CODE 2025 OPEN CALL
Reclaiming Digital Agency

Open call for artists and non-artists based in the Netherlands and Belgium to join a co-creation project on digital rights! Are you an artist, designer, researcher, software designer or developer? Or are you working in marketing, law, technology, policymaking or politics? Are you interested in human rights and equality? Are you open to working on collaborative projects that can speak to the imagination of a wider audience and inspire them to think about their digital agency? Regardless of what you do, if you are concerned about our digital rights and the lack of agency over the platforms and devices we use, we are looking for you!

The deadline to respond to the open call for participation is **15 December 2024** (before 23:59 CET). You will receive notification of the results of your application before 8 January 2025.

CODE 2025 programme

In February and March we will start the co-creation process with an online introduction meeting and online workshop in which participants can get to know the CODE project, the coaches and each other. We will discuss shared interests, topics and themes.

The first physical meetings of the co-creation process of CODE 2025 will be on 28, 29 and 30 March, with the hackathon weekend in Mechelen, Belgium. After that the co-creation process with more on-site meetings in Utrecht and some online meetings, continuing till June when all conceived projects need to be finished.

Important to keep in mind already is:

The stipend we can pay is 200€ per participant. You will receive this on completion of the project.
For production we have an extra of 200€ per group for production expenses. Depending on the proposals more reimbursement of production expenses can be considered.

What is CODE about?

We want to make sure the general audience, politicians and policymakers are aware of the digital challenges of our time. We want big tech companies to be regulated, curb their power, and protect our digital rights. What role should governments play, and how can we make them understand the urgency to act? What can we as concerned citizens, researchers, and artists do to support this process?

With this open call we invite creatives, professional and non-professional artists and concerned citizens living in the Netherlands and Belgium to embark with us on a five-month journey of dialogue, critical discussion and co-creation about digital rights. Between February and June 2025 you will work with other participants on group artworks to be presented at international festivals and events.

CODE was initiated in 2021 as a response to growing concerns that we are losing agency over the digital tools and platforms we use on a daily basis. We believe in the need for better laws and legislation that will protect us as digital citizens and consumers. By creating creative and artistic interventions, our aim is to influence public policy on a national and international level and to create awareness for issues at hand. We want to inspire and facilitate cross-disciplinary collaborations, which have the potential to catalyze system change. CODE 2025 will be the fifth edition. In the past four editions we supported over 100 artists and non-artists to work together and create projects. We also brought together national and European politicians and experts in interviews, panels and presentations, and we presented our projects at international events including Ars Electronica, transmediale, Dutch Design Week, MozFest House, Public Spaces Conference, re:publica, Dutch Media Week and the Computers, Privacy and Data Protection (CPDP) conference. The projects produced, the talks and the many interviews we had with politicians, policy-makers and activists can be found at code.impakt.nl

CODE 2025 is an international programme organized by IMPAKT [Centre for Media Culture] in Utrecht, in collaboration with Kunsthal Mechelen, Werktank, (production platform for media art) in Leuven, Privacy Salon / CPDP (Computers, Privacy and Data Protection conference) in Brussels and NØ School Nevers.

We are happy to invite new participants to join us for an exciting collaborative series of CODE events throughout 2025!

What will you be doing?
Selected participants will work closely together in a co-creation process. Throughout the programme, we invite established artists and experts to provide inspiration and feedback. CODE consists of a series of online and onsite events. See below for a preliminary schedule of events.

The events are spread over several months: from February till June, with all projects finished by June and presentations of the project's outcome expected from September. As a participant, we expect you to be actively engaged in these events, which are aimed at bringing to light the most pressing issues we face in digital culture and public policy. We are looking for people who can participate in all events for the duration of the CODE 2025 programme. The programme is in English.

Final works
Group artworks will be conceived over the five-month period from February to June. During this period, there will be an in person 3-day hackathon where you will have the opportunity to meet, socialize and build teams with your fellow participants. In workshops you will discuss and receive feedback from our mentors, and invited policy makers and established artists. The final works created throughout the events will be exhibited in an online exhibition meant to engage continuous critical discussion beyond the duration of the programme. We will also facilitate presentations of the works at international festivals and events and in the public realm to stir debate and foster change, like emerging projects from past years have done as well.

You can have a look at a selection of projects from the previous editions at code.impakt.nl . The results of CODE 2024 will be added at the end of 2024.

Selection and stipend
For CODE 2025 we can accept participants living in the Netherlands and Belgium. Participants will be selected mainly based on their motivation. In making the selection, we also aim for a diverse group in terms of expertise and backgrounds. No matter if you are working in the arts or technology or in activism, policy making, law, or are simply motivated by concerns regarding our digital rights. Everyone is welcome to apply, and no prior experience is required.

Participation is free of charge. Selected participants will receive a participation stipend of 200 euro, and for the group projects that are developed we provide a small production budget of 200 euro. We will reimburse travel costs and provide stay for the 3-day Hackathon in Mechelen for all participants. Participants will also receive reimbursement of travel costs for all 1-day meetings in Utrecht.

Who are we looking for?
• Applications are open to professional and non-professional artists, researchers, policy makers and concerned citizens
• You must be open to work on projects and concepts that address issues related to digital agency,
• digital rights and digital legislation, and that can inspire the general audience, policy makers and politicians to look more critically at these topics.
• We highly encourage people who don't identify as artists to apply as well, this includes researchers, people with corporate, tech or law background, or working for governmental institutions, and people interested in learning from collaborating with professional artists to create artistic interventions to influence policy makers.
• Participants should be living in the Netherlands or Belgium.
• Women, POC, LGBTQ+ are encouraged to apply
• No prior experience is required.
• If not sure, just apply!

• The application process is short and simple.

Preliminary schedule of events

• This schedule is just an indication and subject to change. We are working on finalizing the schedule:
• February 2025: Kickoff meeting (online)
• Early March 2025: First workshop (online)
• 28, 29 and 30 March 2025 : a 3-day hackathon (in Mechelen, Belgium)
• April, May, June 2025: Several meetings and workshops (in Utrecht, the Netherlands), and additional online meetings and feedback sessions
• September to December 2025: Presentations and exhibitions at international festivals and events

Selected candidates will receive an updated schedule

15 December 2024 (before 23:59 CET): deadline to respond to the open call for participation.

8 January 2025: applicants will receive notification of the results of their applications before 8 January 2025.

February and early March 2025: In an online kickoff meeting and a workshop people are introduced to the project, we explain the components and organizers, coaches and participants introduce themselves to the group.

28, 29 and 30 March 2025: We will organize the 3-day Hackathon in Mechelen, Belgium (with all participants present). During the hackathon, the coaches, organizers and external specialists provide the participants with information and inspiration. Participants discuss their topics of interests, share what their skills are and indicate what skills they would like to acquire.

April and May 2025: Workshops and meetings in Utrecht. The project groups start to form and participants start developing their ideas for collaborative projects. Coaches, organizers and external specialists provide feedback. The groups present their project proposals. Coaches, organizers and external specialists provide feedback. We look at the knowledge, skills and materials required for implementation. Where necessary, we provide what is missing or discuss adjustments to make the ideas feasible. The groups further refine their concepts. Possible interim presentations that contribute to inspiration and feedback for participants and the further development of a professional network in which the CODE projects can develop and reach an audience.

20, 21, 22 and 24 May 2025: For the fourth time CODE will organise a presentation at the Computer, Privacy, Data Protection and AI (CPDP.ai) conference in Brussels. Participants to the CODE project can visit the 4 day conference, participate in the radio program of Avatar.fm (in collaboration with community radio DubLab), immerse in panel discussions, apply for participation in workshops or prepare an artist keynote in the main program of the event.

June 2025: more workshops and meetings in which the latest development of the projects is discussed and groups provide each other with feedback again. Projects are completed.

September – December 2025: Presentations of the works at international events and festivals.

December 2025: launch of the CODE 2025 online exhibition and all associated interviews and event registrations on the CODE web platform.

Questions?
You can also send us a message to code@impakt.nl

About the organisers:

IMPAKT [Centre for Media Culture]
IMPAKT is a media arts organisation based in Utrecht (The Netherlands) and founded in 1988. We present critical and creative views on contemporary media culture and arts, in an interdisciplinary context. Our aim is to identify urgent issues in our digital and transglobal culture, by focusing on the relationship between society, media, technology and arts. We examine issues around politics, science and popular culture from different angles. We aim to present creative and innovative approaches and stir debates with critical ideas on common beliefs in society at large as well as towards dominant perceptions in arts and academia.

Werktank
Werktank is a media arts producer and distributor based in Leuven (Belgium) which operates at the intersection of art, science and technology. Werktank embraces new media, fuses it with artisanal techniques and critically questions the impact of (new) technologies. Werktank offers a professional context and financial support for artists and guides them to the next phase in their artistic practice.

Kunsthal Mechelen
Kunsthal Mechelen is a generous open house for contemporary art. Operating in the city of Mechelen (Belgium) without a central location, the Kunsthal's programme will unfold across various spaces throughout the city, including public space. Rotating formations of artists, curators, thinkers and collectives bring the house to life in a program that refuses to be confined to a singular artistic framework. The program stands for flexibility, depth, and a departure from fixed formats, challenging established patterns of expectation, transforming to the cadence of a changing society and art field. The institution seeks to show art that questions, researches, and imagines the world in all of its complexity. It wants to bring compelling, innovative—yet also critical— perspectives on life and society, engaging in dialogue with the city and its inhabitants.

Privacy Salon
Privacy Salon is the organizer of the annual CPDP Computers, Privacy and Data Protection conference in Brussels. Privacy Salon aims at critically informing the broader public, policy makers and industry in Belgium, Europe and beyond about privacy, data protection and other social and ethical issues that are raised with the introduction of new technologies in society. In addition, it wants to contribute to policy, policy-making and evaluation of privacy and data protection policy by ways of consultancy for policy makers, industry and research institutions, but also to scientific and policy-oriented research on privacy, data protection and social-ethical consequences of new technologies. Finally, it works towards creating a platform.

NØ School Nevers
NØ School Nevers is a unique international summer school, held in Nevers, in Burgundy (France), aimed at students, artists, designers, makers, hackers, activists and educators who wish to further their skills and engage in critical research around the social and environmental impacts of information and communication technologies. During 2 weeks NØ School Nevers offers its participants the opportunity to follow a unique and intensive curriculum, mixing theory and practice, research and making, led by an international panel of artists, designers, critical makers and theorists.