YouthWorkAndYou.org

HUMAK University of Applied Sciences, Finland
in collaboration with
Maynooth University, Ireland

Youth Work in Digital World

Digital youth work in Practice

HUMAK UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Maynooth University National University of Ireland Maynooth
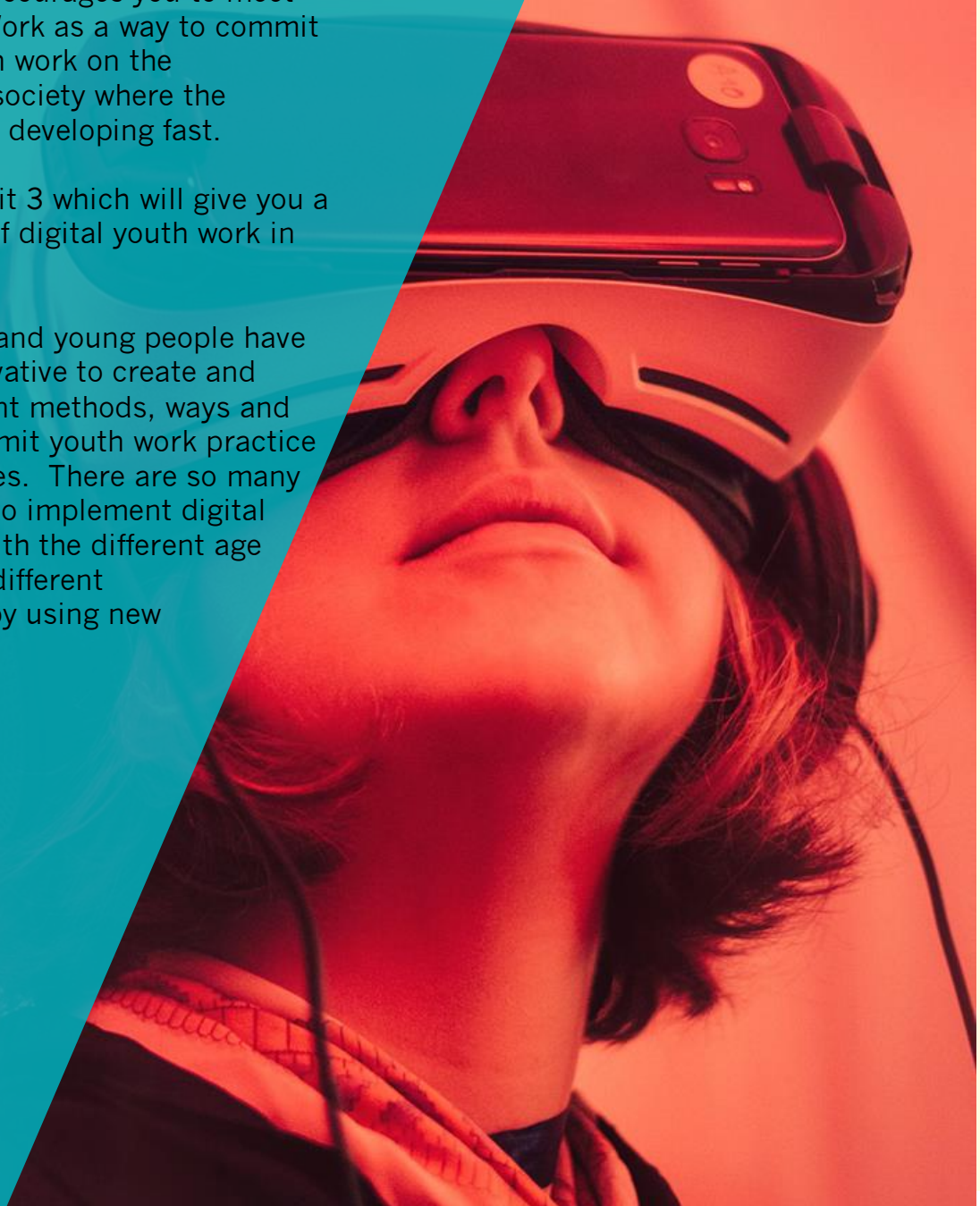
Erasmus+

Introduction

Digital youth work in Practice

The Digital Youth Work module is designed to enhance your understanding of the dimensions about digital youth work. Digital Youth Work is not a method or a form to work, it is youth work that uses the possibilities of new technology.

This module encourages you to meet Digital Youth Work as a way to commit every day youth work on the contemporary society where the digitalisation is developing fast.

Welcome to Unit 3 which will give you a few examples of digital youth work in practice.

Youth workers and young people have been very innovative to create and develop different methods, ways and models to commit youth work practice through the ages. There are so many different ways to implement digital youth work – with the different age groups, in the different environments by using new technology.

HUMAK UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES   Maynooth University National University of Ireland Maynooth   TALLINN UNIVERSITY   VICTORIA UNIVERSITY MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA   Ulster University   Erasmus+

2

Setting the Scene

Digital youth work keeps up with the times and changes accordingly. It grows, adapts and adopts various trends and thoughts, which is why many descriptions of the practices and definitions of digital youth work become obsolete – some faster, others not so fast. This reflects the fact that the digital youth work field is energetic and dynamic.

Youth workers need to recognize that young people are growing up in a digital era. Youth workers have been offered support for young people traditionally and today this means that young people need support to navigate the online aspects of their lives and critically analyze online information and interaction.

Youth work also aims to support the creativity and strengthen the digital skills of more young people by developing technology education and technology-enhanced activities such as robotics, coding and makerspace activities. (Lauha et al. 2017; Tuominen 2017.)

Young people live in an increasingly international world. Regardless of where in Europe they are, they face similar issues, for example, social problems, such as regional inequality, social exclusion, racism and big changes in the labour market. Conditions for youth work, however, are very different in different European countries: there are big differences, for example, between financial resources available and level of professionalism.

Even though the most of the youth work is done in the groups, the essential part of youth work is to support individuals. Digital youth work provides many good possibilities for discussions, information, counselling and advising. In many of these activities the language is in central role – young people need to have such services in their own native language.

What you will learn

In this unit, you will learn about:

- Good practice examples in digital youth work.

- The value of innovation, trying new things out alongside young people.

- The underpinning ethics of youth work in the digital world.

<u>Unit 2 Contents</u>

1. Good practices

The Digital Youth Work Project aims to build capacity to deliver digital youth work at local, national, regional and European levels. It is a transnational Erasmus+ project with seven partners from six different countries across Europe and it is implemented during 2017-2019.

These training materials have been developed to build the capacity of the youth work sector to deliver high-quality youth work in a digital age. They are based on training needs for practitioners identified by the EU expert group on digitalisation and youth's 2018 report.

The materials are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution ShareAlike 4.0 International License. Permissions beyond the scope of this license may be available from their respective authors.

ACT: try out training materials from various countries
https://www.digitalyouthwork.eu/training-materials/

2. Innovate

With technological advances having changed the way in which young people use the web, youth work that utilizes digital technology has reached a turning point. It is therefore no longer appropriate to distinguish digital youth work from face-to-face activities, or treat it as a separate method or branch in youth work. In fact, digital youth work should not be defined solely as youth work done online, but should cover all forms and methods of youth work. Digital youth work cannot indeed even exist without traditional forms of youth work.
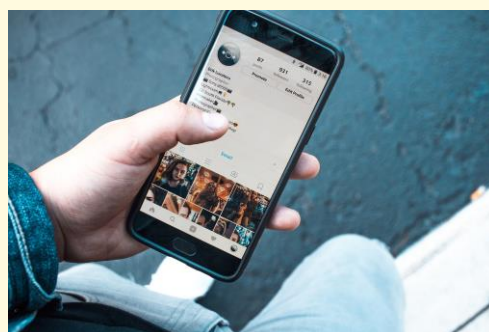
The term digital youth work first emerged in the Finnish youth work lexicon in the summer of 2012, when

youth work organisations throughout Europe, invited by Verke, met in Finland to discuss the impact of digitalization on youth work and its practices. Already then, the central idea was that the goal of digital youth work must be to comprehensively strengthen the agency of young people in a technologized and digitalised world (Davies 2012; Taylor 2012). This idea is still easy to endorse. However, the concept of digital youth work was not firmly established until a few years later. This was partly because online and web-based youth work had gained a strong foothold in the professional terminology of youth work.

On the other hand, only certain approaches to realizing the potential of the digital media and technology had become established in youth work.

Compared to many other countries, Finnish digital youth work has been characterised by work via online

services, particularly the social media, while using a variety of chat tools to reach out to the young and you'll learn more about that in session 2. In fact, many Finnish youth workers have found it difficult to grasp what 'digital media' might mean outside the social media. There was a demand for the concept of digital youth work in parallel with online and web-based youth work to describe the diversity of digitalisation in youth work. (Lauha et. al 2017.)

Digital youth work has also been introduced as a concept in many international arenas. The term smart youth work is used in some countries to refer to same kind of idea. The EU expert group on digitalisation and youth has summarised the definition of digital youth work (Kiviniemi J,

Tuominen S. edits. 2017: Digital Youth Work - a Finnish perspective).

There are many ways and not everything is suitable for everyone. Some digital tools, locations, or

spaces may need to be modified to meet different needs. It is important to participate in digital change and learn new things.

It's important to keep your knowledge updated, because digital world is changing all the time. Even though you don't have to expert in every part of digital world, you have to be aware of possibilities that it has. Be creative and innovate. There are thousands of ways to include digital youth work in youth work settings.

3. The importance of the Ethics in all activities

The Convention of the Child is guiding youth work strongly. The national and European legislations are based on the Human rights, and they are showing the frameworks for youth work in different countries. The way of youth workers or young people to behave is not formulated in the legislation in all the cases. Due to that it is very important the all people committed in youth work do remember to respect the other people. No sharing the personal issues, no behaving unfriendly, no bullying...

Please continue this idea. Make a list that you think that youth workers should take in consideration in youth work services.

Questions

What are some good practice examples in contemporary youth work?

How can youth workers be creative and innovative?

Are there particular ethics associated with digital youth work?

Engaging with the Interactive Video Content

1. What are some good practice examples in contemporary youth work?

Digital youth work has different forms and there are millions of ways to use digital youth work. There is no right or wrong way to do digital youth work. It is important to be bold and try new ways and tools. Digital youth work is being done around the world and it is therefore important to be able to look for information on different good practices.

Maker Activities
Maker activities can take many forms in goal-oriented youth work. They can be implemented to give added value to any existing youth work activity, whether it's an arts and crafts club, a parish confirmation camp or a youth participation process. One of the central tasks of youth work is to organize meaningful free-time activities for young people, and maker activities can indeed be used to give established activities an additional upgrade or create whole new ones.

Maker activities in youth work can also be implemented with a goal to strengthen young people's understanding of and practical skills related to technology. It is clear that the role of technology in our daily lives is not likely to decrease any time soon. Active citizenship in contemporary society will invariably require new kind of technology-related skills and knowledge, and youth work is in an excellent position to help young people build a basis for these.

Naturally, maker activities are also about technology education in a non-formal context. It is clear that all young people's future professions and studies will involve technology somehow. Whether we believe that all young people should be programming robots in the future, all occupations are likely to utilize technology somehow. (Kiviniemi J. (edits) 2019: Maker activities in youth work: page 8).

Netari – online youth club
Youth centre can act and gather young people in the web as well, like we know about Netari Youth Centre in the web. The young people can meet youth workers there and talk privately or in the small groups, young people can play games there or participate and bring their own voice to be heard. The rules and principles of youth work are in the focus of digital youth work as well. Just the technology is bringing the new ways to organise these valuated activities.

Syrian photostory
Many young people come to live in a new country with their family, or sometimes on their own, because of circumstances that are out of their control. This movement away from all that is familiar can be very disrupting to a young person's sense of self. Some young people carry painful memories with them. At the same time, moving to and settling in a new country can also be a period of discovery, of learning new things. For some young people, their stories are the stuff of everyday life, familiar to us already. All of these experiences evoke emotions and feelings that are very relatable to on a human level.

Photographs are central to our day-by-day understanding of the world around us and of civic, social and political life. Photographs can be very powerful avenues to exploring young peoples' deeper understanding of other cultures as well as concepts such as justice/ injustice and importantly, creating empathy. Getting young people to observe and describe what they see in photographs introduces

and opens up a variety of subjects and issues. At the same time, photographs taken by young people and the stories created by them can be a powerful means of giving voice to experiences that might otherwise remain unheard and unseen (Youth Work Ireland Tipperary: What's the photostory Syria-Tipperary?).

Games

Games are significant form of entertainment and communication for young people. Digital games can be used to maintain contact with friends or make entirely new ones. Multiplayer games can be considered full-fledged social media, as other users always create at least part of the content consumed in multiplayer sessions. The decisions made by other players introduce new dimensions to the gaming experience. Even players who are physically alone in a room with their computers or other gaming devices might have pervasive networks that they are connected to during gameplay. Games also provide opportunities for learning various skills, often without even realising it. Different social situations and conflict resolution can serve as useful preparation for working life, for example.

Games are not that different from many other digital or real-world settings. From a young person's perspective, communication on the Steam platform, for example, is no less valuable than face-to-face interaction. When they interact with others, young people may often need adult guidance or advice on creating shared rules within groups as well as ensuring that everyone has an equal opportunity to be involved.

While discussions on games often highlight their negative or positive impacts, it would be better to move on from this juxtaposition. The important thing is to engage young people in youth work by taking advantage of environments and methods that make the activities fun

for them. Games are attractive and diverse, and they facilitate communication. These are noteworthy attributes from the perspective of youth work. Any pastime that is popular among young people can be well suited for use in youth work (Kiviniemi J, Tuominen S. (edits) 2017: Digital Youth Work - a Finnish Perspective, page 80).

When the first steps for digital youth work were taken, the Youth Information and Advising work started to offer information and advising online. And of course the digital games in youth clubs opened new possibilities. The games – both for fun and for learning - have been essential part in the youth work for ages, but since the 80s the gaming consoles and computers started to be basic equipment in the youth centres. Now a days more and more the young people themselves are developing the games – by using their programming skills. Youth participation, to get young people´s voice to be heard is the topic of the many gaming session. For example there are some special games for real city planning; the young people can plan the ideal city for themselves – or the game board could be the real map of the city, and young people could take part in the real city planning. (Good experiences about the cooperation between the city planning department and youth department in Finland.)

Please take a moment and think the importance of the new technology in your everyday life and in your experience in the youth work.

2. How can youth workers be creative and innovative?

While aware of the opportunities and benefits of digital youth work, we have our own insecurities and fears. It is important to understand the importance of digitalisation and the potential benefits, especially for young people, of digital

youth work. It is important for us to monitor what is happening elsewhere in the world and how digital tools are used to work with young people.

There are many ways and not everything is suitable for everyone. Some digital tools, locations, or spaces may need to be modified to meet different needs. It is important to participate in digital change and learn new things.

It's important to understand the meaning of the digitalisation and the nature of digital youth work. As said digital youth work is not a method, it can be included in any youth work setting.

It's important to keep your knowledge updated, because digital world is changing all the time. Even though you don't have to expert in every part of digital world, you have to be aware of possibilities that it has.

Be creative and innovate. There are thousands of ways to include digital youth work in youth work settings.

3. Are there particular ethics associated with digital youth work?

In some countries national youth work associations or equivalents has produced the code of conduct or ethical guidelines for youth work or youth workers.
The European Youth Information and Counselling Agency ERYICA has published principles and guidelines for youth information and counselling work. This

charter is recently revised with an aspect of online youth information and counselling work. Now a days the core idea of this charter is that the principles for face-to-face work and online activities are permanently interconnected. This European Youth Information Charter is translated in many different languages (https://www.eryica.org/european-youth-information-charter)

In Finland the active actors in the field of digital youth work have created a network to support each other´s work and development. This network (NuSuVeFo) has signed up the ethical principles for digital youth work.

Ethical guidelines for digital youth work
Forum for organisations that do online work for young people in Finland (Nusuvefo)
A member organisation has to commit to these guidelines.

Rights and responsibilities of young people who contact a member organisation online

· Young people have the right to know for what age group the service is intended.

· Young people have the right to know if he or she can be in contact anonymously.

· Young people have the right to know to what extent the discussion is confidential.

· Young people have the right to a service that is trustworthy, safe and fair.

· Young people shall be directed to other services if necessary.

· Young people have the right to get information about the online service and its provider, privacy protection protocol and data processing, and to give feedback on the service.

· Young people are responsible for following the rules of the service.

Links to other Information and Reading

Here is a list of additional information which will assist you to explore questions around the Digital Youth Work. The resources will help you further understand this topic and apply it to your own work. You will find books, articles, videos, podcasts and learning modules in the list. Please explore in the Digital Youth Work resources freely.

Books and Articles

Code of Ethics for Youth Workers in New Zealand
https://arataiohi.org.nz/career/code-of-ethics/

Dublin Institute of Technology (2012):
http://www.dit.ie/digitalyouth/project/

Ethical Conduct of Youth Work, National Youth Agency UK
http://www.nya.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Ethical_conduct_in_Youth-Work.pdf

European Youth Information Charter
https://www.eryica.org/european-youth-information-charter

Future Labs e-handbook: Developing youth work innovation (coming in end of August 2019)
https://futurelabs.humak.fi/ehandbook/

Kiviniemi J. (edit) 2019 Maker Activities in Youth Work
https://www.verke.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Verke_maker-opas_ENG_VALMIS_web.pdf

Kiviniemi J, Tuominen S. (edits) 2017: Digital Youth Work - a Finnish Perspective: Pages 80-101:
https://www.verke.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Digital-youth-work-a-Finnish-perspective_web.pdf

Salmon, G. 2013. E-tivities – The Key to Active Online Learning
https://www.routledge.com/E-tivities-The-Key-to-Active-Online-Learning-2nd-Edition/Salmon/p/book/9780415881760

National Agency for Erasmus+/Youth in Action Austria (2017):https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/european-training-calendar/training/conference-digital-youth-work.6839/

National Agency for Erasmus+/Youth in Action, Finland (2018): *Strategies for Digital Youth Work*
https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/european-training-calendar/training/strategies-for-digital-youth-work.6989/

National Agency for Erasmus+/Youth in Action Hungary (2018): *Developing Digital Youth Work*
https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/european-training-calendar/training/developing-digital-youth-work.7001/

Websites and Videos

Digital youth work done the proper way! – Training course of DIG-IT UP!

SALTOs from the E+ programme have been developing MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) which give a groovy way to learn new stuff, if you like that kind of thing. Give 'em a go!

The partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Commission in the field of youth is also working on MOOCs
https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/online-course-on-youth-policy

Humak University of Applied Sciences, Finland (2016):
Distanssi – MOOC (in Finnish)

National Youth Council of Ireland and five partners (2016):
Using ICT, digital and social media in youth work

Verke (2017), Report on training course:
Makerspace in digital youth work (Luxembourg, July 2017)

Lundqvist, M. 2014:
How Facebook Killed Online Youth Work.

Taylor T. 2012.
Digital Youth Work: Towards a Definition and Practice.

Digital youth work
https://www.digitalyouthwork.eu/info/

Verke
https://www.verke.org/?lang=en

Techspace
https://techspace.ie/

Youth Work Tipperary
http://youthworktipperary.ie/

YMCA Ireland
https://www.ymca-ireland.net/

Youth work footage courtesy of:

Camara Ireland:
https://youtu.be/RWjnJEVt_Z4

Verke:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gmIRAUfHzFA

TG4:
https://www.facebook.com/131308256937561/videos/554219325020481/

YMCA Ireland:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AhDBsbIXx1o

Youth Work Tipperary:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JsOmkd7IThI
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yIZgYcEOCWg
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VzC6HTBmBY8
https://youtu.be/ZeNe6wYnIvw
https://youtu.be/iBS1uU4r_uI

Wrapping Up

Unit 3 gave you an understanding of how digital tools can be used in youth work.

This unit collected various examples of digital youth work from around the world.

You also gained an understanding of the benefits of digital youth work and the importance of following ethical guidelines and respecting people's rights.

Summary

Digital technology can be utilised in all forms of youth work. Technology can be for example a tool to increase citizenship skills, to be included in hobby activities as their content, to lower the threshold of using youth work services, and to make young people's voices heard in a way natural for them. The potential that digital tools have to enhance the internal operations of youth work organisations and to vitalise external communication must also not be forgotten. Alongside the additional value created for existing services, this technology enables novel and innovative ways of meeting the goals established in the Youth Act.

Technological competence will be required in almost every profession in the future, as most people will have to work with bots, robots or other pre-programmed functions at some point of their career. Young people should be encouraged to have an open mind for technology in order to utilise all of the possibilities it has to offer. Every young person's equal opportunities to develop their technology skills must be ensured for them to have comparable positions in the labour market of the future · and to feel part of the society on the whole.

Developing digital youth work is currently a focal point in many countries, as is natural in our current ever more technologised society. Several countries already have long traditions in implementing, for example, media education, online counselling and digital gaming into youth work. While youth work is always rooted in both the cultural and societal realities of each country, to keep digital youth work up to date and inspire new innovations, intercultural dialogue and sharing of good practices are needed (Kiviniemi J, Tuominen S. edits. 2017: Digital Youth Work · a Finnish perspective).

Even though we are facing a new era and do not know what the future will bring, it is important to be present at this moment and understand the needs of young people. Ordinary face-to-face youth work is not going away, digital tools, places and spaces should be used as an extension of it. One corner stone in youth work is to respect other (human) beings, it is essential to implement the human rights in the youth work context and follow ethical rules.

We do not need to know everything. It is important to be open and ready to learn alongside young people. Research and practices are being conducted around the world and further development is important. We need to remember what youth work is all about · young people.

YouthWorkAndYou.org

Unit 3

Höylä, Sari and Reponen, Emilia (2019) *Youth Work in the Digital World Units 1, 2 and 3.* Youth Work eLearning Partnership (YWeLP). Available at

https://www.youthworkandyou.org/ywelp-module-five/

Contact:

Senior Lecturer Sari Höylä

Humak University of Applied Sciences,
Helsinki, Finland

t. +358 400 349 376
e. msari.hoyla@humak.fi

This document was provided by the YWeLP Project.

For more resources like this, go to
www.youthworkandyou.org

YWeLP Partner Universities:
Maynooth University, Ireland
HUMAK University of Applied Sciences, Finland
Tallinn University, Estonia
Victoria University, Australia
Ulster University, Northern Ireland

Supported by:
Estonian Association of Youth Workers, The Kanuuna Network, National Youth Council of Ireland, YouthAction Northern Ireland, Youth Workers' Association, Victoria