



Digital Society Initiative – December 2024



Dear DSI Community

The Digital Society Initiative (DSI) has now completed nine successful years and is on the verge of an anniversary. We are proud to say that we have successfully implemented many of our goals. One milestone was the completion of our professorship program and the start of work by the selected participants of the third and final Bridge Postdoc Call. The Minor Digital Skills, a core project of our education program, has made the leap into regular operation. The last doctoral scholarships will be awarded in the coming year and ensure that the next generation of researchers is well prepared for the challenges of the digital future.

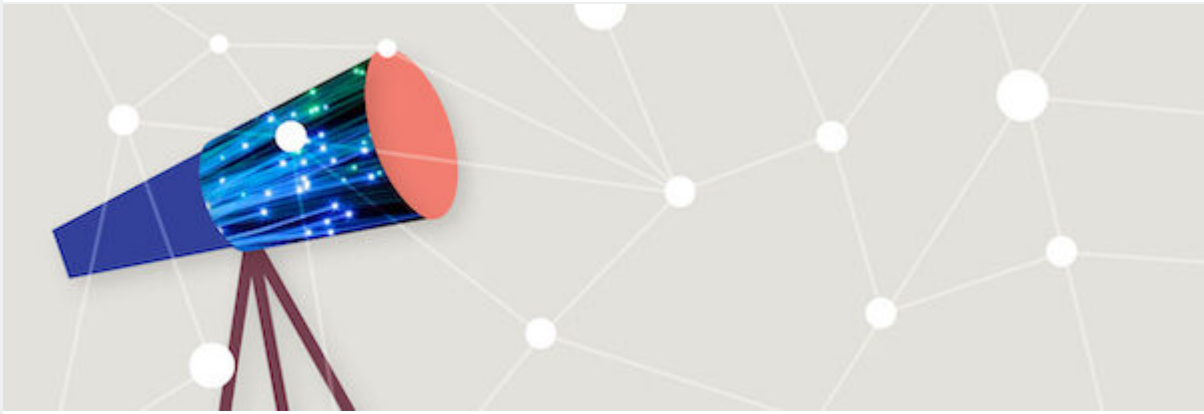
The DSI has thus established itself as a successful and exemplary model of inter-faculty cooperation at our university. With 14 communities and a wide range of activities, they testify to the extraordinary commitment of our researchers. Also worth mentioning is our think tank, the DSI Strategy Lab, which has highlighted important facets of the topic of «disinformation» in a series of events. We will only postpone the associated response to the new Swiss platform law until next year, as the mills in Bern, as we know, grind slowly.

Next year, we will work with the DSI network to revise our roadmap. So don't be surprised if we approach you with specific questions in the coming weeks and months, so that you too can help set the course for the future of the DSI.

I look forward to an exciting 2025 and wish you all a peaceful time.

Avi Bernstein
Managing Director of the DSI

PS: We will be enjoying the holidays from tomorrow evening and will be back on January 6, 2025.



DSI Research

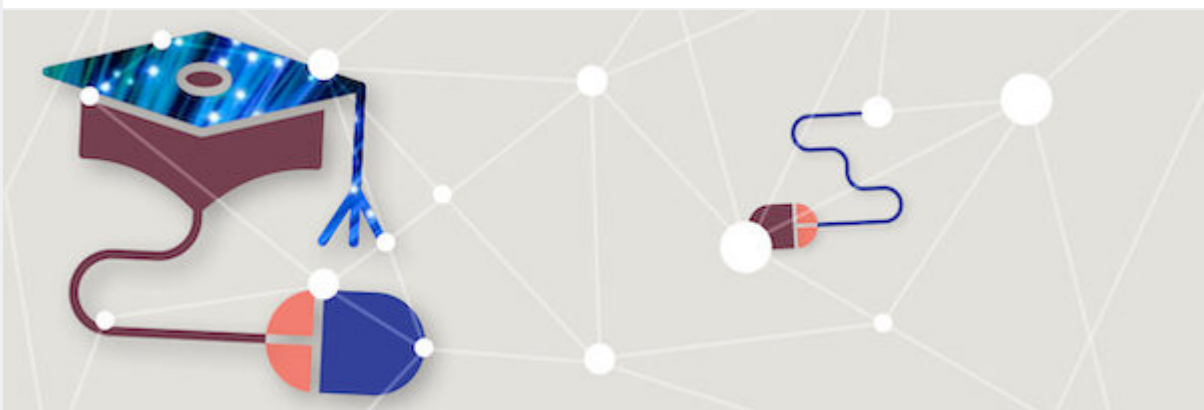
DSI Infrastructures & Labs: In 2024, three new projects have been added to the existing [DSI Infrastructures & Labs](#): «D2USP: Digital Device Use Self-Monitoring Platform», «RAI Platform – Reliable AI for Biomedicine» & «STAG: Statistical Time Series Analysis Guide». Around the same time, the first projects have been [completed](#), while others are becoming permanent infrastructures.

DSI Professorships: In recent months, the DSI has been able to welcome further [DSI Professors](#). There are now 31 professors researching the causes, consequences and future scenarios of the digital transformation of society and science. Six appointments for professorship are currently pending.

DSI Communities: In 2024, two new communities joined the DSI: The DSI Community AI & Law and the DSI Community Digital Humanities. [13 DSI Communities](#) are currently working on a specific topic of digital transformation. Another group is already being planned and will join DSI in 2025. Their topic: AI, Culture & Society.

DSI Postdocs: The DSI Postdoc Program is now complete. [Ten researchers](#) at the DSI are working on a wide range of digital transformation topics: from «Digital Biomarkers» and «Text to Image with AI» to «Sign Language Processing». Last summer, a DSI postdoc began a professorship in Lausanne.

DSI Network Members: 275 new members of the DSI were confirmed at the General Meeting on October 10, 2024. The DSI Network now includes more than 1300 people.



DSI Education

Studium Digitale: Since spring semester 2021, the University of Zurich has been offering Bachelor's students from all faculties the [Studium Digitale](#) course, which teaches basic digital skills from an interdisciplinary perspective. The sixth session of the course is currently running. On average, more than 1500 people take the online course (or parts of it) each year.

DSI Minor / LAO Digital Skills: After three years of curriculum development and piloting of the individual modules, the new [interdisciplinary Master's Minor](#) program officially started on September 16, 2024. The project team is happy to report that 38 motivated students are currently engaged in the core modules of the program. The application window for the next start of the program in fall 2025 will open in January – now also as a Liberal Arts Option (LAO) for students at the Faculty of Law.

Excellence Program: After 21 PhD students of the [Excellence Program \(2022-2024\)](#) were celebrated for successfully completing the program at the DSI Summer Party this June, the next, now [fifth cohort](#), started the program shortly afterwards. And it continues: the application window for the cohort starting in September 2025 is open until January 15, 2025.



DSI Strategy

3rd DSI Strategy Lab: The third DSI Strategy Lab addressed the question «AI in education, research and innovation – what do we lose, what do we gain?». The [objectives and recommendations were summarized in a position paper](#), which has been published in August 2024. Two UZH News articles (in German) appeared about the project: «[Die Lehre wird interaktiver und intensiver](#)» and «[KI-Tools im Studienalltag](#)».

4th DSI Strategy Lab: The topic of disinformation has become increasingly important in recent years, which is why the DSI dedicated its [fourth Strategy Lab](#) to this topic. Among other things, the DSI organized the «[Disinformation Month](#)» in 2024, consisting of public events and other activities that shed light on the topic of disinformation from various perspectives.

5th DSI Strategy Lab: 2025 is the «International Year Of Quantum Science And Technology». The DSI is taking this as an opportunity to focus on «Quantum Computing» in the [fifth DSI Strategy Lab](#). Workshops on the topic were held already in 2024, and the

first communication activities are planned for the first half of 2025.

AI+X Summit: The AI+X Summit, which took place at the beginning of October, provided researchers and academics with the opportunity to explore the latest developments in the field of artificial intelligence (AI). [The DSI represented the University of Zurich at the summit](#) with two talks on the main stage, the workshop «Responsible AI» and an exhibition stand. There, visitors were able to find out in a hands-on way what the Swiss population thinks about AI, and eight DSI experts provided information on a wide range of AI topics.



DSI Outreach

Journalists Workshops: After successful events in 2023, the third and fourth editions of the media workshop took place this year – in May and September 2024. This time on the topic of «[The economic impact of artificial intelligence \(AI\)](#)» and the DSI's annual topic of «[Disinformation](#)». As this format has been met with great interest, it will be continued in 2025.

Digital MasterClass: The Digital MasterClass is increasingly becoming a model for success. This year, the DSI was conducting four MasterClasses. In June, the MasterClass for the [Grand Council of the Canton of Bern](#) was completed. That same month, the MasterClass for the [Zurich Cantonal Parliament](#) began. In September, the second series of events for members of the [National Council and Council of States](#) has started. And finally, the MasterClass for members of the «[Grand Conseil](#)» of the [Canton of Geneva](#) ended in November 2024.

DSI Insights: In the «DSI Insights» series of columns, the DSI demonstrates its expertise and interdisciplinary approach to digital transformation topics since 2017. The columns by authors from the DSI Network appear in the «Inside IT» industry magazine and on the University of Zurich's communication channels. [In 2024 six columns were published.](#)

DSI Podcast: The DSI has a new podcast: «[Genial digital?](#)» provides answers on topics related to digital transformation (in German). In the first episodes, which are created in collaboration with the DSI Community Work, the podcast focuses on the future of work. The first episode is about platforms that digitally mediate work. In the second episode, we ask ourselves the question of whether managers should show more emotion. This episode will be available at the beginning of 2025.

DSI Spotlights: In November, the new «[DSI Spotlights](#)» format was launched. In this video series, experts from the DSI shed light on various aspects of the digital

transformation. In short, informative videos, they provide exciting insights into the effects of digitalization on our society.

DSI News: Over the course of the year, the DSI website has increasingly also developed into a [news portal](#) – among other things, with a new news slider on the homepage. This development will continue in 2025: the news on the website will be given more weight and will be promoted via [LinkedIn](#) and [Newsletter](#) (now six times a year in your mailbox). This way, you will always be up to date on developments around the DSI and on topics related to the digital transformation.

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