Guidelines for the Implementation of a Promptathon

In February 2023, the Department of Computer Science at the University of Hamburg announced the "World's first "Prompt-a-thon" („Weltweit erster „Prompt-a-thon“). Deutsche Telekom was then one of the first companies to hold a Promptathon and to report on it. This event took place in September 2023 ("How I experienced our Promptathon"). In April 2024, the Corporate Learning Community (https://colearn.de/) also embraced the new format and invited people to the "CLC Promptathon" („CLC Promptathon 2024 – „Prompt in die Zukunft: Generative KI entdecken!“). Against this backdrop, we have summarized the experience gained with the format to date in a guideline. It is intended to give interested parties an initial overview of the tasks involved in preparing and running a Promptathon. This overview is supplemented by short field reports, examples and literature references.

***Disclaimer**: The above mentioned and the following links in this guideline contain German content, but can easily be translated by using the translation function in your favorite browser.*

1. What is a Promptathon?

A Promptathon is an event in which participants develop a large number of creative prompts within a certain period of time in order to solve a specific task. The term Promptathon is made up of "prompt" (prompt) and the suffix "-athon" (based on marathon), which indicates an intensive and often collaborative process. While a hackathon usually involves the development of software or hardware, a Promptathon focuses on the development and optimization of prompts for generative AI systems such as ChatGPT. During a Promptathon, participants work in teams to find practical solutions to various challenges.

Against this background, a Promptathon is a **peer learning format** in which participants familiarize themselves with the possibilities of generative AI systems and support each other in the process.

Typical features of a Promptathon:

- **Creativity and diversity**: Participants are asked to develop as many and diverse prompts as possible to solve given tasks ("challenges").
- **Limited time:** A Promptathon takes place within a fixed time frame, which can last from several hours up to a whole day.
- **Collaborative:** Participants often work in teams to pool their creativity and learn from each other.

- **Self-organized:** Promptathons offer participants opportunities to take on tasks themselves and actively participate in the event ("BarCamp feeling").
- **Targeted**: Depending on the background and orientation of the organizer, there is usually a specific goal or topic that determines the tasks ("challenges") and thus the focus of the prompts.

2. How to plan a Promptathon?

Planning a Promptathon involves several steps and tasks:

- **Organizing team:**

  A dedicated team is essential for the planning and execution of a Promptathon. Ideally, the team should combine different skills, including event management, technical expertise, marketing and specialist know-how for the development of challenging tasks.

- **Premises (on site, online, hybrid):**

  A decision must be made as to whether the Promptathon should take place on site, online or hybrid. For hybrid events, suitable premises with the necessary technical infrastructure are important in order to support both on site and virtual participants

  Example of an on site Promptathon: DATEV (Burda, 2024)
  Example of a hybrid Promptathon: CLC (Jenewein, 2024a)

- **Target group:**

  The topic of AI is highly dynamic. However, this also means that while some have already gained a lot of experience with AI tools, others are just cautiously approaching the topic. Therefore, think about who you want to address with the Promptathon and introduce "newcomers" to the topic of generative AI and prompting. Make sure that the target group and challenges "fit" together.

- **Number of participants::**

  Think about how many participants your framework conditions (premises, technical infrastructure) allow. If you run the Promptathon as a hybrid event or only online, you will of course have enhanced opportunities. Previous Promptathons have had between 20 and 200 participants.

- **Registration of participants:**

  In order to keep an accurate overview of the interest in the Promptathon and the number of participants, it is advisable to use a registration system, for example via event software such as Eventbrite.

- **Technical infrastructure:**

  Ensure that all participants have access to computers and the internet. Required software and platforms should be provided and tested in advance, e.g. whiteboards such as Miro or

Conceptboard (Jenewein, 2024b) and communication tools such as Zoom or MS Teams for breakout rooms.

Consider whether you will provide participants with access to an AI tool for the Promptathon ("level playing field") or whether you will leave it up to the participants to decide which AI tools they use ("diverse experiences").

- **Time and duration:**

  A typical Promptathon can last one or two days. Allow enough time for introduction, group work, breaks and potential presentations.

- **Communication and Marketing:**

  Use various channels to attract participants and promote the event. Create clear and engaging information about the purpose and process of the Promptathon.

- **Embedding the Promptathon:**

  A Promptathon is usually one of several building blocks on the journey to help employees develop their AI skills. Ensure that it is meaningfully combined with other learning offers and opportunities to share experiences.

- **Challenges:**

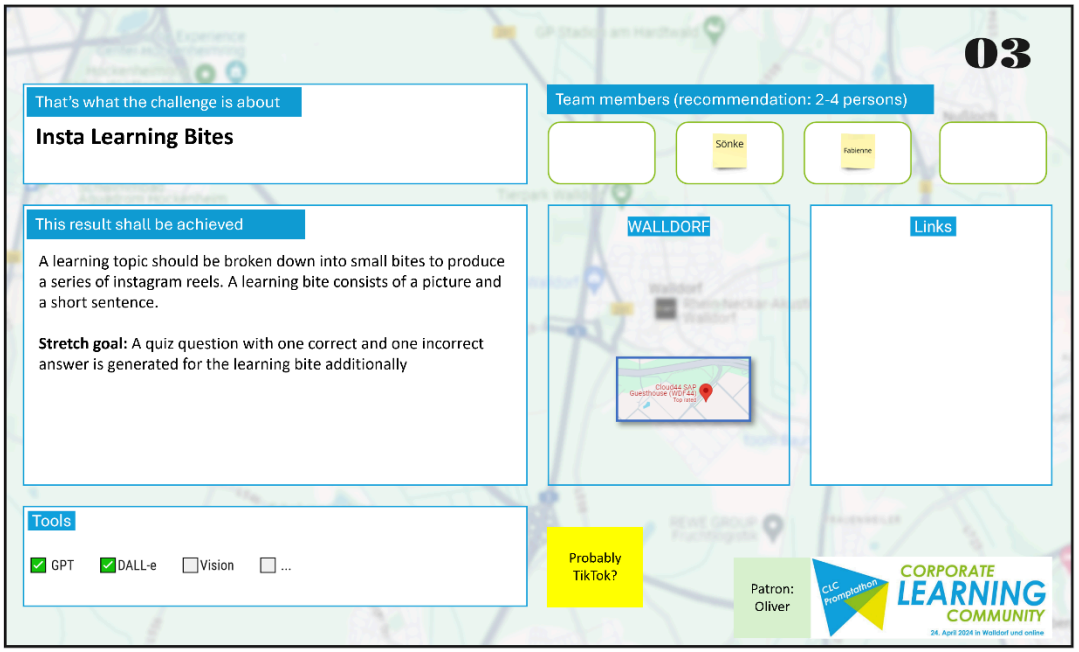
  Develop a series of exciting challenges for participants to solve. These should be varied and tailored to the interests and abilities of the participants.

Challenges at the CLC Promptathon:

Challenge 01:	My personal LernOS
Challenge 02:	Learn a language via Triolingo
Challenge 03:	Insta Learning Bites
Challenge 04:	Your skills and abilities
Challenge 05:	Agile methodology coach
Challenge 06:	Exploration of the „Unknown Unknowns“
Challenge 07:	Team learning plan
Challenge 08:	Team satisfaction
Challenge 09:	Face-to-face workshop results
Challenge 10:	Marketing and communication concept for a learning program
Challenge 11:	Generate your podcast
Challenge 12:	Change & Learning Strategy (SAP Challenge)
Challenge 13:	Create an online course
Challenge 14:	Role-playing games and simulations

Source: Whiteboard of the CLC Promptathon (https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVKIqp9wg=/); Password: Promptathon2024

Disclaimer: *All content on the Miro Board exists in German only; the list above and all following screenshots have been translated in this guideline for a better understanding of our international readers.*



(Example: Layout per challenge on Miro Board)

3. How to run a Promptathon?

- **Facilitation/Moderation:**

  A facilitator is important to steer the process, answer questions and ensure that all participants are on the same page.

- **Flow of the day:**

  Start with a welcome and introduction. Introduce the day's schedule, provide information on organizational matters and important framework conditions. Schedule fixed times for group work, breaks and presentations of the results.

- **Introduction to the topic of AI or prompting::**

  If the topic of AI or prompting is still new to many participants, a short introduction is useful, for example introducing the development of generative AI and giving an overview of important prompting techniques.

- **Presentation of the challenges:**

  Introduce the challenges to be solved by the participants. If necessary, add the "rules of the game" that apply to prompting: What is expected, what is evaluated, which tools are used and how? (see Fig. 6 below in this guideline).

- **Group formation:**

  Either let the participants choose their groups themselves or assign them to groups. If possible, ensure a balanced distribution of skills within the groups. Group sizes of 3 to 5 people have proven to be successful.

- **Group work:**

  During the group work, facilitators ("patrons") should be available to help with questions or technical problems. Ensure that the required tools and resources are accessible.

- **Presentation of the results:**

  At the end, each group presents its results. This can take the form of short presentations or demos. A subsequent discussion and feedback round is important to consolidate the findings.

- **Evaluation of the results:**

  As a rule, the results of a Promptathon are documented and presented in plenary. Sometimes they are also evaluated by a jury and the winner or winners are chosen. Experienced organizational teams have even developed their own chatbot (GPT) to take on this task
  (Burda, 2024).

4. How to evaluate a Promptathon?

- **Learning experiences of the participants:**

  Gather feedback from participants through surveys or feedback rounds. Ask about their learning experiences, the challenges they overcame and the insights they gained (Fig. 8) (Jenewein, 2024c).

- **Documentation of results:**

  Record the results of the group work and share them with all participants. A shared documentation platform such as a virtual whiteboard will be helpful for this (Fig. 1).

- **Analysis of prompts:**

  Evaluate the quality of the prompts developed and discuss which techniques were particularly successful. You can also use these findings to develop further learning opportunities for the participants.

- **Analysis of the "Promptathon" format:**

  Use the feedback from the organizing team and participants to review the format and develop it further if necessary: What worked well? Where does it make sense to think about alternatives? Which adjustments can be easily made if the Promptathon is to be held for a different target group or under new conditions?

Examples from the CLC Promptathon documentation

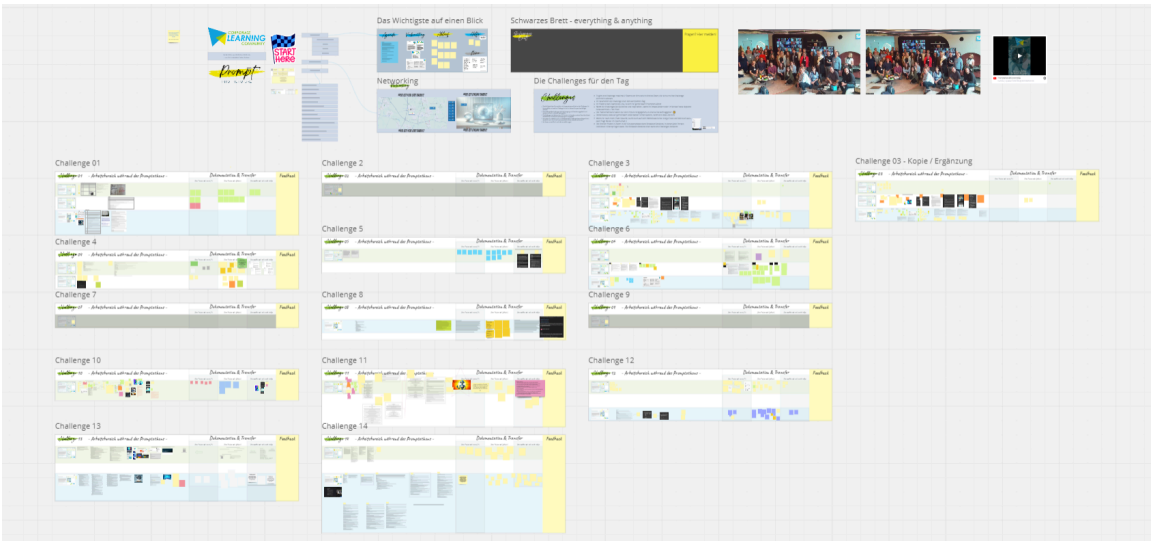


Fig. 1: A Miro whiteboard formed the heart of the Promptathon: information & orientation, challenges, group formation, documentation of results (CLC Promptathon; Jenewein, 2024b)

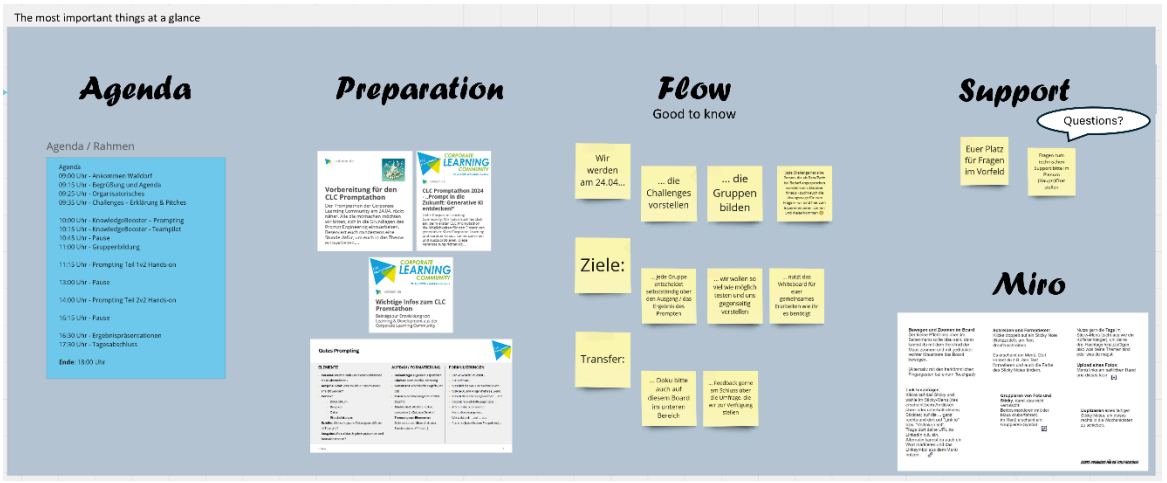


Fig. 2: Excerpt: "The most important things at a glance" (CLC Promptathon)

AGENDA

The agenda provided the flow of the day:

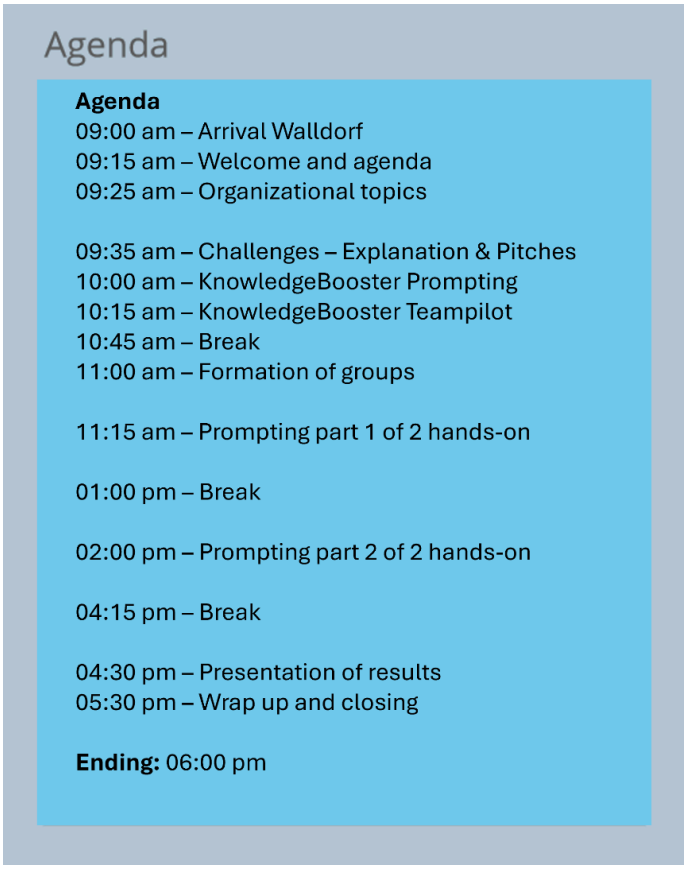
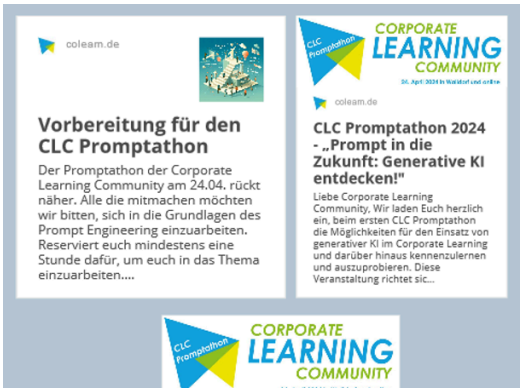


Fig. 3: Excerpt: "Agenda" (CLC Promptathon)

PREPARATION

The preparation section provided information the participants needed to prepare for the Promptathon. It reminded of the emails the participants received prior to the event, added by respective announcements on the colearn homepage.



The preparation information for the event contained the following elements:

- Location info for the onsite-event
- Agenda with the flow for the day
- Access to participate online via Zoom
- Hardware needed
- Software needed (including access to Zoom, Miro and Teampilot)
- ToDos prior to the event (introduction per participant on the Miro board, set up of a user profile in Teampilot#
- Two resources for newbies in prompting to get familiar with the topic as a starting point for the Promptathon

One of the prep documents has been a sheet for good prompting:

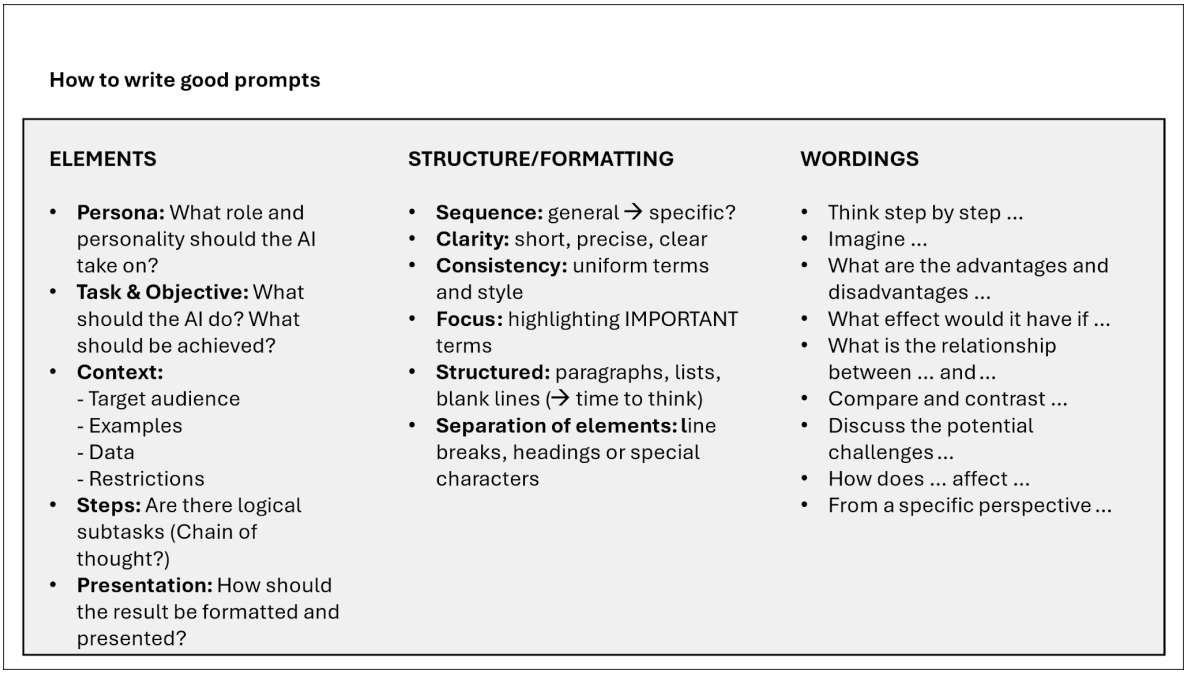


Fig. 4: Excerpt: "Template 'Good Prompting'" (CLC Promptathon

FLOW / GOOD TO KNOW

This section provided some more information for the event:



Fig. 5: Excerpt: "Flow / Good to know" (CLC Promptathon)

Translation sticky notes:

What will happen on June 24 is

- the presentation of the challenges
- the formation of the working groups
- each challenge has a person who can be approached as a sponsor if needed. in addition, find the solutions to your questions - we are here to experiment, learn and progress

Objectives

- Each group decides independently on the outcome/result of the prompts
- We want to test as much as possible and share with each other
- Use the whiteboard for your collaboration as it suits you best

Transfer

- Please place all documentation on this board in the lower section
- Feedback is welcome at the end via the survey we will provide

CHALLENGES

This section provided some information and explanation regarding the challenges for the Promptathon:

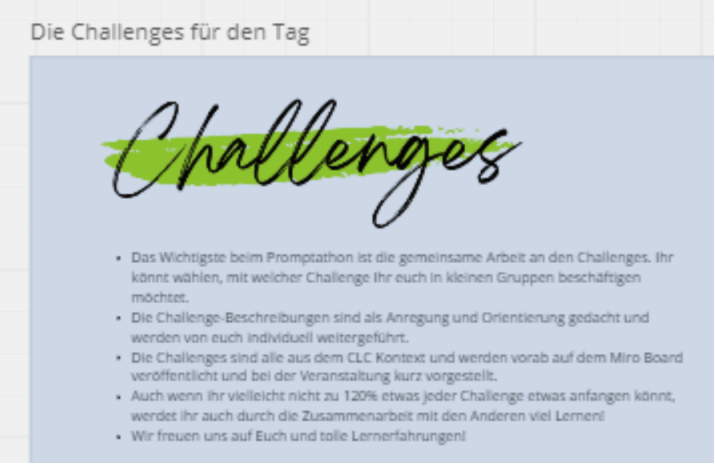


Fig. 6: Excerpt: "The challenges for the day" (CLC Promptathon)

Translation:

- The most important thing about the Promptathon is working together on the challenges. You can choose which challenge you would like to work on in small groups.
- The challenge descriptions are intended as a suggestion and orientation and will be continued by you individually.

- All challenges are coming from the clc context; they will be published in advance on the miro board and briefly presented at the event.
- Even if you can't do 120 % with every challenge, you will learn a lot from working together with the others!
- We look forward to seeing you and to great learning experiences!

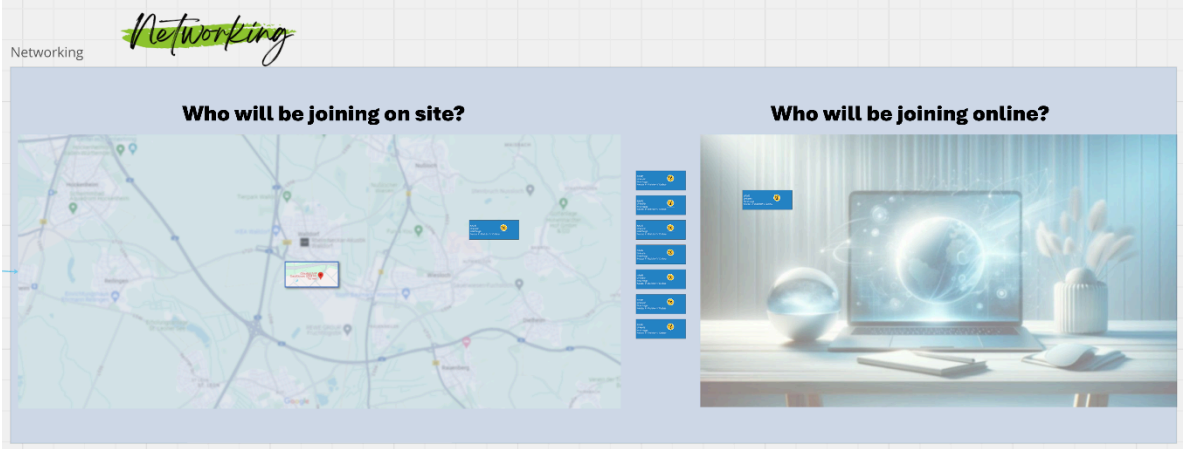


Fig. 7: Excerpt: "Networking" (CLC Promptathon)

The networking section displayed the participants on site and online.

Highlight

A total of 45 fully completed feedback forms from the online survey were evaluated.
The questions covered overall satisfaction, organization of the event, challenges, group work and learning experiences.
The result is extremely positive with a Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 77%.

Fig. 8: Extract from the results of the online survey for the CLC Promptathon (Jenewein, 2024c)

5. Addition: The „Prompt Battle“

At the 8th lernOS Convention (#loscon24), a Prompt Battle took place as part of the evening program, in which eight people competed against each other on stage to demonstrate their prompting skills. >

Flow of the prompt battle:

- Two participants competed against each other in each round of the Prompt Battle (preliminary round and/or round of 16, quarter-final, semi-final, final).

- The participants had the same access to a text-to-image software.

- A facilitator on stage set them a task that they had to solve within 60 seconds.

- The audience decided by the strength of their applause who had solved the task best, i.e. who had generated the most accurate, original, humorous ... image.

Important: To ensure that a Prompt Battle runs smoothly, the setting must be tested on site from different perspectives (moderation, participants, audience) prior to the event. This primarily concerns access to the AI software, the participants' view of the task and their own screen, as well as the audience, who want to look over the shoulders of the participants on stage while they are prompting and evaluate their results.

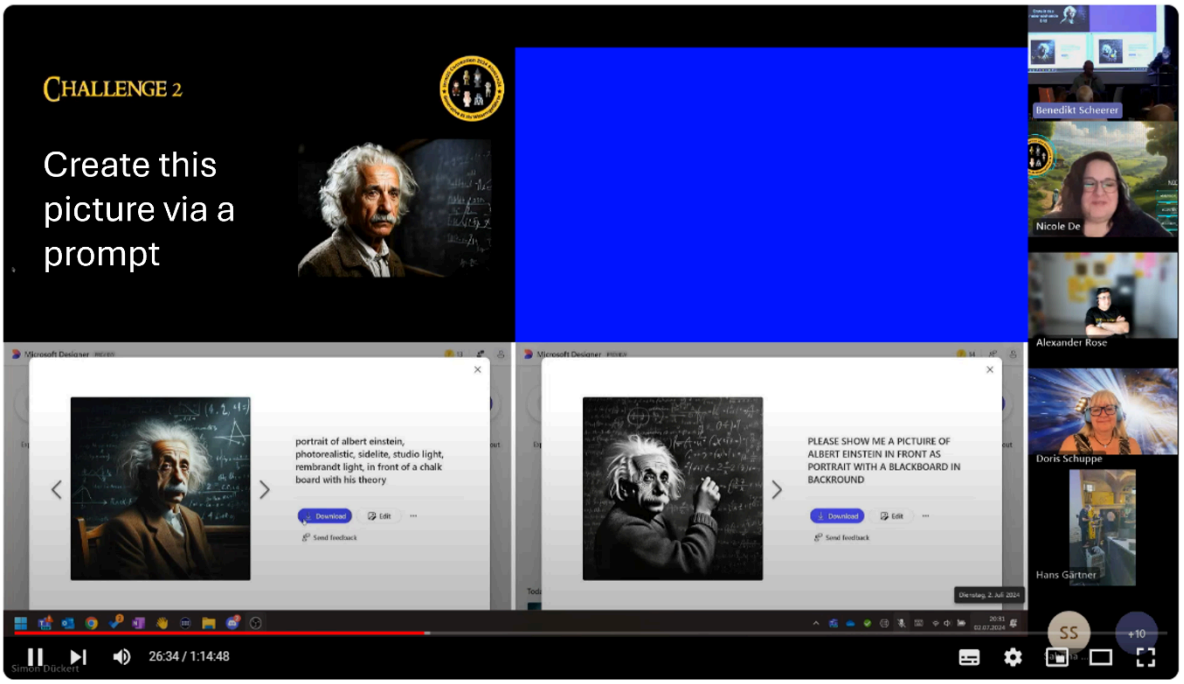


Fig. 9: Scene from the Prompt Battle at #loscon24, Cogneon Academy, YouTube, 2024
https://youtu.be/Nwz0WBeg1Zg?si=m87Wyxm2xriCPR6w

Please find following an initial comparison in order to differentiate between the two formats "Promptathon" and "Prompt Battle" based on possible areas of application:

Features	Promptathon	Prompt Battle
Objective	Learning with and from each other; developing skills	Entertaining and breaking down barriers
Mode	Peer learning format	Tournament or game
Duration	approx. 8 hours/ day event (plus preparation and follow-up)	1 - 3 hours/ rather evening even (plus preparation)
Number of participants	approx. 20 - 200 active participants	8 - 16 active participants (plus audience)
Exchange of participants	Collaboratively in learning groups	Competitively in pairs or groups of three
Challenges	Time-consuming, possibly multi-stage	Short and can be implemented as quickly as possible
Effort	high	medium to high

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History of versions

Version	Edited by	Description Modification	Date
1.1	Jochen Robes	Changed the CC license to „CC BY 4.0“	July 30th, 2024
1.1	Martina Pumpat	Translation German - English	Aug 15th, 2024