



Universität  
Zürich<sup>UZH</sup>

Digital Society Initiative (DSI)

# Digital Society Initiative – April 2026



Dear readers,

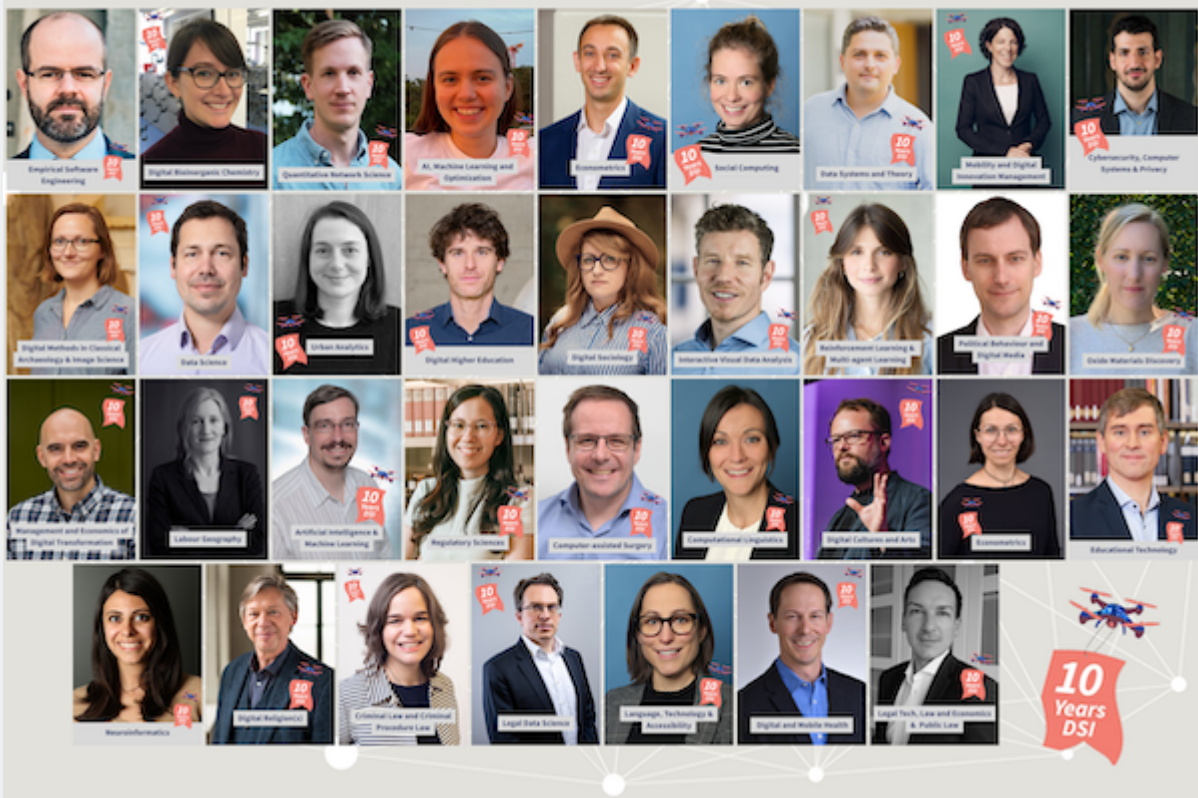
Ten years DSI – and there's plenty to share. In this issue, we're launching DSI Minds, a new series of portraits about the people behind DSI. We're also welcoming a new DSI Community, sharing our consultation response to a proposed Federal Act, and introducing a research project that's reshaping our view of cities through data. And in the latest DSI Insights, we explore the question of who AI should actually be built for.

Also: awards, career moves, fellowships – and a calendar of events filling the coming weeks. And of course: November 24, 2026. Our anniversary celebration with distinguished guests. It's worth marking your calendars.

We hope you enjoy this issue.

Your Digital Society Initiative team

## News



10 YEARS DSI

## DSI Minds

To mark the **10th anniversary of the DSI**, we are launching a new series of portraits of the people behind the DSI: DSI Minds.

DSI Minds is an invitation **to take a look behind the scenes at DSI** – and to meet the people who are asking pressing questions about digital transformation: Who is responsible when an algorithm fails? How do we protect democratic processes in an era of disinformation? What does it mean to work, learn, heal, or believe in an increasingly digital world?

Starting today, April 16, 2026, new portraits will appear regularly on the [DSI LinkedIn channel](#). Follow us to meet the minds behind the DSI – and to discover the full breadth of research that makes this initiative what it is.

By the way: We're celebrating the DSI's anniversary on **November 24, 2026** with distinguished guests. If you haven't already, mark the date on your calendar now.

[The DSI on LinkedIn](#)



## NEW PLATFORM LEGISLATION

# DSI's Response to the Consultation

The DSI has submitted its **consultation response** to the proposed **Federal Act on Communication Platforms and Search Engines**.

An interdisciplinary team of experts in computer science, law, ethics, political science, and communication studies developed key recommendations on the topic of disinformation as part of our **fourth Strategy Lab** – under the leadership of the Center for Information Technology, Society, and Law (ITSL).

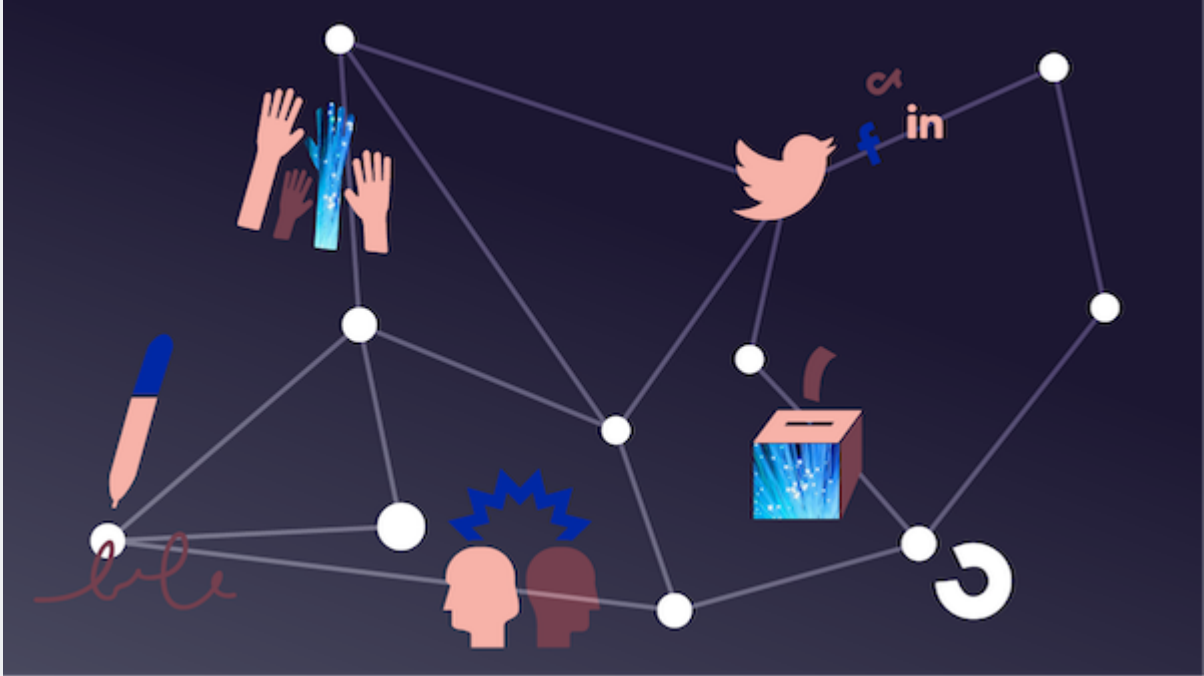
Some of our **key positions**:

- A **tiered obligations model** for small, medium, and large platforms – instead of a blanket usage threshold of 10%
- A reporting procedure for all unlawful content, not just hate speech
- Binding provisions for the **protection of children and adolescents**

Further information and the full consultation response can be found [here](#).

The sixth and latest [DSI Strategy Lab](#) focuses on the **Impact of Interdisciplinary Research**. Initial results are expected this summer.

[You can find all DSI Strategy Labs here](#)



## NEW DSI COMMUNITY

# Digital Publics

The DSI is bringing its **research on the digital public sphere** together under one roof: The newly established [DSI Community Digital Publics](#) creates an interdisciplinary platform that examines the opportunities and risks of digital transformation for public life.

The community's goal is to develop well-founded insights and share them with researchers, policymakers, and the general public. The focus is on the question of how **digital spaces can be made more inclusive, transparent, and sustainable**.

**Save the Date:** The first [Digital Publics Conference](#) will take place from October 21 to 23, 2026 at the DSI in Zurich – the [Call for Papers](#) is now open.

[You can find all DSI Communities here](#)



## RESEARCH AT THE DSI

# 3 Questions about UDH

Prof. Dr. Esra Suel presents the **UDH** project – a project in the «**DSI Infrastructures & Labs**» series.

### **What exactly is the main goal of the Urban Data Hub (UDH)?**

Our goal is to build a shared data infrastructure for interdisciplinary research on cities. Although Switzerland has a strong urban data ecosystem, combining data from different sources remains difficult due to access constraints. This limits research on complex urban challenges that require integrated data. UDH aims to address this gap by making high-resolution, neighborhood-level data easier to access, integrate, and analyze.

### **Which urban challenges should be specifically addressed?**

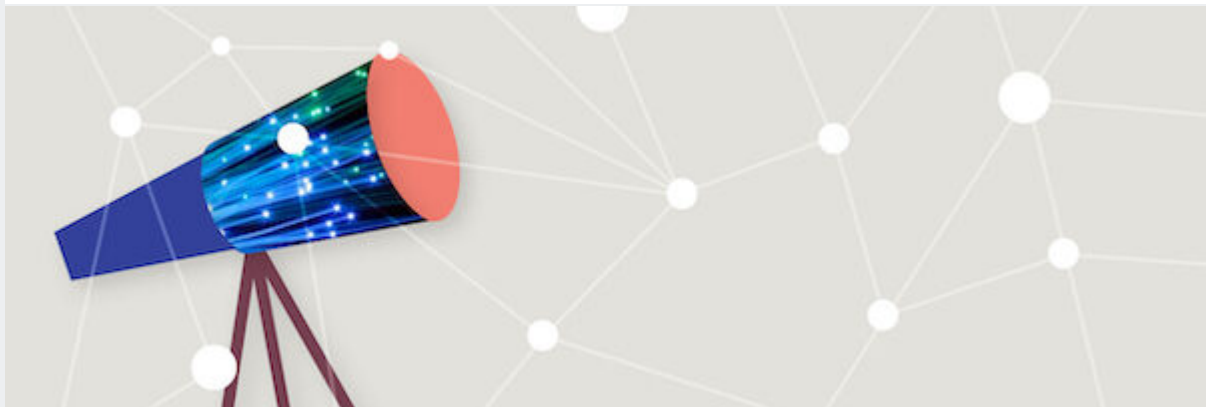
In its first phase, UDH focuses on three themes: mobility, housing, and healthy aging. Through the DSI network, we brought together an interdisciplinary team, enabling us to identify and prioritize datasets that support new cross-domain questions. For example, whether cities provide adequate transport and housing options for healthy aging. Or whether housing densification for affordability generates new travel demand that can be met by low-carbon mobility options.

### **What effect do you hope to achieve in the long term?**

We aim for the UDH to become a platform that enables interdisciplinary urban research through a growing collection of harmonized datasets. By providing data at consistent geographic and temporal scales, the UDH will make it easier to combine insights and data from different disciplines, support new research questions, and foster collaboration across fields working on urban challenges.

You can learn more about UDH and Esra [here](#).

[Click here to see all projects in the series](#)



## **DSI INSIGHTS**

# **Democratizing AI**

**AI doesn't have to be big to be good.** In the latest [DSI Insights](#), **DSI Professor Anastasiia Koloskova** shows how new algorithms are making AI more efficient and compliant with data protection regulations – and how it can **reach the places where it's truly needed**.

In the column series «DSI Insights» the DSI showcases its **expertise** and

**interdisciplinarity** on topics of **digital transformation**. The columns by authors from the DSI network appear in the [online magazine «Inside IT»](#).

[Click here for all DSI Insights](#)

## DSI EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

### New: UZH.ai Fellowship Track

The **DSI and UZH.ai are joining forces** to support the next generation of AI researchers at UZH. This spring, doctoral students focusing on AI were able to apply for the **UZH.ai Fellowship** – a funded track within the DSI Excellence Program.

The Excellence Program / UZH.ai Fellowship generated significant interest: This year, **over 40 people** applied.

The DSI's **Excellence Program** is a supplementary curriculum to existing **doctoral programs**. It prepares students **from all disciplines** for an environment where **interdisciplinary collaboration** on **digitalization topics** is a top priority.

[More information about the collaboration](#)



## Rapid Action & Outreach

Democratic societies are under pressure – the **DIZH** is responding with the [5th Rapid Action Call](#). Projects that strengthen democratic resilience and civic participation are sought. All members of DIZH universities are eligible to apply, with funding of up to CHF 75,000 available. **Application deadline: July 1, 2026.**

In the **2nd DIZH Outreach Call**, eight projects were selected that bring digital research to the wider public – four of which involve UZH. Among them is the [DSI DigitalForum](#). This is a further development of the already established [Digital MasterClass](#) and will launch this summer.



### MORE NEWS IN BRIEF

## DSI Shorts

In this section, we highlight **more news** from the DSI universe.

- The SNSF is launching [three new National Research Programmes](#) on «**Mental Health of Adolescents**», «**Digital Resilience of Critical Infrastructures**» and «**Deglobalisation and Supply Chain Resilience**» – with a total budget of CHF 17 million. Calls will open in mid-2026.

Today we would also like to congratulate:

- Three DSI members have [received special honors](#): **Nina Hartrampf** has been awarded the Werner Prize by the Swiss Chemical Society, **Sascha Schneider** is among the 50 most productive researchers in educational psychology worldwide, and **Philipp Homan** has been awarded the 2026 Hirnliga Research Award.
- Two additional DSI members [take the next step in their careers](#): The Board of the University of Zurich has promoted DSI member Prof. Dr. **Meredith Christine Shuman** and DSI Professor **Alberto Bacchelli**.

# Today

## **Hands-on-Workshop: Designing your own AI- Competency-Based Teaching Approach**

Organized by the DSI Community Education and its subcommunity «AI in Higher Education Teaching», this workshop invites participants to a 120-minute interactive session where educators will learn how to effectively integrate AI skills into their teaching.

[More information](#)

## **28.04.**

## **Workshop: Autonomous Driving and the Legal Challenges of Allocating Liability**

This workshop, organized by the DSI Communities AI & Law and Mobility, addresses the legal challenges posed by autonomous vehicles – featuring keynote speeches on liability issues.

[More information](#)

## **30.04.**

## **AI, Culture & Society Reading Group**

An event as part of the «AI, Culture & Society Reading Group» series – organized by the DSI Community AI, Culture & Society.

[More information](#)

## **30.04.**

## **Cycles of Care: Bridging Medicine, Technology, Sociology, and Intersectional Design in Digital Women's Health**

This workshop series organized by the DSI Community Health brings together researchers and practitioners from the fields of medicine, technology, sociology, and feminist design to better integrate gender-specific data into research and practice.

[More information](#)

**05.05.**

## **Workshop on Time Series Analysis for Digital Humanities**

This workshop, organized by the DSI Community Digital Humanities, introduces methods for automated text analysis and time-series semantics – with hands-on exercises in R and Python for identifying historical trends and cultural shifts.

[More information](#)

**07.05.**

## **Climate Week Zurich – Framing Sustainability in the Age of AI: Public Voices, Corporate Strategies, Media Influence**

This panel discussion organized by the DSI Community Sustainability as part of the Climate Week Zurich explores how AI influences environmental discourse, corporate strategies, and public perception.

[More information](#)

**08.05.**

## **Shape responsible clinical AI: An expert panel on the Clinician-in-the-Loop AI**

This interdisciplinary panel, organized by the DSI Communities AI & Law, Ethics, and Health, brings together professionals from the fields of healthcare, AI, law, and ethics to develop a practical playbook for the responsible use of clinical AI.

[More information](#)

**13.05.**

## **DSI Community Sustainability – Townhall Meeting**

The DSI Community Sustainability Townhall Meeting provides insights into current community activities and invites participants to collaborate on shaping future initiatives at the intersection of sustainability and digitalization.

[More information](#)

**18.05.**

## **Digital Resilience in Crisis: Does a Government as a Platform (GaaP) Approach Improve Digital Crisis Response?**

This final presentation of the DIZH project «Government as a Platform» presents key findings on digital crisis resilience in Switzerland and discusses how digital platforms can improve coordination among government agencies during crises.

[More information](#)

**20.05.**

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[More information](#)

**28.05.**

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[More information](#)

**04.06.**

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[More information](#)

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