

Come and Play in the Badge Sandpit

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I am Wendy Palmer, based in Australia, and I have worked in the digital credentialing field for many years. One consistent observation is that while digital credentials are widely discussed through frameworks, policies, and models, they can remain abstract and difficult to experience in practice. Many people working in this space report that they have never claimed a badge or set up a digital wallet—not due to resistance, but because it is unclear where to begin. This is an emerging and rapidly evolving ecosystem, where new tools appear frequently. I have long believed that learning is most effective through play. The best way to understand LEGO is not to read about it, but to tip the box onto the floor and start building. This belief led to the creation of the Badge Sandpit.

Inspired by the hands-on exploration space at the Badge Summit, the Badge Sandpit translates that experience into a virtual format. Because credentialing systems are digital, they naturally support an online, global learning environment. Credentialing platforms and tool providers were invited to place their tools in the sandpit and co-design structured challenges. Rather than signing up for open-ended free trials, participants completed guided activities with clear outcomes. These activities included curriculum mapping to earn a skills-mapping badge, using artificial intelligence tools to surface and map personal competencies, designing a quality badge, or converting a paper-based credential into a verified digital credential. The emphasis is on doing, rather than observing.

The Badge Sandpit began on November 17 and ran for three weeks. It is virtual and self-paced, enabling participation from anywhere in the world. Those interested in experimenting, contributing a challenge, or experiencing the digital credentialing ecosystem firsthand were invited to register and play.

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