Building a community for Research Software Engineers @ ETH Zurich

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deRSE24, 7th of March 2024

Who are we?

- https://sis.id.ethz.ch
- Scientific IT Services of ETH Zurich, 10 years old
- Research IT group (~50 people):
  - RSE
  - Data science
  - HPC
  - Trainings and Consultings
  - Trusted Research Environments
  - Part of central IT

A bit of history

Source: https://rsecon2022.society-rse.org/ (CC BY 4.0 Deed)

RSECon UK - 5-7 September 2023 - Swansea

EnhanceR Symposium 2023

Research Software Engineering

Join our second edition of a yearly meeting of research IT specialists, organized by the EnhanceR association!

Date

EnhanceR Symposium is a full-day event on **Oct 18th, 2023.**

Event Format

An in-person event for members of the Swiss research IT community, this symposium provides a platform for professionals to meet, network, and exchange knowledge.

Dive deep into the trends of the field, collaborate on shared challenges, and present your innovative projects in engaging show-and-tell sessions.

Take the opportunity to share both success and failure stories, learn from your colleagues, and collaborate on shaping the future of research software engineering in Swiss academia.

Focus Areas

- **Research Software Engineering**
  - Algorithm improvements
  - Security in research code
  - Usability challenges (UI/UX, APIs)
  - Code custodianship
- **Challenges and Opportunities**
  - How to make research IT work
  - A day in the life of a research IT unit
  - Case analysis for success and failure stories
  - Effective outreach to the research community

This list is not exhaustive and serves only as examples of topics of interest.

Source: https://www.enhancer.ch/

2022 - RSE Con UK Newcastle - **Why don't we have this in Switzerland?**

September 2023 - RSE Con UK Swansea - **Why don't we have this in Switzerland?**

October 2023 - EnhanceR symposium – **Why don't we have this in Switzerland?**

If no one else is doing it, then **why not us?**

RSE community @ ETH: first steps

- Mail campaign (~7800 emails!) on 23rd of November

  - First personal message at UK slack within one hour.

  - Maybe we get 50 people together for regular meetups

- Announced 1st online information event on 12th of December

1st online information event

- Around 120 participants

- 2 parts:

    1. Talk by Prof. Simon Hettrick (Software Sustainability Institute UK)

    2. Information on community building @ ETH

        - RSE community survey

        - Q&A

Which department / institutions are your from?

Results of RSE community survey

IAC
ETH Zurich, D-CHAB   PSI (CPT)
DBM
DBAUG   DMATH UniBasel
DITET
Library   DMAVT Eawag
DCHAB   DPHYS DUSYS   DHEST MeteoSwiss
ETH IfU
Dbiol ethz
DMATL   ERDW   SIS WSL   DINFK
ETH Zurich, D-USYS   Materials Science
DGESS   DERDW   DBIOL UCL ARC   EAWAGUCHEM
Dept. of Earth Sciences

13 out of 16 ETH Zurich departments represented!

First on-site event: 1st of February

- **Part 1: Lightning talks:**

- **Part 2: Talk by Mr. Peter Schmidt**

- **Part 3: Discussion rounds in small groups:**

  - What do you expect from the RSE community?
  - What kind of role do you imagine for yourself in this community?
  - How can we build the community?

Reactions:

- **EPFL Lausanne**: we also want to do something!
- **KOF Swiss Economic Institute**: We were just about to set up something of our own!

- 280 members on mailing list
- ~80 on matrix chat
- ~65 at first on-site event

Ongoing / future activities

ETH Domain

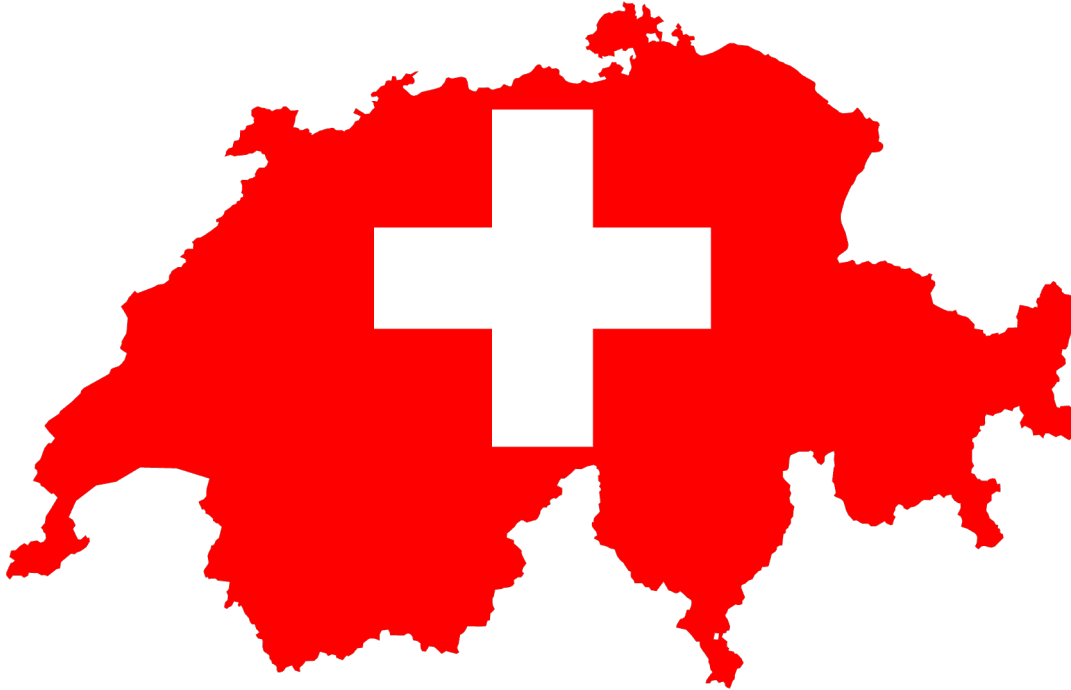# Funding

- We submitted a pre-proposal for funding by ORD-CH

    - Setup network of RSE ambassadors in ETH Domain
    - Work towards Swiss RSE association.

Next event: 12th of March, online

- Overview of latest activities

- Suggest working groups:

    - Event planning

    - Outreach, RSE ambassadors in institutes

    - RSE education

- Lightning talks + Technical presentation

Swiss RSESoc? When? How?

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