPIs.

Table 2. Key performance indicators for each communication channel (Y=year). The green background indicates that the proposed KPI was achieved.

Communication Channel	KPI	Y1 Target	Y1 Result	Y2 Target	Y2 Result
Social Media	Reach	1000	9050	1000	7690
	Updates	10	14	20	8
Website	Visitors	200	1700	500	696
	Updates	10	16	20	6
Press	Press releases sent	1	2	1	2
	Published articles	5	12	10	13
Public events	Number of events	1	4	2	1
	Audience reached	300	4000	600	50
Newsletter	Receiving contacts	50	57	60	107
Promotional materials	Number of materials	4	5	1	0

Overall, DCitizens has reached all its communication KPIs in the first year (see Table above). The website and social media channels performed particularly better than expected. We attribute this success to following the best practices in digital marketing and frequent updates on both communication channels.

The project published four press releases by the end of the 16th month, which originated a total of 12 and 13 press articles in years 1 and 2, respectively. Examples include:

- [When Disability, Civics, and Technology Rights Movements Come Together](#) (translated from Portuguese)
- [Digital Civics Projects Putting People at the Heart of Digital Innovation](#)

- [Robots foster Inclusion in Education through Touch](#)
- [Neurodivergent kids design their own games with robots and augmented reality](#)

In terms of public events, DCitizens participated in three public events:

1. [European Researchers' Night](#), September 2023
2. [Openday at the Interactive Technologies Institute](#), October 2023
3. [Openday at Instituto Superior Técnico - Taguspark](#), November 2023

The project also organised two civic events with local communities in [January 2023](#) and [February 2024](#), which are closely related to the commissioning model of WP4.

Regarding the second year, some KPIs have already been reached, including social media reach, website visitors, published articles in the press and newsletter contacts. We will continue our work to ensure the KPIs will be met by the end of the year, with a particular effort on growing our online presence through our joint events (e.g., seminar series, accepted workshops at four different international conferences) and enhancing relationships with local communities in Lisbon through public events.

2. Report on Dissemination

The main goal of the DCitizen's dissemination is three-fold: 1) communicate the scientific results of the project to the academic community; 2) foster the uptake and application of scientific outcomes; and 3) increase awareness and understanding of the scientific results.

The dissemination strategy and proposed activities of the Dissemination Plan (D7.3) is grounded on excellence and open access. The strategy is being implemented through three main activities: 1) deliver academic presentations through DCitizens' consortium partner network and at top conferences; 1) publish results from work package 4 (joint research) in premier journals and conferences; and 3) organise joint events such as summer schools, invited lecture series, and scientific workshops. The following sections describe the major activities of the dissemination plan, while Table 3 summarises the DCitizen's performance on the dissemination's Key Performance Indicators for years one and two.

Table 3. Dissemination timeline and key performance indicators (Y = Year). The green background indicates that the proposed KPI was achieved. The second year's performance should correspond to 30% of the proposed KPIs – Month (M) 13 to 16.

Key Performance Indicator	Y1 Target	Y1 Result	Y2 Target	M13 - M16 Result
Joint journal papers	-	-	1	-
Joint conference papers	1	1	2	-
Organisation of summer schools	1	1	1	-
Organisation of international scientific workshops	-	1	1	4
Conference and workshop participation	10	16	10	4
Invited lectures by experts in Digital Civics	3	3	3	6

2.1. Attending and Presenting at Conferences

DCitizens supported nine ESR participation in five international conferences in the first 16 months of the project: 1) 2023 ACM CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems, 2) 2023 INTERACT IFIP TC13 International Conference, 3) 2023 ACM Conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work, 4) 2023 ACM SIGACCESS Conference on Computers and Accessibility, and 5) 2024 ACM Interaction Design and Children.

Moreover, it supported seven ESR participations in scientific workshops: Workshop on Designing Technology for Neurodivergent Self-Determination: Challenges and Opportunities at INTERACT'23, Workshop on A Toolbox for Feminist Wonder: Theories and Methods that can Make a Difference at CSCW'23, three ESR participations in the ASSETS'23 Workshop on Tackling the Lack of a Practical Guide in Disability-Centered Research, and 2 ESR participations at the IDC'24 Participatory Design with Young Children: Failures, Challenges and Successes.

2.2. Publish at Premier Journals and Conferences

In the first 16 months, DCitizens supported six peer-reviewed publications (freely available to download):

1. Patricia Piedade, Isabel Neto, Ana Cristina Pires, Rui Prada, and Hugo Nicolau. 2023. PartiPlay: A Participatory Game Design Kit for Neurodiverse Classrooms. *Proceedings of the 25th International ACM SIGACCESS Conference on Computers and Accessibility*, Association for Computing Machinery. <https://arxiv.org/abs/2404.11234>
2. Patricia Piedade, Ana Henriques, Filipa Rocha, Isabel Neto, and Hugo Nicolau. 2023. Ethical Concerns when Working with Mixed-Ability Groups of Children. *In*

Proceedings of ASSETS 2023 Workshop - Tackling the Lack of a Practical Guide in Disability-Centered Research. <https://arxiv.org/abs/2404.11248>

3. Ana Henriques, Hugo Nicolau, and Kyle Montague. 2023. Frameworking for a Community-led Feminist Ethics. In *Proceedings of CSCW 2023 Workshop - A Toolbox for Feminist Wonder - Theories and Methods that can Make a Difference.* <https://arxiv.org/abs/2404.11514>
4. Patricia Piedade, Isabel Neto, Ana Pires, Rui Prada, and Hugo Nicolau. 2023. That's our game!: Reflections on Co-designing a Robotic Game with Neurodiverse Children. In *Proceedings of INTERACT 2023 Workshop - Designing Technology for Neurodivergent Self-Determination: Challenges and Opportunities*, Springer International Publishing. <https://arxiv.org/abs/2404.11252>
5. Filipa Correia, Isabel Neto, Soraia Paulo, Patricia Piedade, Hadas Erel, Ana Paiva, and Hugo Nicolau. 2024. The Effects of Observing Robotic Ostracism on Children's Prosociality and Basic Needs. In *Proceedings of the 2024 ACM/IEEE International Conference on Human-Robot Interaction (HRI '24)*. Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 157–166. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3610977.3634997>
6. Isabel Neto, Yuhan Hu, Filipa Correia, Filipa Rocha, João Nogueira, Katharina Buckmayer, Guy Hoffman, Hugo Nicolau, and Ana Paiva. 2024. "I'm Not Touching You. It's The Robot!": Inclusion Through a Touch-Based Robot Among Mixed-Visual Ability Children. In *Proceedings of the 2024 ACM/IEEE International Conference on Human-Robot Interaction (HRI '24)*. Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 511–521. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3610977.3634992>

It is worth mentioning most of these publications are the result of research work at IST-ID related to Digital Civics that started before the kick-off of the project. Nevertheless, the consortium has one joint publication with preliminary results from WP4, which focuses on the conceptualisation and design process of the Digital Civics Ethical Toolkit (see publication #3). Other results from the joint research work in WP4 will be submitted in 2024. We devised a joint submission plan focused on high-potential scientific contributions to Digital Civics, which include:

1. Crafting a Community-led Ethics Toolkit for Digital Civics Projects

This work aims to develop an ethics toolkit for Digital Civics projects. Contributions include a fusion of care ethics with embedded research (community-led/digital civics); development of a novel and open source (copyleft) toolkit for academic and community use; empirical evidence of the impact of community ethics discussions on Digital Civics research; exploratory findings regarding the application of care ethics to community-led projects; and design considerations for the development of a toolkit intended for community use.

2. Infrastructuring a Community Sponsorship Program for Refugees in Portugal

This submission is the result of one (of the two) commissioned projects in WP4. The work focuses on the collaboration between DCitizens and the Portuguese Council for Refugees. It will explore how digital technologies can support the Portuguese Community Sponsorship program. Contributions include understanding the challenges and opportunities of the community sponsorship program, co-designing a socio-technical infrastructure, and mixed-methods real-world evaluation of its impact.

3. A Critical Review of Urban Technologies for Inclusive Smart Cities

The main contribution of this work is to establish a gap in the literature and create a strong theoretical foundation for the development of truly inclusive smart cities. We will analyse three main research topics: how HCI is involved in the design of public spaces and the inclusion of people with disabilities; methods used to co-design public space technologies; and methods used to co-design with people with disabilities.

4. Understanding the Lifecycle and Sustainability of Digital Civics Projects

This submission explores the lack of a framework for conducting sustainable digital civics projects, including considerations for community engagement, running projects, and exit strategies. We aim to answer three main research questions: How can digital civics research effectively collaborate with diverse stakeholders such as government, NGOs, citizens, other academics, and the private sector who have varying needs and perspectives within communities? How can digital civics projects establish protocols for addressing unexpected challenges and obstacles as they arise? What are effective strategies for concluding digital civics projects sustainably?

5. Strategies, Tactics and Challenges of Civic Universities in Empowering Local Communities

This submission will focus on local initiatives fostering collaboration and empowerment between universities and citizens. We aim to compare these initiatives with similar efforts in Siegen and Lisbon, shedding light on effective strategies and challenges faced. One specific issue concerns gentrification and its adverse effects on European urban centres. Through collaboration between consortium partners, we aim to analyse the findings of the DCitizens project, along with existing literature on gentrification, to identify strategies for mitigating the negative consequences of gentrification and potentially providing socio-technical solutions to affected communities.

Regarding KPIs in paper submissions, we achieved year one proposed joint conference submission (and publication), and we are on track to submit at least three

papers in 2024. In 2025, we expected 5+ submissions based on ongoing collaborations, new commissioned projects in 2024 and 2025, and ongoing joint PhD supervisions.

2.3. Organise Joint Events

The organisation of joint events tailored to the academic community, which complement the public events described in the Communication section, mostly consists of the organisation of scientific workshops at premier conferences, the invited seminar series, and the summer schools. The full details of these joint events are available in D2.2 – Mid-term Report on Joint Events.

The consortium submitted four workshop proposals and one special interest group proposal at premier conferences in Human-Computer Interaction, such as ACM CHI (CORE A*) and ACM DIS (CORE). The main goal is to create a research community around Digital Civics and establish DCitizens as a major leading force.

The invited seminar series has been an extremely useful mechanism to engage other academics with the project and expand our research network while exposing ESRs to world-class senior researchers. It is noteworthy that some of the invited academics have started collaborating with the consortium to organise scientific workshops and proposal writing. Overall, DCitizens proposed nine invited seminars for the whole duration of the project. We have already achieved that goal by month 16 and expect to surpass it by a large margin.

3. Conclusion

This deliverable reports on DCitizen's communication and dissemination activities and results for the first 16 months of the project. Overall, we achieved all proposed KPIs in the Grant Agreement and the "Communication, Dissemination, and Exploitation" plan that was submitted in month six. We do not expect any deviations from the plan in the second half of the project.