



MERLOT



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## Marketplace for Lifelong Educational Dataspaces and Smart Services Provisioning

The MERLOT funding project aims to create specially protected educational data spaces and services within the Gaia-X ecosystem. These ensure that the owners of educational data always retain sovereignty over their data and can selectively share them with other users or services as needed. Learners, schools, public institutions, administrations, or businesses are thus empowered to exchange educational data in compliance with GDPR and to share them in a controlled manner without having to individually negotiate agreements with each participant. This facilitates interaction among stakeholders in federated systems and opens new possibilities for processing highly protected educational data.

The consortium is developing Advanced Smart Services, various services based on secure AI-driven digital assistants, to support learners in education and career orientation or to accompany citizens in lifelong learning through digital professional development assistants. The MERLOT project demonstrates with these use cases that despite decentralized data storage based on the Gaia-X Federation Services architecture, processing of highly sensitive educational data using AI methods becomes possible without jeopardizing data protection or the data sovereignty of learners and other data sources.

A marketplace for certified digital services developed within MERLOT ensures secure and responsible provision and usage of data according to European values and regulations in a transparent ecosystem open to all providers. Learners, schools, public institutions, administrations, or businesses can select services from a trusted source and use those that best fit their needs. From the perspective of educators, the offerings listed on the MERLOT marketplace represent a kind of "whitelist," meaning these services and content offerings must meet minimum standards regarding data protection, access, usage, discoverability, quality, and more. Finding relevant subject-specific and interdisciplinary services that can be used in schools by teachers and learners with confidence is facilitated in a user-friendly way. Additionally, the AI-based services listed on the marketplace must meet high transparency requirements to actively support the creation of traceability.

The development of the MERLOT marketplace is being advanced through a public-private partnership. The marketplace enables dynamic competition, innovation, and new forms of cooperation among education service providers. The creation of diverse digital tools for individual



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education and skills development is promoted, thereby improving overall equality of opportunity and educational justice.

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| Domain         | Education      |
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| Term           | 3 years        |
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| Partner | 1 & 1 IONOS SE<br>Dataport AöR<br>Edu-sense gGmbH<br>Hochschule Karlsruhe<br>Schülerkarriere GmbH<br>August-Wilhelm Scheer Insitut gGmbH<br>Hasso-Plattner-Institut für Digital Engineering gGmbH<br>International Dataspaces Association e.V.<br>Technische Universität Kaiserslautern<br>M.I.T e-Solutions GmbH |
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| Website | <a href="https://merlot-education.eu/">https://merlot-education.eu/</a> |
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