

Press Release

National Center for Data Science launched

Bridge the divide

Bern, 6 February 2017

ETH Zurich and EPFL are creating a National Center for Data Science to foster innovation in data science, multidisciplinary research and open science. Today, the inauguration of the Swiss Data Science Center (SDSC) is taking place in Bern.

ETH Zurich and EPFL are launching a National Center for Data Science in order to innovate in the realm of data and computer science, and to provide an infrastructure for fostering multidisciplinary research and open science, with applications ranging from personalised health to environmental issues. It is a joint venture between EPFL and ETH Zürich with offices in both Lausanne and Zurich. The initiative will ensure that Switzerland possesses expertise and excellence in data science while striving to be globally competitive.

A complex journey made simple

Data science sits at the intersection of several academic disciplines including data management and engineering, statistics, machine learning, algorithms, optimisation and visualisation. It offers a new tool to social sciences, economics, medicine, environmental sciences, and others, by helping to understand and influence complex, real-world systems, and by providing insight into some of the most challenging problems of our time.

For this reason, data science has become extremely important at the global level, with the majority of top-tier international research and teaching institutions investing significantly in dedicated centers and programs.

Bringing experts together

The SDSC inauguration is taking place in Bern with opening remarks by ETH Zürich and EPFL presidents Lino Guzzella and Martin Vetterli, and keynote speaker Professor Jure Leskovec from Stanford University and Pinterest Chief Scientist.

One of the main challenges in this field is to help data providers, computer scientists and domain experts speak the same language. “We depend on data scientists’ unique expertise to help us pull relevant insights from masses of data. The new data science center brings these experts together, offering an interdisciplinary platform that will also promote education and knowledge transfer,” says ETH Zurich President Lino Guzzella.

Scientists at the SDSC will aim to provide sensible answers to everyday problems, with a particular focus on fields such as personalised health, environmental issues or today’s manufacturing challenges. The objective is to work on real-life applications, thus federating the various actors taking part in a data science project, and therefore bringing tangible results.

The center will host a multi-disciplinary team of 30 to 40 data and computer scientists, and experts in select domains, with offices in Lausanne and Zurich.

Developing a cutting-edge Insights Factory

It will be a true one-stop-shop for hosting, exploring and analyzing curated, calibrated and anonymised data. Its user-friendly tooling and services will also help with the adoption of Open Science, fostering research productivity and excellence.

“This new platform is a fundamental step in the development of Open Science. Scientific knowledge sharing on a broad scale requires solid, trustworthy and regulated infrastructures. With this Center, Switzerland is providing itself with the resources that matches its ambitions,” comments Martin Vetterli, EPFL President.

The online services of the SDSC will be backed by existing infrastructures of the ETH Domain (e.g. by leveraging resources at the Swiss National Supercomputing Centre CSCS in Lugano), SWITCH (the technology and service platform for Swiss Universities), as well as those of cloud providers. The SDSC will operate itself as a cloud-computing provider.

www.datascience.ch →

Further informationen

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A national initiative for Data Science

18 months ago, the ETH Board launched the initiative for Data Science in Switzerland to accelerate the adoption of data science through both an expansion of education and research, as well as the provision of infrastructure for data science users across disciplines. Data science is indeed a strategic field of research of the ETH Domain for the period 2017–2020, and the Initiative will ensure that the EPFs and Switzerland possess the necessary expertise and remain globally competitive. The initiative creates Master courses in data science at EPFL and ETH Zurich as of September 2017, as well as the Swiss Data Science Center (SDSC).

Swiss Data Science Center

The Swiss Data Science Center is a joint venture between EPFL and ETH Zurich. Its mission is to accelerate the adoption of data science and machine learning techniques within academic disciplines of the ETH Domain, the Swiss academic community at large, and the industrial sector. In particular, it addresses the gap between those who create data, those who develop data analytics and systems, and those who could potentially extract value from it. The center is composed of a large multi-disciplinary team of data and computer scientists, and experts in select domains, with offices in Lausanne and Zurich