

DARIS Vision: 2020

Data infusion: a community of secondary users.

By 2020, there should be wider and more effective use of existing quantitative and qualitative data to address research questions in the social sciences in Switzerland.

The greater availability of different types of data will facilitate more sophisticated and richer forms of analysis.

A larger body of available data will provide greater freedom of movement for researchers to address important theory-relevant topics.

There will be fewer barriers to accessing relevant data, both nationally and internationally, and access will be free and easy.

Public institutions will make their data freely available to the research community.

Researchers will make their data available to others as a matter of normal practice, and will be fully competent in making use of the data of others.

Researchers will be better skilled in data documentation, and will have a better command of issues concerning consent, confidentiality, and anonymisation.

Researchers will engage in more common projects that use existing data, and will be more closely tied in collaborative networks of use and learning.

An infrastructure backing the vision

A key mission of DARIS will be to offer an ever richer body of well documented quantitative and qualitative data that can be exploited by researchers. Greater availability of data from different sources and in different forms, coupled with more sophisticated technical platforms and tools for accessing and making use of these data, could have profound affects on how researchers do science. The project FORSbase embodies the vision of a community of data users by offering researchers a platform for easily documenting and sharing their data, while at the same time discovering and accessing the data of others.

But making greater volumes of data available to researchers and providing a technical system for deposit and access will not be sufficient for leading a change of research culture in the direction of more secondary use of data. What will be needed for real change is an intensive engagement with researchers and persistent demonstration of the advantages of data sharing and secondary analysis. Therefore, a crucial mission of DARIS until 2020 will be to conduct a range of promotional and training activities that aim to persuade researchers and prepare them to share their own data and make use of the data of others. Also, DARIS should target the next generation of researchers currently training at universities. A likely effect of these activities will be to encourage community building and collaborative projects among data producers and users. This will also be facilitated within FORSbase with its networking tools and project work spaces.