

PRESS RELEASE

Formal Launch of the Swiss Digital Initiative Foundation at the Occasion of WEF 2020

At the start of WEF 2020, the Swiss Digital Initiative Foundation celebrated its official founding and presented its first project, the development of a digital trust label. In an event jointly organised with the FDFA as part of the Geneva Day in Davos, Federal Councillors Ignazio Cassis and Ueli Maurer emphasised the importance of International Geneva on global digital governance issues and welcomed momentum from new players such as the Swiss Digital Initiative.

Davos, 21 January 2020 – The Swiss Digital Initiative (SDI), kicked-off in Geneva in September 2019 by digitalswitzerland under the patronage of the Federal Councillor Ueli Maurer, aims to anchor ethical standards in the digital world with concrete projects and make a relevant contribution to digital ethics.

Today, the SDI celebrated the founding of the Swiss Digital Initiative Foundation in a symbolic ceremony during the Geneva Day at WEF 2020. Doris Leuthard, former Federal Councillor and President of the Swiss Digital Initiative: *"New technologies should contribute to society's well-being and improve people's lives. The SDI is committed to ensure that ethical principles and values are at the heart of technological development."*

First SDI Project: Development of a Digital Trust Label

The Swiss Digital Initiative's first project tackles the topic of trust in the digital age. Consumers are increasingly concerned about the trustworthiness of digital services. They want to know what happens to their data. The Swiss Digital Trust Label aims to provide guidance and transparency to users of digital services, such as apps and websites. For companies and public institutions, the label is an opportunity to demonstrate responsibility as players in the digital space. The label could be a milestone in the development of good practices in the field of digital services and aims to encourage companies to act responsibly.

In the initial development phase, a group of academic experts from EPFL, ETH Zurich, University of Geneva and University of Zurich defined a first version of the label. This pilot version will be tested with national and international companies and public institutions starting in Spring 2020. First-mover test partners include Booking.com, Credit Suisse, IBM Switzerland, SBB, Swiss Re, Kudelski and the Canton of Vaud. The label is expected to be officially launched in 2021.

Gillian Tans, Chairwoman Booking.com: *"Companies have a responsibility to ensure secure and trustworthy digital services. Booking.com supports the Swiss Digital Initiative and will participate as a pioneer company in the development of the Digital Trust Label"*.

Urs Rohner, Chairman of Credit Suisse Group, says: *"Digitization is a continuous trend. As more and more people embrace digital products faster and faster, digital trust becomes even*

more important, not least to address the concerns of people who are still skeptical about digital services.”

Martin Vetterli, President of EPFL, adds: *“The digitally changing landscape and the current activities in cyberspace require new notions of trust, namely a clear notion of digital trust, and a label is a step in the right direction.”*

Consumer perspective on "Trust in the Digital World"

The SDI conducted a qualitative study to integrate the consumer's viewpoint from the beginning in the label development and test consumer perception of a label.

The Label aims to guarantee that a specific digital service fulfils certain conditions which will create trust from the consumer. The Label includes a list of ethical principles and a set of specifications to ensure that these principles are respected. Criteria, which form the basis of the first version of the label, are:

- Security of the service
- Reliability of the service
- Fair data management
- Responsible interactions of users

Besides academia and test partners from the public and private sectors, consumer organizations will be closely involved in the development phase of the label.

Outlook 2020

In 2020, the main focus will be the development of the Digital Trust Label. The initiative will work closely with international and national institutions and companies, as well as key players in international Geneva, including the United Nations, NGOs, the World Economic Forum (WEF), the Geneva Sciences and Diplomacy Anticipator (GESDA) and the Cyber Peace Institute.

In a trend map developed for SDI, the independent think tank [W.I.R.E.](#) identified strategic areas of action for decision-makers to foster trust and responsibility. In the next decade, we will face more individual empowerment, increased convenience, new communities, and higher security, but we also have to prepare for data-driven intransparencies, algorithmic discrimination, loss of control, and the erosion of privacy. Based on these findings, SDI aims to explore new projects and measures in the future.

About the Swiss Digital Initiative

The Swiss Digital Initiative is a long-term, sustainable process to safeguard ethical standards in the digital world through concrete projects. It brings together academia, government, civil society and business to find solutions to strengthen trust in digital technologies and in the actors involved in ongoing digital transformation.

The initiative has a global focus and is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. It was initiated by digitalswitzerland and Federal Councillor Ueli Maurer.

About [digitalswitzerland](#)

digitalswitzerland is the joint initiative of the economic and academic spheres and the public authorities aimed at shaping Switzerland into a leading international digital innovation hub. To this end, digitalswitzerland is already active in a wide range of fields such as collaboration, knowledge transfer, education, start-up ecosystems and the political framework. More than 160 of the best-known companies and organisations as well as innovative locations throughout Switzerland belong to the association. The initiative was launched in 2015.

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