COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK

developed by Mindshift Talent Advisory

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Country	Organisation
Czech Republic	AHINSA
Portugal	Mindshift Talent Advisory
German	assist International HR
Cyprus	CARDET
Greece	Asserted Knowledge
Belgium	Forum Citoyens
Spain	INFODEF
France	Association de Gestion des Fonds Européns
Turkey	Gelecegin Egitimi Dernegi

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Why the Netiquette+ Competence framework?

This **Competence framework** is the first result of a strategic partnership for the adult education project titled Netiquette+ – Fundamentals for fostering Netiquette in the Digital Age. Funded by the Erasmus+ programme, the objective of the project is twofold: first, to provide participating organisations with a set of tangible results to support adult educators in the process of mainstreaming and transferring relevant knowledge and skills on netiquette; second, to foster low-skilled adult learners' awareness, knowledge and skills to take part in the digital society critically, consciously and responsibly.

The main goal of the Netiquette+ Competence framework is to **define the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are most relevant to the target groups** – low-skilled adult learners and adult educators – in the participating countries. It provides Adult Education sector with a state-of-the-art instrument to help professionals to identify the learning needs of adult learners, devise didactic activities and pedagogical strategies, as well as to assess learners' netiquette skills.

For this, the use of European Qualification Framework (EQF) and The digital competence framework for citizens (DigComp 2.1) tools and methodologies are embedded to define and describe the competences that are required to boost netiquette in the digital age and provide adult educators with a formal but dynamic competence framework on netiquette. It is structured around four **key-areas**:

1)	online ethics and netiquette
2)	communication modes and strategies
3)	generational diversity
4)	cultural diversity

To draft the Competence framework, an extended needs analysis was carried out in all nine participating countries through a public consultation with the Local Expert Groups, aiming to take into consideration their concerns, critical reflection and insights on how low skilled adult learners can make a positive, responsible and ethic use of digital technologies in their daily lives, educational settings, and workplace. The ultimate goal was to ensure that this framework is relevant and has the **expected impact** in these countries and their Adult Education systems.

A high level of **transferability potential** is also expected, serving as inspiration to other educational sectors, such as Vocational Education and Training or High Education, and European countries, as this project result is available online as on open resource in eight languages: Czech, English, French, German, Greek, Portuguese, Spanish and Turkish. It is available online at https://netiquetteproject.eu.

This core document supports the definition of the other two project results: Netiquette+ MOOC and Didactic handbook and Netiquette+ Learning hub and digital resources. It includes the following **sections**:

- An introduction to the concept netiquette - What is netiquette?

- A check list of relevant terminology - What are the terms of reference?

- A comprehensive overview of the basis that supports this competence framework - What is the theory behind Netiquette+?

- A description of the four key-areas and respective learning outcomes - What are the Netiquette+ key-areas and learning outcomes?

- A comprehensive user guideline - How to use the Netiquette+ Competence Framework?

What is netiquette?

Netiquette is a combined word from the words "net" and "etiquette". Thus, netiquette **describes** the rules of conduct for respectful and appropriate communication on the internet.

Netiquette is common referred to as etiquette for the internet. The digital age has brought new dimensions to our life, in which netiquette has (or should) become the new etiquette. Netiquette entails non-technical skills, and it is highly interconnected with the **21st century skills** listed in the next table[1].

learning skills			
critical thinking	creativity	collaboration	communication

literacy skills		
information	media	technology

life skills				
flexibility	leadership	initiative	productivity	social skills

Netiquette is beyond mere civility when communicating with others and involves key ethical elements, as well as it is highly affected by contextual, cultural and generational factors. The significance of netiquette in nowadays derives from the pervasiveness and **impact of the digital technologies**, which are a powerful driving force behind deep transformations in the way we communicate and collaborate with others, learn and work, think and behave.

Our increasingly digital societies face several **challenging issues**. One of these issues is precisely the digital divide, which entails the risk of exclusion of disadvantaged groups, namely low-skilled adults and adult learners. Netiquette is also critical to address other significant societal challenges. Online disinformation, fake-news and online hate speech constitute real threats to core European democratic values, which can be tackled by fostering the capacity to engage positively, critically and responsibly with digital technologies.

Whilst most initiatives at national, regional and European levels aim at raising children and youngster's awareness regarding netiquette, so far, this topic has not been central beyond compulsory education, specifically in the **Adult Education sector**. In most European member states, the relevance of netiquette to foster low skilled adults personal and professional advancement, their critical thinking skills and active

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[1] Adapted from https://www.aeseducation.com/blog/what-are-21st-century-skills

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citizenship, as well as their privacy and safety online, has been overlooked. The negative outcome of this circumstance became apparent during the **COVID-19 pandemic**, which tested the digital readiness of adult educators and learners, as well as unveiled European societies permeability to the spread of disinformation and fraudulent schemes at large.

Source: https://dreamstime.com

What are the terms of reference?

Ageism

Ageism refers to the stereotypes (how we think), prejudice (how we feel) and discrimination (how we act) towards others or oneself based on age.

Attitudes

The ability to develop tasks and solve problems of a higher or lower degree of complexity and different degrees of autonomy and responsibility

Competence

Proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities in work or study situations and in professional and personal development.

Digital divide

The existing gap and barriers that prevent an equal access to the digital technologies.

Digital footprint

The record of an individual online presence.

Digital literacy

The ability to use and know how to use digital technologies.

Knowledge

Outcome of the assimilation of information through learning: the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of work or study. In the EQF context, is described as theoretical and/or factual.

Learning outcomes

Statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Low-skilled adults

Adults with low basic skills are individuals aged 25-64 with low proficiency in literacy, numeracy or both.

Netiquette

Set of rules applied to online communication and engagement.

Proficiency

Indicates a degree of mastery that allows a person to function independently to achieve performance.

Skills

Ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. In the EQF context, they are described as cognitive (use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) and/or practical and technical (manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments).

What is the theory behind Netiquette+?

Digital proficiency levels

According to **DigComp 2.1** - The Digital Competence Framework for Citizens with eight proficiency levels, netiquette integrates the competence area **communication and collaboration** and is broadly defined as the awareness regarding "behavioural norms and know-how while using digital technologies and interacting in digital environments", as well as the capability "to adapt communication strategies to specific audiences and to be aware of cultural and generational diversity in digital environments".

The table below shows how each one of the **eight levels** represent a step up in adults' acquisition of the competence according to its cognitive challenge, the complexity of the tasks they can handle and their autonomy in completing the task[2]

levels		complexity of tasks	autonomy	cognitive domain
foundation	1	simple tasks	with guidance	remembering
foundation	2	simple tasks	autonomy and with guidance where needed	remembering
intermediate	3	well-defined and routine tasks, and straightforward problems	on my own	understanding
intermediate	4	tasks, and well-defined and non-routine problems	independent and according to my needs	understanding
advanced	5	different tasks and problems	guiding others	applying
advanced	6	most appropriate tasks	able to adapt to others in a complex context	evaluating
highly specialised	7	resolve complex problems with limited solutions	integrate to contribute to the professional practice and to guide others	creating
highly specialised	8	resolve complex problems with many interacting factors	propose new ideas and processes to the field	creating

Extended needs analysis

To tailor the Netiquette+ project to a real need and gather an external perspective in all the nine participating countries, a **public consultation involving 66 members of the Local Expert Groups** (i.e., adult learners, adult educators, other adult education professionals and associated partners) was conducted during May and June of 2022.

Taking into consideration their local context and needs, participants were invited to **decide which digital proficiency level** best defines the knowledge, skills and attitudes that each one of the project targets groups.

Low-skilled adult learners

Foundation level 2

Low-skilled adult learners can differentiate simple behavioural norms and know-how while using digital technologies and interacting in digital environments, as well as choose simple communication modes and strategies adapted to an audience and differentiate simple cultural and generational diversity aspects to consider in digital environments.

Adult educators

Advanced level 5

Adult educators can apply different behavioural norms and know-how while using digital technologies and interacting in digital environments, as well as apply different communication strategies in digital environments adapted to an audience and apply different cultural and generational diversity aspects to consider in digital environments.

Learning outcomes-based framework

The Netiquette+ Competence framework is developed in accordance with the **EQF**, an 8-level learning outcomes-based translation tool that helps to improve transparency, comparability and portability qualifications and makes it possible to compare qualifications from different European countries. The EQF covers all types and all levels of qualifications and the use of learning outcomes makes it clear what a person knows, understands and is able to do.

The EQF applies to all types of education, training and qualifications, from school education to academic, vocational and adult education. This approach shifts the focus from the traditional system which emphasises "learning inputs", such as the length of a learning experience, or type of institution. It also **encourages lifelong learning** by promoting the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

In the frame of EQF, **learning outcomes** are described in terms of knowledge (i.e., theoretical and/or factual learning domain), skills (i.e., cognitive and practical learning domain) what a person needs to know), and responsibility and autonomy (i.e., attitudes to effective learning).

The table below summarises **eight levels descriptors** of EQF.[3]

levels	knowledge	skills	responsibility and autonomy
1	basic general knowledge	basic skills required to carry out simple tasks	performance under direct supervision
2	basic factual knowledge	basic cognitive and practical skills required to use simple rules and tools	performance under supervision with some autonomy
3	knowledge of facts, principles, processes and general concepts	a range of cognitive and practical skills required to use basic methods, tools, materials and information	take responsibility for completion of tasks, adapting behaviour to circumstances
4	factual and theoretical knowledge	a range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems	exercise self-management
5	comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge	a comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems	exercise management and supervision; review and develop performance of self and others
6	advanced knowledge involving a critical understanding of theories and principles	advanced skills, demonstrating mastery and innovation, required to solve complex and unpredictable problems	manage complex activities or projects; take responsibility for managing professional development of others
7	highly specialised knowledge; critical awareness of knowledge	specialised problem-solving skills required to develop new knowledge and procedures	manage and transform contexts that are complex and unpredictable
8	knowledge at the most advanced	the most advanced and specialised skills and techniques	demonstrate substantial authority, innovation, autonomy and scholarly

Taking into consideration the digital proficiency level chosen for each one of the project targets groups, the following **EQF levels will guide the definition of the learning outcomes** of the Netiquette+ Competence framework.

Low-skilled adult learners

EQF level 3

Low-skilled adult learners know facts, principles, processes and general concepts in netiquette field, and have a range of cognitive and practical skills that allow them to apply basic methods, tools, materials and information necessary to perform tasks and solve problems; they can take responsibility for completion of tasks, as well as adapt their behaviour to circumstances.
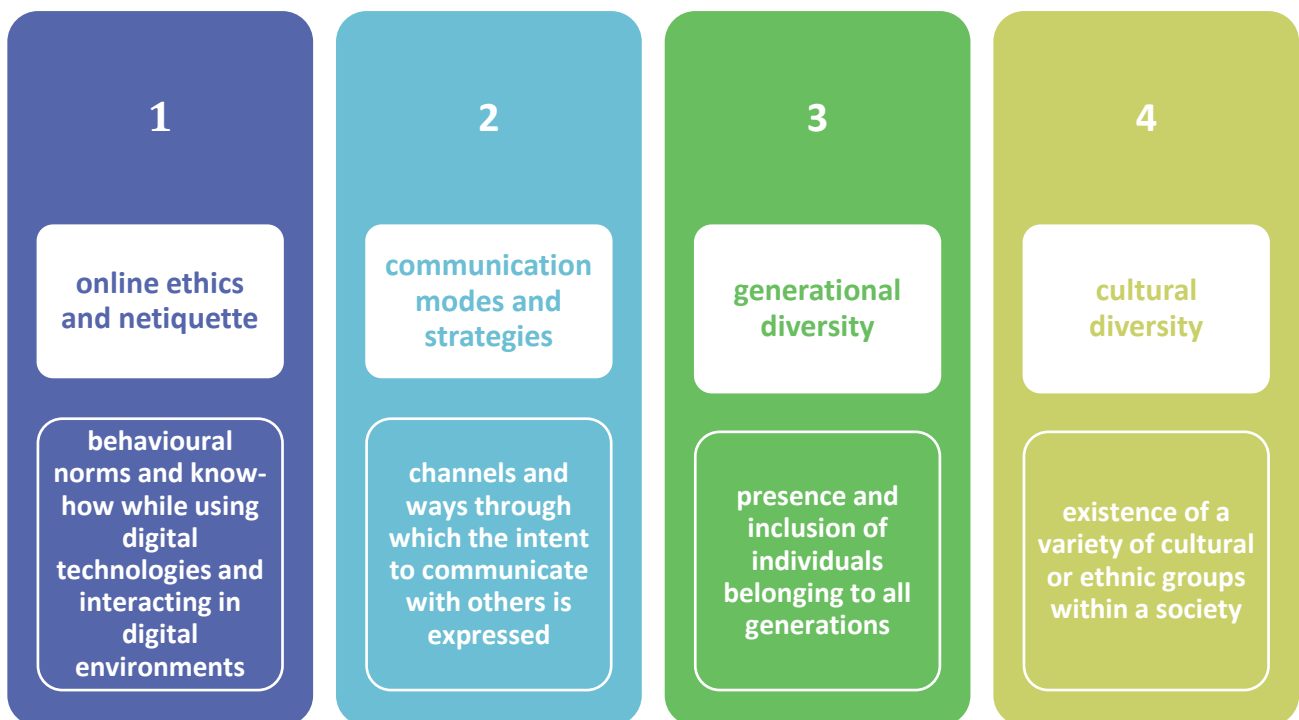
Adult educators

EQF level 5

Adult educators have comprehensive, specialised, factual and theoretical knowledge about netiquette, and the required range of cognitive and practical skills to develop creative solutions to abstract problems; they are able to exercise management and supervision in the scope of netiquette, as well as review and develop performance of self and others.

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What are the Netiquette+ key-areas and learning outcomes?

The Netiquette+ Competence framework offers a common basis for the development of the MOOC and Didactic handbook, aiming at enhancing low-skilled adult learners' netiquette competences, as well to support adult educators in teaching on this subject area. It provides a reference of four **key-areas of competence**, in line with DigComp 2.1.

1	**2**	**3**	**4**
online ethics and netiquette	**communication modes and strategies**	**generational diversity**	**cultural diversity**
behavioural norms and know-how while using digital technologies and interacting in digital environments	channels and ways through which the intent to communicate with others is expressed	presence and inclusion of individuals belonging to all generations	existence of a variety of cultural or ethnic groups within a society

The scheme above provides an overview of each one of the four key-areas and respective **descriptors**.

For each one of the four key-areas of competence, next are presented the learning outcomes to be acquired after a learning process. These **learning outcomes** are described in terms of the knowledge, skills and attitudes that for both target groups of the Netiquette+ project – low-skilled adult learners and adult educators.

All the learning outcomes are drafted in accordance with the **digital proficiency and the EQF levels** defined for these two target groups.

- **Low-skilled adult learners →** foundation level 2 and EQF level 3
- **Adult educators →** advanced level 5 and EQF level 5

Online ethics and netiquette

Behavioural norms and know-how while using digital technologies and interacting in digital environments.

	knowledge	skills	attitudes
LOW-SKILLED ADULT LEARNERS	• describe online ethics • list the fundamentals of netiquette rules • identify creative credits and copyright protection as reference practices	• apply the code of ethics for online environments • utilise behavioural netiquette guidelines • reference creative credits	• recognise that online environments are an extension of society • recognise that online environments are an extension of society • acknowledge that plagiarism and piracy are forms of copyright infringements
ADULT EDUCATORS	• distinguish online ethics and netiquette • explain that the principles needed to deal with online ethical problems are based on individual, social and global principles • recall the different licences attributed to digital contents	• incorporate netiquette rules for online and offline learning environments • devise learning scenarios to discuss online ethics and netiquette • create guidelines for learners to respect and make a correct use of copyright rules	• guide learners on how to apply codes of ethics for online environments • debate with learners the fundamental netiquette rules • respect and correctly apply copyright rules when creating digital content and resources

Communication modes and strategies

Channels and ways through which the intent to communicate with others is expressed.

	knowledge	skills	attitudes
LOW-SKILLED ADULT LEARNERS	- define online communication - list different types of online communication channels and tools - describe digital footprint	- outline the pros and cons of online communication - choose the appropriate online communication channels and tools for both personal and professional uses - identify the different existing digital footprints	- follow privacy and confidentially procedures for online communication - be aware of the skillset needed for proper and safe online communication - verify how to maintain information and data security online (cybersecurity)
ADULT EDUCATORS	- outline the relevance of online collaborations channels and tools in education and training - distinguish different types of online communication channels and tools - relate digital footprint with the fundamentals of netiquette	- proactive look for updated online communication channels and tools to engage learners in online settings - integrate learning activities in communication channels and tools that are most familiar to learners - identify the tools to conduct a digital privacy check-up	- guide learners on how to follow privacy and confidentially procedures for online communication debate with learners the fundamental netiquette rules - foster learners' soft skills through the use of differentiated communication and collaboration channels - guide learners in tracking and recognising own digital footprint and digital identity

Generational diversity

Presence and inclusion of individuals belonging to all generations.

	knowledge	skills	attitudes
LOW-SKILLED ADULT LEARNERS	• define digital exclusion • describe ageism • define digital literacy	• explain why older adults face the risk of digital exclusion • analyse from available data how digital divide affects older adults • compare from available data the different levels of digital literacy between younger and older people	• contribute to foster intergenerational digital practices • recognise how own age-related stereotypes impacts how people view their ability to use digital technology • asses own level of digital literacy
ADULT EDUCATORS	• correlate digital devise and ageism • outline how ageism is a barrier to the design, adoption and use of digital technology by older people • explain the relevance of digital literacy	• identify the barriers preventing older adults' full access to digital technologies • design intergenerational and age inclusive digital resources • design activities for the digital literacy of adult learners	• promote intergenerational learning activities focused on the use of digital technologies • influence learners on how to contribute to combat age related digital exclusion • assess learners' digital literacy skills

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Cultural diversity

Existence of a variety of cultural or ethnic groups within a society.

	knowledge	skills	attitudes
LOW-SKILLED ADULT LEARNERS	• define the basics of digital citizenship • define cyber hate and cyber bullying • describe what are fake news and the source of it	• create a personal online code of ethics • research for websites that offer support on digital rights • select reliable online tools to conduct fact-checking	• extend the basic tenets of good citizenship to online activities • foster empathy, respect for others and mutual support on online settings • commit to fact-checking
ADULT EDUCATORS	• relate digital citizenship, global citizenship and e-democracy • explain how the limits of "freedom of expression" applies to online settings • recall the roots of fake news	• incorporate digital citizenship in training programmes • conceive digital awareness campaigns to tackle and fight cyber hate and bullying • facilitate learning scenarios for learners to assess the truth-value of online contents	• guide learners on how to spot and report patterns of use and abuse in online settings • advise learners on how to actively counter prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping • comply with a set of recommendations on how to spot and counter the spread of fake news

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