JURY REPORT

SURF Security & Privacy Award 2026

The Security & Privacy Award is a recognition for the people who dedicate themselves to strengthening and protecting our digital environment. An award for those who work every day to improve the security and privacy of educational institutions and to make the digital world safer and more reliable.

This year's SURF sees a person who is committed with exceptional wisdom and vision to strengthening security and privacy in education. Thanks to their efforts, institutions, lecturers, and researchers can work in a digital environment that is safe, open, and reliable.

About the nominees

The jury consists of professionals from the field, each with a unique background. Ultimately, one nominee is chosen as the winner. Their years of involvement made a deep impression. This award is not only a recognition for SURF, but above all an appreciation of the many years of dedication shown by this person.

The nominees from this year share an important commonality: their exceptional contribution to security and privacy in a rapidly changing and highly complex field. They have not only made educational institutions safer but have also inspired others and contributed to a culture of awareness and responsibility.

With the Security & Privacy Award, we not only want to honor a person, but also highlight the value of all the inspiring examples and the drive within the security community. Thanks to their dedication, educational institutions are challenged to continue contributing to professional and responsible digital practices.

On behalf of the full jury, we would like to express our congratulations and great appreciation to all nominees. You make the difference.

Anita Polderdijk-Rijntjes

What the jury says:

The jury from within and beyond the field. Anita has dedicated a significant part of her life to security and privacy communities in education and research. Although her work is not always directly visible to everyone, its impact is evident. Time and again, she has proven how much she means to both the broad and closely connected group of people around her.

What distinguishes Anita is not only the scope of her work, but also her ability to bring people together. Not developing frameworks, policies, and standards in isolation, but by creating broad support and fostering collaboration across sectors and organizations. The jury therefore especially appreciates her contribution. She demonstrates that knowledge-sharing and collaboration within the community, even when difficult, can make a real difference.

Her work has had a direct and lasting influence on professionals. The jury sees her as a true driving force: someone who not only shares knowledge but also actively supports others in finding their place and meaningful role.

Her legacy is therefore much more than the tangible results she leaves behind; it is the community she has helped build. Thanks to her efforts, people, communities, and organizations have been encouraged to continue working on privacy, security, and public values in education and research.

For the jury, it is clear that Anita has made an enduring contribution to the field and to the people who work within it. Her impact will remain visible for many years to come.

What the community says:

"Anita combines active participation in the community with an infectious and tireless work ethic. She is a connecting force and a pleasure to work with."

"The red thread throughout her career is that privacy and security are always at the center of her work."

"Her expertise, accessibility, and willingness to share knowledge make her a valued colleague and an inspiring role model for many."

"Without Anita, the privacy and security community would look very different today."

The jury

Floor Jas *(jury chair)*
Manager Trust & Security, SURF

Ewald Beekman
IT Security Officer, Amsterdam UMC
Security & Privacy Award 2025

Gunes Acar
Professor of Digital Security, Radboud Universiteit

Roland van Rijswijk-Deij
Professor of Internet Security, Universiteit Twente en Principal Scientist, NLnet Labs

Anna Berlee
Professor of Data Protection and Privacy Law, Open Universiteit