



# Digital Society Initiative – December 2023



Dear DSI community

Time flies – and so we can look back on another successful year for the DSI, in which new things have been created, proven things have been continued and important processes are nearing completion.

Let's start with the latter point: during the development phase of the DSI and with the support of the DIZH programs, up to 36 new professorships were to be created at our university, including assistant professorships. We can now report that we will achieve this goal through numerous different measures – even if not all positions have yet been filled, which, as usual with such processes, takes some time.

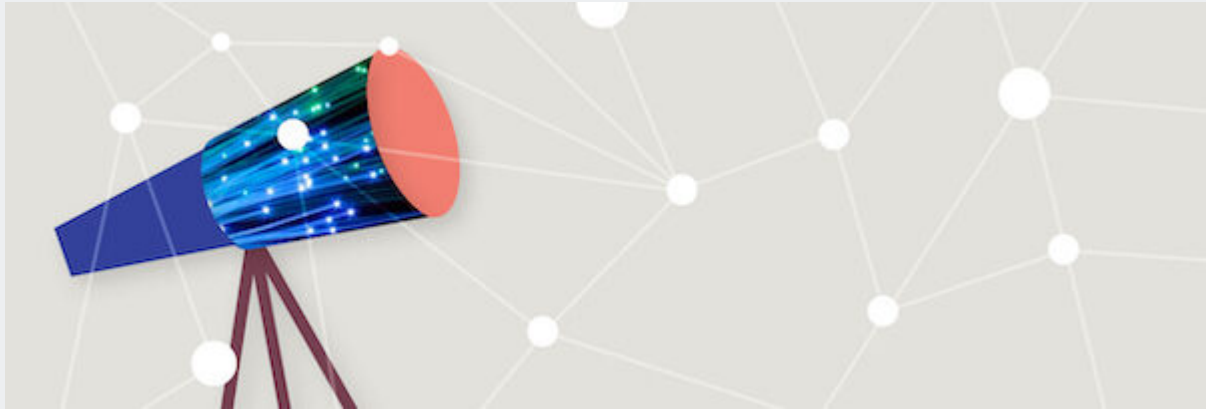
Our support structures for the researchers in our network, which comprises more than 1100 people, have proven their worth. Two new DSI Communities on «Digital Humanities» and «AI & Law» have joined our 12 DSI Communities, five new DSI Infrastructures & Labs have been created and 14 new doctoral students have enriched our PhD Excellence Program.

And there is also something new on the horizon: we are currently piloting our «DSI Minor/LAO Digital Skills». Finally, our «education program» for politicians has proven to be very successful: The «Parldigi MasterClass» has received offshoots in the cantons of Bern, Geneva and Zurich – in addition to repeating the national MasterClass with the newly elected members of the National Council and Council of States, this will be a focus of our outreach in the coming year.

In view of all these achievements, it is not surprising that more than 170 media articles related to the DSI have been published this year – on average one article almost every other day. I think we can all be justifiably proud of this. With this in mind, I would like to

thank you all for this great work – and I hope that you find peace and reflection over the next few days.

Avi Bernstein  
Managing Director of the DSI



## DSI Research

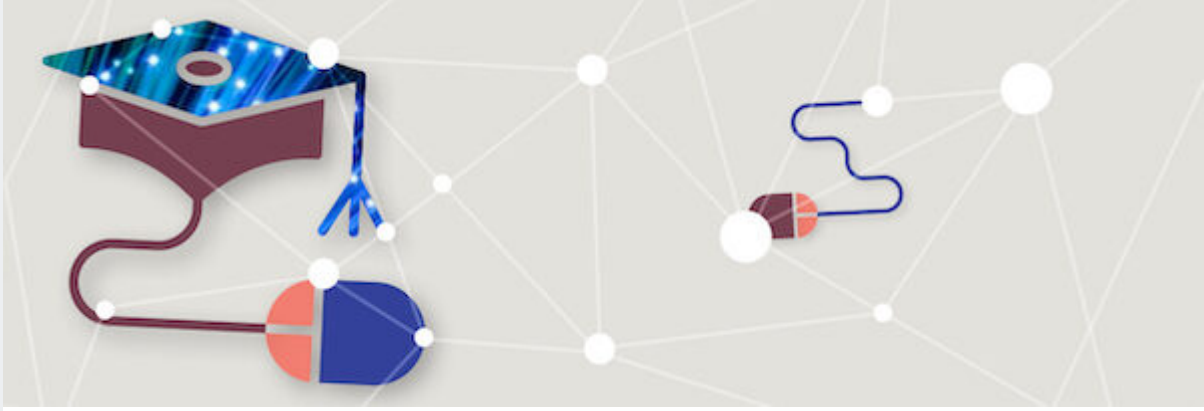
**DSI Infrastructures & Labs:** Of the current 14 projects, the first will be completed in the next few months, while others started just a few weeks ago. We have introduced selected projects with short interviews: [Talk2UZH](#), [BRIDGE Lab](#), [HDR](#), [SDR Research Scout](#) & [PREMIA](#) – by the way, the latter served as data provider for the «Wahlbörse» of the news platform «Watson» with regard to the past elections in October.

**DSI Professorships:** The DSI professors research the causes, consequences and future scenarios of the digital transformation of society and science. Currently, the DSI has 25 appointed [professorships](#); In the next months, twelve further appointments for DSI professorships will follow.

**DSI Communities:** During this year, three new communities complemented the already existing nine. The newly formed research groups address exciting and highly topical issues: [Education](#), [Sustainability](#) and [Metaverse](#). Two more communities on the topics of «Digital Humanities» and «AI & Law» are emerging and will follow in the next year.

**DSI Postdocs:** [Seven researchers](#) are now working on their projects. Another four will follow in 2024: the application process has been completed and the selection process currently takes place.

**DSI Network Members:** More than 250 new members of the DSI were confirmed at the [General Meeting](#) on November 2. With this, more than 1100 people now belong to the DSI.



## DSI Education

**Excellence Program:** Following the launch of the [fourth cohort](#) this summer, the application window for the fifth cohort opened in mid-November. The [call for applications](#) runs until January 15, 2024 – please forward this information to potential candidates. Learn more about the DSI Excellence Program in this [video](#).

**DSI Minor/LAO Digital Skills:** Starting in the fall semester of 2024, the DSI will offer the master's program «[Digital Skills](#)». Already starting this fall, pilot modules in Python Programming and Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) can be attended. And in the core module of the program «Teamwork on Digital Transformation Challenges», students from different disciplines work on challenges in the areas «meaning in virtual space» and «artificial digital imaginations».

**Studium Digitale:** The [Studium Digitale](#) teaches basic digital skills from an interdisciplinary perspective. The aim of the online course which was specially developed by the DSI in 2021, is to give students at Bachelor level an initial introduction to this broad and complex subject. This year, there were 1706 registrations for the course.

**Parladi MasterClass:** The current [MasterClass](#) for members of the Grand Council of the Canton of Bern is in the final phase. The next MasterClass will start at the end of January in the Canton of Geneva, the planning work for another series in the national parliament is in progress and we will receive the funding decision for a series in the Canton of Zurich these days. Planning work is underway for a further series in the national parliament and an implementation in the canton of Zurich.



## DSI Strategy

**Second DSI Strategy Lab:** In the second DSI Strategy Lab, the DSI took a look into the future and examined the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in medicine. In the process, the [digital twin](#) was identified as an important development in medicine: The digital image of a human body is expected to have a major impact on healthcare in the future and will be used in prevention, diagnosis or treatment. A [representative survey](#) by the DSI shows that almost two thirds of the Swiss population would like to have a digital twin. In line with the wishes of the population, the DSI has developed [recommendations](#) for dealing with this new technology. These were part of an [article on digital twins in the Tagesanzeiger](#) on November 3 (in German).

**Third DSI Strategy Lab:** The [third DSI Strategy Lab](#) «AI in education, research and innovation – what do we lose, what do we gain?» takes the public discussions about artificial intelligence (AI) as an opportunity to reflect in depth on the opportunities and risks of AI in a context that is significant for universities. About 20 experts from different fields developed scenarios and draft recommendations on the topic in a retreat in August 2023. This work will serve as the basis for further steps. The results will be published later.

**DSI Roadmap:** As part of the update of the [DSI Roadmap](#), all members of the DSI were given the opportunity to take part in a survey in 2023. The results will be incorporated into the DSI's research priorities for 2024 - 2025.



## DSI Outreach

**Journalists Workshops:** After the successful first workshop «[Algorithms and AI](#)» in March, a follow-up event «[Opinion Shaping in the Digital Space](#)» was held in autumn. The workshops were well attended, hence further events are planned for 2024.

**Events, events & more events:** Since this year, the DSI Communities can apply for additional funding to organize public events. This new process is a great success: close to 70 events have taken place at the DSI. As example the panel discussion «[ChatGPT & Co. – eine Chance für Forschung und Lehre?](#)» in March with almost 90 visitors or the [DSI AI Week](#) in September, hosted by the DSI Community Ethics.

**Social Media:** Since this year, the DSI has a new channel on social media: [YouTube](#). The topics covered there include DSI's educational programs, the Parldigi MasterClass and DSI's Strategy Labs. We look forward to welcoming new subscribers. On contrast, the DSI said goodbye to another platform this year: we were no longer able to support the developments of X, formerly Twitter. If you have followed us there and would like to stay up to date about the DSI, you can still find us on [LinkedIn](#).

**DSI in the media:** Artificial Intelligence in medicine, Big Data, digital sustainability, cyberattacks, religious influencers, ChatGPT, new UZH Digital Professorships, autonomous robots, data protection, Metaverse, digital trinity and much more: The DSI once again excelled thanks to its experts and its interdisciplinarity. In 2023, more than **170 articles related to the DSI** were already published so far.

University of Zurich  
Digital Society Initiative (DSI)  
Rämistrasse 69  
80001 Zurich  
Switzerland  
[info@dsi.uzh.ch](mailto:info@dsi.uzh.ch)  
[www.dsi.uzh.ch](http://www.dsi.uzh.ch)



[Unsubscribe](#)  
[Edit Profile](#)