

SCHOOLWISE: Building Educational Data Literacy and Ethical AI Governance in European Schools

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Abstract

European education systems increasingly rely on digital technologies and AI-supported tools, yet educational data practices remain fragmented across technical, pedagogical, governance, and ethical dimensions. This fragmentation limits schools' ability to use data strategically for teaching improvement, organizational learning, and educational equity, while intensifying risks related to privacy, accountability, and regulatory compliance. SCHOOLWISE addresses this gap by developing a comprehensive, human-centred framework for responsible educational data use in primary and secondary education. Launched in March 2026, SCHOOLWISE aims to strengthen educational data literacy and support ethically and legally compliant AI use in school contexts. The project pursues four integrated objectives: (1) establishing a shared educational data literacy framework, (2) developing ethical governance models aligned with GDPR and the EU AI Act, (3) enabling cross-border data governance policies, and (4) building sustainable institutional capacities for responsible data collection and analysis. Conceptually, SCHOOLWISE draws on the Data–Information–Knowledge–Wisdom (DIKW) model to structure the progression from raw data to actionable, context-sensitive decision-making.

SCHOOLWISE integrates technical standards, pedagogical practices, governance structures, and ethical principles through collaborative engagement with researchers, school leaders, teachers, policymakers, and civil society actors. Expected outputs include the SCHOOLWISE Educational Data Literacy Framework, governance protocols, implementation toolkits, and professional training formats, which will be developed and tested through pilot activities in Italy, Germany, Spain, and Belgium. The project will also establish a European SCHOOLWISE Network and an Observatory on Ethical Educational Data Use to support knowledge exchange and long-term adoption. By reframing educational data as a strategic asset rather than an administrative by-product, SCHOOLWISE strengthens transparent, ethical, and evidence-informed leadership and management practices in European school systems and enables responsible innovation at scale.

Keywords: Educational data literacy, responsible AI, data governance, school leadership, GDPR compliance, AI Act, school education