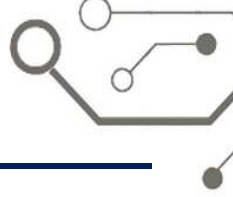


CSI-COP

Citizen Scientists Investigating Cookies and App GDPR Compliance



Newsletter #5: February-March 2022



CSI-COP's 5th Newsletter Presents:

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Project Purpose

CSI-COP project at its core aims to engage citizen scientists across Europe, and the world, to explore their own digital journeys recording the number, and type, of third-party tracking cookies they find across the web and in apps on their mobile devices. Frequently asked questions ([FAQs](#)) about [CSI-COP](#) have been translated into Greek, Hebrew and Hungarian and can be found here: <https://csi-cop.eu/faq/>

For further information please do contact CSI-COP's Co-Investigator and Director of Science: Dr. Huma Shah on ab7778@coventry.ac.uk

Free Informal education

CSI-COP's free informal education course (MOOC) '**Your Right to Privacy Online**', which you can complete in your own time, is now available to download as a document in eleven languages (**English, Catalan, Czech, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hungarian, Italian, Romanian** and **Spanish**) from the project website here: <https://csi-cop.eu/informal-education-mooc/>

In five easy-to-follow steps, the course on '**Your Right to Privacy Online**' can be completed in half-a-day. The course covers:

Step 1 - Privacy

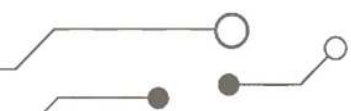
Step 2 - Personal Data

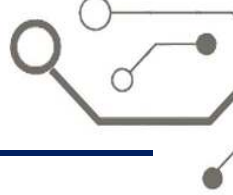
Step 3 - Online Tracking

Step 4 - Rights to data protection and privacy

Step 5 - Tools to protect your data and privacy

This MOOC is also available in English from the [EU-Citizen.Science](#) platform, from here: <https://moodle.eu-citizen.science/>



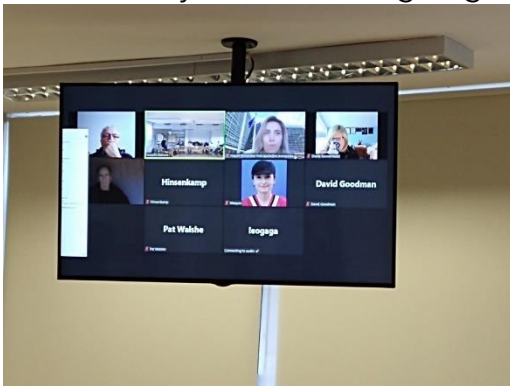


Project update: Year2-end meeting, Patras-Greece

Due to the continuing COVID-19 risks with a new variant, a blended Year2-end meeting was held in December 2021 hosted by CSI-COP partner University of Patras, in Patras Greece. CSI-COP partners attending in person were Professor Olga Stepankova from CTU, Dr. Tiberius Ignat from Immer Besser and Coventry University's team: Dr. Huma Shah, Roy Thomson (Finance), Jaimz Winter (Research Assistant), and Cathryn Thompson-Goodwin (Project Officer). Also attending in person were Dr, Luigi Ceccaroni, member of CSI-COP Advisory Board, and Coventry University sub-contractor Pat Walshe of Privacy Matters. Other CSI-COP partners participated online along with the EU Project Officer, Raquel Fernandez Horcajada, Gabriella Leo (from EU RTD), and other Advisory Board members.



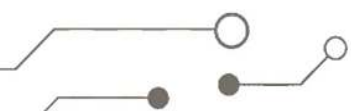
The first day of the meeting began with Dr. Huma Shah, from lead partner Coventry University, presenting CSI-COP's first policy recommendation detailed in **Policy Brief 1** deliverable report accessible from open-access platform, **Zenodo**: <https://zenodo.org/record/4672515#.YgfvQpanw2w> . The recommendation put forward to the EU that they add a requirement for EU-funded projects to "be required to set-up minimal tracking project websites" (more [here](#)). The day continued with partners presenting progress in year 2 (January-December 2021).

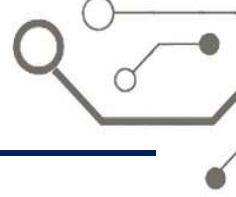


Pat Walshe and Dr Luigi Ceccaroni and delivered guest talks in

the meeting.

<p>Privacy Matters Pat Walshe</p>	<p>Dr. Luigi Ceccaroni</p>





Project update: workshops

At the time of this Newsletter, workshops are being organised across Europe by CSI-COP partners. This is in addition to the availability of the [‘Your Right to Privacy Online’](#) MOOC.

CSI-COP partners are continuing their delivery of a series of free ‘Your Right to Privacy Online’ courses as hybrid or face-to-face sessions. Bar Ilan University is organising their second workshop in April as a blended session allowing individuals to follow online as well as attend in-person. Coventry University is organising more workshops across February-March. A general public course in a small independent café is organised during half-term in South Harrow London, 17 February. Local libraries are also venues for CSI-COP workshops with one upcoming in Coventry city library, UK (22 March). Another is planned in Harrow-London Greenhill library.



Students in Coventry University are also being encouraged to take CSI-COP’s free informal education course with one **‘Your Right to Privacy Online’** course dedicated to masters and PhD students taking place 16 February.

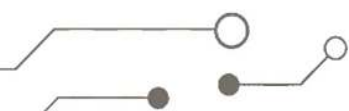
This will be held in Coventry University’s research centre for Computational Science and Mathematical Modelling (CSM).

Jaimz Winter (also CSI-COP’s Creativity Manager), designed banners based on UPAT’s stand-up banner on display during the Year2-end Patras meeting. The banner in the picture on the left is on display in the atrium of Coventry University’s Engineering,

Environment and Computing (EEC) high-tech building (has a life-size Harrier Jump Jet in the basement!).

More information on Coventry University’s February-March 2022 workshops, and registration, can be found on this page:

<https://www.coventry.ac.uk/research/about-us/research-events/2022/your-right-to-privacy-online/>





Other news:

Dr. Huma Shah interviewed in CS Track project e-Magazine

Sally Reynolds of 'sister citizen science' project **CS Track** interviewed Coventry University and CSI-COP's [Dr. Huma Shah](#) on '[Why the protection of online privacy is important for the citizen science community](#)'. The interview can be read here: <https://bit.ly/3rGFXe1>.

International Women and Girls in Science Day.

The [European Citizen Science Association \(ECSA\)](#) organised an online event on **11 February 2022** for the [2022 International Women and Girls Day in Science](#).

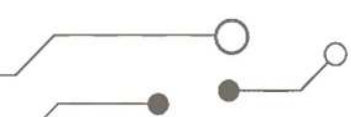


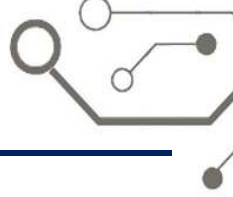
ECSA's online event was livecast on YouTube featuring women and men delivering two-minute stories about their experiences in science. CSI-COP's Huma Shah participated in the event.

UCL's Alice Sheppard delivered an inspiring story of her journey from an interest in space science.

The UK Open University's Senior Project Manager-Citizen Science, Janice Ansine, tweeted a snapshot of the diverse participants in ECSA's celebration of women and girls in science.

<https://twitter.com/JaniceAnsine/status/1492119486639620096>





Interview with Dr. Tiberius Ignat - Immer Besser

How do parents negotiate data protection of their families? Here we present an insightful interview of CSI-COP partner, [Dr. Tiberius Ignat](#) from Immer Besser, a fierce advocate of Open Science.

1. Tell us a little about yourself

Tiberius Ignat is the Director of [Scientific Knowledge Services](#), a company that specializes in helping research organisations to embrace new technologies and ways of working. He runs in partnership with UCL Press and LIBER Europe a successful series of workshops - [Focus On Open Science](#), now in its 7th year. After being a long-time individual member of the European Association of Research Libraries (LIBER), he became a LIBER Associate through his company where he is now the vice-chair of [LIBER Citizen Science Working Group](#).

Tiberius is a member of the European Citizen Science Association and Citizen Science Association (US) and a member of the Scientific Committee for [OAI](#), the CERN - Geneva University Workshop on open science.

He was part of the organising committee of the [Sorbonne Declaration on Research Data Rights](#) and is currently doing research on internet tracking in a project which involves citizen scientists.

Tiberius Ignat has a personal interest in research communication and open science, particularly in citizen science and how open science could remain protected against unethical technologies.

He has a PhD in Library and Information Science from the University of Bucharest.

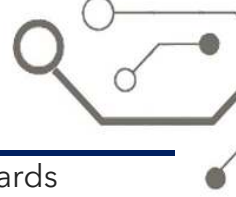
2. Do you use any online educational platforms to assist your children to boost their learning/help with homework? If so which ones?

I have two children, 13 and respectively 7 years old. The older one is in 7th grade, in Gymnasium while the younger one is in 1st grade (primary school).

Only the older one is using educational platforms. Here is a list of these platforms with some short descriptions

- a. Antolin (<https://antolin.westermann.de>) is a platform that pupils start to use in primary school. The schools have a contract with the platform. The school issues pass individual credentials to pupils. The platform provides a number of tools that helps professors and pupils interact based on their readings. At its core, the platform test the level of





understanding for kids, related to their readings. A system of points and rewards incentivise pupils to read more and to focus on reading.

- b. MatheGym: (<https://mathegym.de/start>) is a platform that pupils start to use from the 5th grade on. It offers tailor-made practice for different disciplines. The interactions between the pupils and the platform is supervised by teachers. Teachers could offer homework and monitor pupils' progress.
- c. Mebis: (<https://www.mebis.bayern.de/>) is a platform used by pupils from 5th grade on to communicate with their teachers on educational and administrative matters. At the beginning of the pandemic, it showed little reliability due to extensive use. It has now improved. The individual credentials are offered by the school.

More info could be found here: <https://www.datenschutz-bayern.de/5/digitales-lernen.html>. The essential information is translated below:

"As early as September 2011, the State Ministry for Education and Culture launched the "Digital Learning Bavaria" project to specifically promote information and communication technology-based, i.e. digital, teaching at Bavarian schools. The Prime Minister (n.b. of Bavaria; education is de-centralised in Germany and falls in the responsibility of each "Land" and not at the federal level) at the time took up this goal in his government declaration "Bavaria. The Future" on November 12, 2013, by announcing that he would set up a virtual educational media centre that would connect the approximately 6,100 Bavarian schools to a central educational network and thus improve the media skills of Bavarian schoolchildren to expand further.

As the "core" of the "Digital Learning Bavaria" project, the Ministry of Education has created an umbrella portal called "mebis - Bavarian State Media Center", under which existing measures have been bundled and combined with other new offers. Essential components of "mebis - Landesmedienzentrum Bayern" are the mebis information portal, the mebis media library, the mebis examination archive and the mebis learning platform."

- d. Elsa Brändström Gymnasium Portal for Parents (<https://ebgymuc.eltern-portal.org>). Not necessary with a direct educational role, this is a portal that facilitates the communication and coordination between parents and schools
- e. MS Teams from Microsoft. While it's not an educational portal, I thought it is worth mentioning it. The account credentials were given to each pupil by the school.
- f. Although it is not a platform, but a browser, it is good to mention that some teachers - in their individual capacity - recommend to children in schools to use Ecosia. This browser finances forestation (<https://info.ecosia.org/>) and is considered privacy fair (<https://info.ecosia.org/privacy>).

3. Do you use any educational apps to assist your children with their learning/homework?

MatheGym has an app, but it's not used by my child.





4. Do your children use any games websites or apps? Do you ever check the privacy notices of these digital games?

Yes. My older child spends some time playing Minecraft and he is also looking to use some other games from Epic Games (Ubisoft), despite our efforts to drive his attention and time to other activities. It turned out that playing these games is a community activity, even when played individually. Exercising too much pressure to move him away from those games had a counter effect and made him feel like an outcast.

My child didn't notice the cookies policies and I noticed he downloaded the game a day after he started to use it.

5. What if anything do you do to protect children's data online?

We attended an extensive webinar in German about data protection. It has been organised by the school in 2021. Our child could hardly follow the entire webinar as it was designed mainly for parents. We also watch together and regularly documentaries explaining how internet trackers are used and what are the business models of companies that offer free services (incl. portals) in the internet and in App-stores.

I also explain to my children the nature of my work and how the internet developed from a place of reading and sharing information to a marketplace of services and products. I explain to them how good intentions could turn in bad practices and how identities could be stolen.

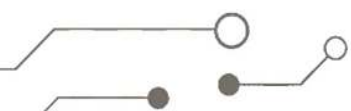
My older child became interested to explore together the cookies policies, but it's not yet prepared to make a priority from this. The younger one is too small to be given an explanation about internet trackers and is not using the computer at this moment.

On mobile devices, we installed child protecting apps that limit their use. We were honest when registering accounts on these devices by stating the real age of the children. The operating software turned a number of services off, based on their birthdate. As an effect of this and according to German law, my older child didn't have access to YouTube and other apps and websites until he turned 13. This built a level of frustration for him and he felt being treated differently as his colleagues were able to watch different videos and listen to different music.

My children's Microsoft account is attached to a family account and we see if a new programme is being installed.

6. What's your first reaction when you see a cookie notice on a website?

My child believes that turning cookies off could result in limited use of the website or app. On the other hand, by having them turned on, he doesn't feel any harm is produced to him. He is





not convinced about psychographic profiling (given age adequate explanation) and he feels confident of being able to reject algorithmic persuasion.

Hard work of explaining that this is false self-confidence is undertaking, but progress is rather small.

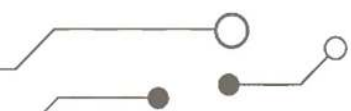
7. If you use a smartphone or tablet, have you ever checked permissions on the various apps you might have on your smart devices?

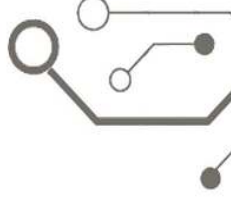
I am carefully selecting the apps I am using and I check the permissions they require. I usually accept to turn on only the essential ones (essential for me) and only while using the app. I reject permission while the app is not used and I usually keep only a very few apps to work in the background.

8. Is there anything else you would like to say about data privacy?

I feel lucky to live in Europe which currently leads the way toward more transparent digital services. I don't think we are doing enough, but at least Europe is a better place to be in this regard. I am not a big supporter of state interventionism, but I feel that in the digital sphere the states are behind their tasks. Without proper regulations, we will continue to develop a state of feudalism in the digital world and we will leave a questionable legacy to our future generations. My children grow already in a world which appreciate less the freedom of individuals and where organisations (both from business and from governmental agencies) promote the philosophy that digital entertainment is a fair trade for freedom.

CSI-COP thanks Tiberius for his fascinating perspective of a parent doing everything to protect their children's data, and how children do not yet understand the problems of data extraction without consent, especially since it is not as visceral as other experiences children might go through, such as bullying.





CSI-COP Partners

