

HORIZON  
2020

# Youth Skills

## Rendicontazione

### Informazioni relative al progetto

#### ySKILLS

ID dell'accordo di sovvenzione: 870612

[Sito web del progetto](#)

#### DOI

[10.3030/870612](#)

Progetto chiuso

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#### Data di completamento

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SOCIETAL CHALLENGES - Europe In A Changing  
World - Inclusive, Innovative And Reflective  
Societies

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#### Contributo UE

€ 3 188 703,50

#### Coordinato da

KATHOLIEKE UNIVERSITEIT  
LEUVEN



Belgium

Questo progetto è apparso in...



**Promuovere lo sviluppo  
delle competenze nell'UE  
per società più  
sostenibili, resilienti ed  
eque**

## Periodic Reporting for period 3 - ySKILLS (Youth Skills)

**Periodo di rendicontazione:** 2022-07-01 al 2023-12-31

### Sintesi del contesto e degli obiettivi generali del progetto



Over the last decade we have witnessed major transformations in youth's access to digital media platforms. Children and adolescents live in an always-on world with increased surveillance by adults, corporations and institutions, decreased levels of privacy, access to an ever-growing number and diverse range of mobile apps, and increasingly pervasive use of technology in schools. Compared to a decade ago, ICT use has become far more omnipresent, but there is a great variability in the ICT behaviours of children and adolescents. Navigating this world can be difficult for children and adolescents as it requires certain digital skills that many young people do not master. There is an underdevelopment of measures for digital skills testing around the softer non-technical skills that allow young people to safely interact in a civil manner on social media. For digital skills testing, a fresh approach is required. ySKILLS developed measures around sharing and communicating with others allowing children and adolescents to participate in positive ways and to deal with negative interactions which might lead to harm.

ySKILLS' overarching aim is to enhance and maximise long-term positive impact of the ICT environment on multiple aspects of wellbeing for all children and adolescents by stimulating resilience through the enhancement of digital skills. ySKILLS identified the (f)actors associated with children's and adolescents' wellbeing in the digital environment and the conditions in which digital skills influence the effect of these factors on their wellbeing, seen from a multidimensional perspective. The relationship between ICT use and the different wellbeing dimensions are examined on a short-, medium- and long-term basis among 12- to 17-year-olds.

### Lavoro eseguito dall'inizio del progetto fino alla fine del periodo coperto dalla relazione e principali risultati finora ottenuti



Our longitudinal survey across six European countries has unveiled distinct developmental patterns within the various dimensions of digital skills. While technical operational, programming, and digital

knowledge skills have exhibited notable progress over time, information navigation, communication, and content creation skills have shown limited growth, prompting a need for deeper investigation into the factors influencing these trajectories.

The intricate landscape of digital skills is intimately connected with individual, social, and country-specific factors. Notably, age has displayed a positive correlation with most digital skills, emphasizing the vital role of experiential learning in skill acquisition. Gender disparities have surfaced across various digital skill dimensions, underscoring the necessity for gender-inclusive approaches.

Moreover, self-efficacy has emerged as a robust predictor of digital skill proficiency. In the sphere of social interactions, our research has pointed at the negative impact of parental restrictive approaches on the technical and operational skills of children and young people. Additionally, the accessibility of digital technology and daily online activities has been closely intertwined with the acquisition of digital skills, highlighting the continued pivotal role of digital access in our increasingly interconnected world. We have also examined the complex relationship between digital skills and online risks, identifying both direct and indirect links. While most digital skills did not directly influence risky online experiences, an exception was observed in the case of content creation and production skills, emphasising the nuanced relationship between skills and online risk.

While digital skills have displayed limited direct effects on psychological and social wellbeing, communication and interaction skills, as well as information navigation and processing skills, have modestly influenced perceived school performance (i.e. cognitive wellbeing) positively. In contrast, content creation and production skills were associated with lower school performance, revealing the complex interplay between digital skills and academic success.

Through interviews with vulnerable groups, such as adolescents grappling with mental health challenges, we have uncovered the complexity of digital skill development. Our findings have illustrated that advanced digital skills do not necessarily guarantee improved mental health and wellbeing. In some cases, skilled internet use has even led to riskier online behaviours, underscoring the importance of comprehensive digital literacy education that addresses both skill acquisition and responsible digital citizenship. The ySKILLS project research has also underscored the necessity of considering the psychosocial context and individual developmental needs of children and young people.

Our performance testing has cast doubt on the overall digital skill levels of children and young people in Europe. Specifically, we observed challenges in Information Navigation & Processing skills, including difficulties in assessing the credibility of online information and discerning the motives behind online posts. In the domain of Communication and Interaction skills, we noted a lack of clear, appropriate, and polite online conduct, suggesting the need for improvement in this aspect of digital behaviour. Additionally, our testing indicated limited success in adhering to guidelines for effective presentation slide design in the realm of Content Creation and Production skills.

## Progressi oltre lo stato dell'arte e potenziale impatto previsto (incluso l'impatto socioeconomico e le implicazioni sociali più ampie del progetto fino ad ora)

ySKILLS generated a fivefold impact. It 1) informed stakeholder groups about the way in which digital skills can be used to make young people more resilient to these negative impacts and that can lead to

improved wellbeing; 2) formulated recommendations in support of national and European policies and practices that promote children's digital/social inclusion and wellbeing; 3) advanced an evidence-based EU policy and regulatory framework for young people's wellbeing guiding the immediate and medium-term evolution of EU legal standards, regulations promoting safer, more skilled and more beneficial ICT uses by children and adolescents; 4) helped to build the necessary interaction and cooperation between the actors and relevant stakeholders involved; and 5) offered robust, longitudinal, cross-country data on both national and European levels, generated innovative quantitative and qualitative methods, identified which combination of individual, social and cultural characteristics, ICT use and digital skills, can improve or undermine youth wellbeing, and expanded the knowledge base on at-risk (vulnerable or disadvantaged) children and adolescents. ySKILLS showed how European and international collaboration can achieve more than would have otherwise been possible, contributing to competitiveness and solving societal challenges. The various activities of ySKILLS showed its awareness that academic research is after all a contribution to society and that Europeans can profit from such research initiatives directly. ySKILLS generated a greater contribution to the knowledge-based economy and society by 1) enhancing cooperation and better transfer of knowledge between sectors and disciplines; 2) increasing the internationalisation of participating organisations; 3) increasing Europe's attractiveness as a leading research destination, accompanied by a rise in the numbers of talented researchers attracted and retained from abroad; 4) better quality research and innovation contributing to Europe's competitiveness and growth.



Logo ySKILLS

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**Permalink:** <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/870612/reporting/it>

European Union, 2025

