Ypart for Youth

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Participation? Liquid of course!

This booklet is about flexible and contemporary online participation for young people on the online platform Ypart. Ypart is a digital participation platform enabling and supporting young people to explore their interests, concerns and wishes in the form of self-determined projects. The platform Ypart is based on the concept “Liquid Democracy”. The basic idea of “liquid democracy” is to tap the full potential of the internet in order to achieve flexible forms of digital participation that allow young people to decide for themselves and by themselves about the topics, breadth and depth of their involvement. In this respect Ypart empowers young people not only to read, follow, discuss and evaluate proposals of their peers, but furthermore to autonomously and independently initiate their own projects. Ypart offers young people the opportunity to start their own initiatives, and to develop their visions and ideas, organising these together online with their peers.

Ypart is a flexible, durable and sustainable platform that seeks to amplify the possibilities of participation for young people on the Internet. In doing so, young people should be able to decide when, where, how and to what extent they wish to get involved: for their association, city, municipality or school – in short for anything that interests them and has a bearing upon their lives. Ypart directly addresses young people, municipalities, youth organisations, and everyone who wants to actively involve young people in decision-making processes.

Ypart is an initiative of Youthpart, a project by IJAB – International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany, funded by the German Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.

You can find Ypart on www.ypart.eu!
Ypart's most important features

On Ypart, all young people are encouraged to start their own projects online. Together with their peers, young people can discuss, comment and vote for projects they like and want to support, regardless of when and where they take place.

The different forms of digital participation offered on Ypart are based on the participation software Adhocracy. The Liquid Democracy association and the open source community are continuously developing Adhocracy as free, open source and transparent software. Adhocracy is modular so that its functions can easily be individually adjusted to young people's online participation. This makes Ypart very flexible:

☑ Groups

Everyone can found a group on Ypart – whether at the municipal level, or at that of youth associations and clubs. Once founded, groups can be used permanently so that its members can be repeatedly involved in upcoming decision-making processes.

☑ Flexible participation processes

Within the groups on Ypart a variety of participation processes on many different levels are possible. For instance, local youth associations and clubs up to national and international associations can consult the opinions and proposals of young people on an infinite variety of topics. Together young people can collect and develop ideas, mutually discuss, write and vote on position papers, programmes and statutes. A map function allows the collective discussion and planning of land-use. With the help of the integrated calendar, all participation projects and online discussions can also be timed and synchronised with offline events.
**Ypart is modular**

Ypart is a modular platform, which means that all functions available online can be individually customised to the needs of the group and the context of the participation process. The selection of modules and features of Ypart can be changed at all times – even during active participation processes.

**Ypart is sustainable**

Every organisation that starts a group on Ypart once, can repeatedly use it for online participation projects. This means that Ypart enables online participation on time-limited as well as permanent projects.

**Resource saving**

Discussions on Ypart do not require any active moderation. Ypart is designed in such a way that online participation processes are structured by the behaviour of its users. When users rate contributions positively these move to the top of the list of proposals and therefore become the focus of attention. You can consequently even use Ypart when you do not have the financial means for professional moderation. However, if desired, you can always include professional moderation of your group.
Who can use Ypart?

Ypart is designed for all young people and everyone who wants to work with them – from local youth clubs and leagues, educational institutions, youth welfare services, youth councils and parliaments, and local authorities to the EU parliament and international youth projects.

Ypart addresses everyone who wants to use web-based tools to include young people in their decision-making. Anyone can start a project!
What can you do on Ypart?

Ypart is designed for a variety of different participation projects. Generally there are three main forms of participation processes:

(A) collecting ideas, (B) collaboratively drafting texts, and (C) land-use planning. This variety and flexibility explains the diversity of projects that are currently run on Ypart: there are projects concerning urban development and planning, consultation of young people by municipalities, participation projects of youth associations and clubs, as well as projects in which young people edit and write a newspaper together.

There are different functions and features on Ypart that provide the respective demands of the projects of young people.
(A) Collecting ideas

Example:
youth participation on municipal level

On Ypart young people and youth associations can collect ideas concerning a particular topic of their interest. To this end, the initiator of a project invites participants to put forward proposals and to discuss and evaluate them. This results in discussed and voted proposals which can then be implemented by the initiators.

Example case:
youthpart and youthpart #local

The initiatives youthpart and youthpart #local create and accompany application-oriented models for online participation of young people at many different levels. Within the scope of these projects, young people are invited to...

...make proposals for the improvement of their city,
schoolyard or their recreational facilities, as was done in Offenbach an der Queich (https://vgo.ypart.eu).

...make creative proposals concerning the use of youth spaces and empty sites in a city, as was done in Saalfeld an der Saale (https://luecke.ypart.eu) or Emsdetten (https://emsdetten.ypart.eu).

...or to propose the realisation of local extracurricular youth education such as the creation of an online job market for young people, as was done in Oschatz (https://oschatz.ypart.eu).

Municipalities which participate within the scope of youthpart and youthpart #local, receive professional advice from our side. Together with you we plan the participation processes and topics for youth participation as well as their practical realisation on Ypart.
For everyone who wants to know the facts: the most important features of Ypart at a glance.

How to make a proposal

Creating a new proposal on Ypart is simple. Write down a title, a short description as well as the most important tags.

Optionally:

Proposals can also be linked to specific locations on a map in case the interactive map is activated for the participation process.

Furthermore, proposals can be linked to dates such as offline workshops or meetings with the help of the calendar function.
Discussing and evaluating

It's very easy to comment on interesting proposals. Comments can be placed directly under the proposal in the field "discussions".

The newly created comment can contain personal opinion and it is possible to specify whether the comment is for or against the proposal, or whether it is a neutral comment.

Likewise, you can also comment on other comments.

Evaluating

Needless to say, you can evaluate proposals by clicking the arrows above the title of the proposal. The upward arrow means “I am in favor of”, and the downward arrow means “I am against the proposal".
Example case: mittendrin by the German Scout Association Saint George (DPSG)

In spring 2013 the biggest scout association in Germany – the DPSG – decided to involve all its members in composing and editing its quarterly member journal called mittendrin.

All 118 members that participated in the pilot project were asked to hand in proposals for articles including pictures and graphs. All submitted proposals were discussed and evaluated during the participation process.

Due to the success of mittendrin, in the aftermath of the project, the DPSG decided to initiate an association-wide consultation with its members on Ypart, which started in November 2013.
(B) Collaboratively drafting texts

On Ypart texts and documents such as positions papers, programmes and statues can be simply elaborated and developed together. To this end, an initiator enters a text or document on the platform and invites everyone concerned to discuss, evaluate and suggest amendments to the text or document. The result is a collaboratively drafted and edited text, which reflects the opinion and wishes of all participants.

Example case: collaboration on writing a blog

Young people can use Ypart to collaboratively develop the topic as well as the content of a blog. Participants can actively contribute by making proposals which they would like to discuss and develop further with the rest of their group. All proposals can be commented and voted on to select the best topics.
After having voted on the topics to be included on the blog, the texts of every topic can be collaboratively written online. To this end, participants have the choice between adding a new paragraph to an existing text or topic, to suggest amendments of an existing paragraph by someone else or to comment on and discuss particular paragraphs of the text. The amendments suggested for particular paragraphs can also be discussed and voted on, so that all participants can actively take part in the whole process of collaboratively drafting a text.

The result is a text, which has been developed together with all participants. In the end, the final result consists of those paragraphs and text elements that the majority of the participants liked best.
(C) Land–use planning

Example:
urban development

On Ypart you can collaboratively develop plans for the use of a particular piece of land. To this end, for instance the initiator enters the purposes and intentions of a particular property on an interactive map on Ypart. All participants are then invited to make propositions as to how the property in question should be used by marking their propositions on the interactive land-use plan on Ypart.

Young people can then discuss, vote and decide online how they want to use a particular piece of land. The results are the best-voted proposals or land-use plans that inform the initiator how the participants would like to make use of the land in question.
Example case:
Stadt!Macht!Schule!

The urban development project called “Stadt!Macht!Schule!” ([https://smsaltona.ypart.eu](https://smsaltona.ypart.eu)) was a participatory project concerning Hamburg’s second biggest city planning project “Mitte Altona”.

During the project 28 young people from 5 different schools in Hamburg were asked to voice their ideas, wishes and demands concerning the future of the train station Hamburg-Altona on the basis of the official development master plan.

To this end, the construction phases foreseen in the official master plan were put on the interactive map on Ypart, so that young people could directly add their proposals and ideas to the respective sections on the master plan. The young people discussed the living-, traffic circulation- and public green areas of the master plan and developed their own alternative land-use plan.
The interactive construction stages on Ypart also contained the texts and descriptions of the official land-use plan. The participating young people could therefore make amendments and suggest alternative changes to the text passages of the official master plan.

From the highest-voted proposals the participants drafted a position paper in April 2013 that represented the opinion, ideas and wishes of the young people in Hamburg.
What else can you do on Ypart?

Organising internal participation –
example: German Scout Association Saint George (DPSG)

From November 2013 to March 2014, the DPSG discussed online its internal organisation, statutes, and the general procedures of the association together with its members.

Every two weeks the DPSG introduced a new topic, which its members were asked to discuss and to give their opinion on. Additionally, proposals for improving the organisational structure of the association could be made.

All submitted proposals were collected in preparation of the General Assembly in 2014 and have informed the decision made there.
the calendar

All project related dates, events and workshops regarding the topic of a particular group are listed under the menu item ‘milestones’. All participants can make proposals about the structure and content of the meetings online. This way, young people can decide how the offline meetings shall be organised.

Furthermore, with the help of the calendar function the participation process of the project can be structured into different phases. This would make sense for example if phase 1 is about generally collecting ideas for a particular topic, which will then lead to the collection of concrete proposals to achieve these ideas in phase 2.
Ypart is designed to involve young people in concrete decision-making processes where they have the chance to have a genuine influence on the outcome. Founding a group on Ypart is generally open to all organisations, initiatives and projects that have something concrete to decide.

Those who would like to initiate their own project on Ypart are very welcome to do so. Please contact the Liquid Democracy association via email or phone in order to discuss the intended project.

The goal of Ypart is to enable young people in big and small organisations to participate online. In this sense it is desirable that youth organisations and associations with bigger financial resources allow smaller organisations to use online participation by financing further developments of the software Adhocracy. Everyone should be able to use Ypart, even if the financial resources are limited.

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The Ypart network

Ypart is a charitable and non-profit project of the Liquid Democracy Association. The platform, its development and configuration is advised and accompanied by the following network:

IJAB – International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany

IJAB – International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany is the provider of the project Youthpart, which supports the development of online participation of young people. Youthpart is sponsored by the German Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ).

Regional Youth Council of Lower Saxony

The Regional Youth Council of Lower Saxony unites 19 statewide youth organisations and their associated 80 independent youth associations into one consortium, which reaches about 70 per cent of all children and young people in the state of Lower Saxony.

The German Children and Youth Foundation

The GCYF provides the initiative Youthpart #lokal, focusing on municipal youth participation. The initiative accompanies and supports particular municipalities in Germany in introducing internet based participation methods (e-participation) in order to involve young people in local processes.
Liquid Democracy e.V.

Founded in 2009, the Liquid Democracy Association is a non-profit and non-partisan organisation that works on innovative ideas and projects for democratic participation. The goal is to tap into and make available the potentials of the Internet as a tool for political communication and involvement. For these reasons the Liquid Democracy Association continuously develops the open source and web-based software Adhocracy in order to support charitable and non-profit participation platforms such as Ypart.
Imprint

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