

Data Donation Day 2024 – Call for Project Proposals

The DIZH Data Donation Lab organizes the first *Data Donation Day* in September 2024 and seeks project partners from all DIZH institutions. Data donation refers to the consensual act of requesting and sharing personal data (e.g., digital trace data recorded by online platforms) for academic research (more details on page 2). The goal of the Data Donation Day is to make people aware of this new research approach, familiarize them with its basic characteristics, and provide the opportunity to participate in a project of their choice. The outreach activities include live events, media coverage, and a website.

All DIZH researchers are invited to propose a data donation project that will be featured in the outreach activities. Participating projects will profit from the opportunity to collect data for their research and gain public visibility. All projects will be supported by the Data Donation Lab regarding conceptual issues, the technical implementation of their project, and their outreach activities.

Project proposals can be submitted with [the application form provided on our website](#). Proposals should provide information regarding the following issues:

- Involved institutions and persons
- Research question(s) and its societal relevance
- Description of the data requested from participants (e.g., google search history)
- Short description of how the data takeout works (how can participants access their data)
- Feedback to participants (what insights will be provided to the participants and when)
- Context of the proposed project (e.g., pilot study, supplement to an ongoing project, etc.)

Project submissions are possible until 10 March 2024.

The project proposals will be selected regarding topic diversity, potential for storytelling, gratifications for participants, and institutional diversity:

- The *diversity of topics* (e.g., health, entertainment, news, mobility) should guarantee, that all citizens find at least one project of societal relevance. Furthermore, the diversity increases the likelihood, that every citizen can become a potential data donor (e.g., by using services from Alphabet (Google), Meta (Facebook), Apple, or SBB).
- The potential for storytelling will be critically assessed because it will be crucial to attract the attention from potential participants and multipliers (e.g., journalists, opinion leaders). Therefore, the societal relevance and potential impact of the project will be an important criterion for project selection.
- An immediate gratification (e.g., a personalized report) for participants will be important to motivate people to participate and spread the recommendation to participate to their personal network.
- Furthermore, we aim for inclusion of projects from all DIZH institutions to support networking among researchers of the different institutions.

Background Information

Why Data Donation?

By using digital services, people create digital traces that allow a fine-grained analysis of individuals, different social groups, and the society as a whole. While these data would be an important resource for academic research, access is increasingly restricted by the respective companies, technically challenging, and in some cases ethically questionable. In sum, this results in the need to develop a new research strategy to get access to digital trace data in a secure, legal, simple, and ethical way.

What is Data Donation?

Data donation refers to the consensual act of requesting and sharing personal data (e.g., digital trace data recorded by online platforms) for academic research. Thus, to collect data donations, users of a relevant platform are approached and asked to contribute their personal data to a research project. One way to do this is the download-upload approach: This approach utilizes the “takeout” function that many large companies such as Google, Instagram, or Spotify have implemented in their platforms which allows users to download a copy of the data stored about them and subsequently submit these data to the researchers.

What is the Data Donation Lab?

The *Data Donation Lab* (datadonation.uzh.ch) was established in 2021 through a DIZH Infrastructure and Lab Fund to aid DIZH researchers in collecting digital trace data through data donations by citizens. The Data Donation Lab has (A) established a network of DIZH researchers interested in this methodological approach and organizes regular lab meetings to support the knowledge exchange among interested researchers. The Data Donation Lab has (B) developed a state-of-the-art technological infrastructure (called Data Donation Module; <https://github.com/uzh/ddm>). The Data Donation Lab hosts and maintains this infrastructure that can be used by all DIZH researchers to collect data donations for their research projects. In 2023 the Data Donation Lab has organized the first European Data Donation Symposium (11-12 September 2023) was present at the 2023 Scientifica of UZH and ETHZ.

Who is funding the Data Donation Day?

The Data Donation Day is a DIZH outreach activity and is funded by the DIZH innovation programme. The funding was granted to Prof. Dr. Thomas Friemel from the Department of Communication and Media Research at the University of Zurich (mediennutzung.ch).

Online Information Event

There will be an online information event on 26 February 2024 from 12:15-13:00, where we provide more information on the Data Donation Day and are available to answer questions regarding project proposals. [Please sign up here](#) for this event to get involved.

Contact

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