

The Edgeryders guide to the future

his publication is the result of the Edgeryders project, an online dialogue platform run by the Council of Europe with a view to promoting discussion with young people on the challenges of their transition to working life.

iven that the imagination and the experiences of young citizens can only be understood in the context of horizontal relations (learning through sharing and joint management) in line with the networking approach, which restores the significance of individual effort and provides innovative solutions, programme such as Edgeryders can provide a future-oriented alternative.

urn, institutions must show creativity. is no longer a case of managing inertia, but above all of creating a balance

between what the public authorities can do and what they can facilitate. By adopting a spirit of co-operation, the authorities can encourage the sharing of responsibilities, ideas, goods and values, while opening up to mutual learning.

Nevertheless, this type of interaction is only possible if two conditions are met. Firstly, institutions must show a clear desire to ensure unprecedented scope for dialogue with young people by ascribing a high value to the proposals that emerge from the contacts among and with young citizens. Secondly, young people's interest in public affairs must be maintained in the long term by shoring up the online exchange with concrete evidence of legitimacy. This publication is intended to help meet these two conditions.

Prens 43013



.coe.int

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It includes 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union.

All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.



ISBN 978-92-871-7659-2
<http://book.coe.int>
€19/US\$38

**A handbook
for policy makers and designers
of policy-oriented online communities**



COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

The Edgeryders guide to the future

**A handbook
for policy makers and designers
of policy-oriented online communities**

French edition:

Guide Edgeryders pour l'avenir

N 978-92-871-7658-5

Opinions expressed in this work are the responsibility of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Council of Europe.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be translated, reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic (CD-Rom, Internet, etc.) or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or any information storage or retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the Directorate of Communication (F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex or publishing@coe.int).

Acknowledgements

Compiling this report from the wealth of stories posted on the *Edgeryders* platform has been a pleasure and a challenge in equal measure. My aim has been to convey the breadth of *Edgeryders*' experiences in such a way as to draw together common concerns, framed in terms easily transposable to the policy domain. I extend thanks to the *Edgeryders* research team whose work has informed this report, the project team for their valued input, and, most of all, *Edgeryders* for sharing their stories so vividly.

Rebecca Collins

Contributors: Alberto Cottica, Barbara Giovanni Di Bello, Ben Vickers, Dunja Potocnik, Gaia Arcus, Piotr Mikiewicz, Prudencia Gutiérrez Esteban, Magnus Eriksson, Rebecca Collins, Sladja Kovic and Valentina Cuzzocrea

Artistic direction for *The Edgeryders guide to the future*: Nadia El-Imam

Graphic design and illustrations: Malica Worms

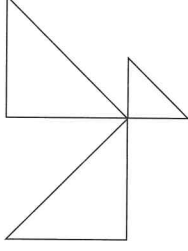
Cover and layout: Documents and Publications Production Department (SPDP), Council of Europe

Council of Europe Publishing
F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex
<http://book.coe.int>

N 978-92-871-7659-2

Council of Europe, October 2013

Printed by Imprimerie Freppel-Edac - Wintzenheim



Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Foreword | 5 |
| Executive summary | 9 |
| How to use this guide | 13 |
| I. On being Edgeryders | 17 |
| Introduction | 17 |
| 1. The multiple layers of the <i>Edgeryders</i> platform | 20 |
| 2. Values and motivations | 21 |
| 3. Risks | 27 |
| 4. Resources | 31 |
| 5. Responses | 34 |
| 6. Scale | 37 |
| Conclusions | 41 |
| References | 43 |

itioning into the future.....47

tion47

pean network of citizen experts.....50

iew of the youth policy landscape53

on the edge59

alising value in work, in education, in communities.....59

aking things happen.....65

ilding trust.....71

aw cultural norms.....74

action.....77

ampion new cultural norms.....78

esign policy-making processes81

ovide more timely support mechanisms.....86

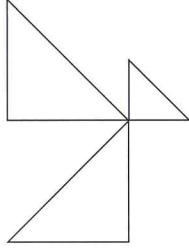
ike some risks!87

ions88

ces93

lix A – Engaging the citizen expert – A user’s manual.....97

lix B – An open letter to funders and supporters of innovation 115

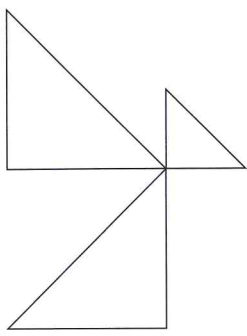


Foreword

*Edgeryders*¹ has been a unique experience for many of us working in public administration with responsibility for framing policies. This online platform, co-funded by the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion and by the Council of Europe, had a specific aim: to understand, via an innovative approach which deliberately sought not to impose any institutional forms of dialogue, the difficulties faced by young Europeans and the solutions they come up with, based on their experiences of the transition towards an independent life in a rapidly changing, increasingly insecure environment.

The platform was designed to freely encourage horizontal interaction and exchanges. Nevertheless, at a time when the speed of communication means that opinions are expressed in just a few sentences – often using shortcuts that are understandable only to the initiated – *Edgeryders* asked the young participants to focus their voluntary participation on six themes or “campaigns”: Making a Living; We, the People; Living Together; Caring for Commons; Learning; and Resilience.² They were asked to produce “mission reports” or comments in response to open questions which were always formulated in co-operation, both within the Council of Europe and with the participants themselves.

1. Throughout this guide, the term “*Edgeryder(s)*” will refer to project participants while the italicised “*Edgeryders*” will refer to the project and the online platform.
 2. Resilience can generally be understood as the capacity of humans to come out of an extreme shock, damage and trauma and adapt to new living conditions.



I. On being Edgeryders

A picture of young Europeans navigating the transition to an independent life

Rebecca Collins and Valentina Cuzzocrea⁹

Introduction

Edgeryders was launched in October 2011 as a “social game” and “peer-to-peer learning environment” with three main aims. The first of these has been to provide information, encouragement and support to a generation of young Europeans who are striving to build futures based on meaningful work and political participation in the most challenging socio-economic climate in several decades. The second aim has been to explore the stories of project participants in order to better understand the specific challenges they feel they face, as well as their goals and aspirations, and the resources they draw on to support their pursuit of a satisfying and successful life. The third and overriding aim has been to use the information generated by the “think tank” approach adopted by this project to inform policy initiatives around young people’s transitions to adulthood.

9. This section is the result of a collaboration between the two authors, who share the views expressed here. The content under the headings “Risks”, “Resources” and “Scale” were drafted by Rebecca Collins (University College London), and the content under “The many layers of the *Edgeryders* platform”, “Values and motivations” and “Responses” by Valentina Cuzzocrea (University of Kent). Both authors contributed equally to “Introduction” and “Conclusions”.