

RISE Newsletter February 2025

Dear colleagues

In our latest newsletter we would like to inform you about our newly updated crash course program, changes in the team, our mailing list and our services.

RISE mailing list

There is an official RISE mailing list that you can join via <https://www.maillist.unibas.ch/mailman/listinfo/rise>. Please be advised that you have to be within the network of the University of Basel or use its VPN to access the site.

Going forward, we will use the mailing list to distribute our newsletter, which we send out 2-3 times a year.

Updated courses and workshops on AI

Since we first introduced our AI crash course series in October 2024 the AI landscape has changed significantly. Not only did the big US providers publish the latest more powerful commercial versions of their large language models (LLMs) and services, but more open models from other global players from the US, Europe and China were published as well. These models are now mature enough that it is worth having a closer look and see where they can be used productively in research projects within our university. The advantage of some of these models is that they might even run locally on your computer or on dedicated hardware at Basel university and therefore do not transfer data to third parties. Our updated crash courses will take these changes into account.

For a deeper dive in Open-Source LLMs we recommend the workshop and symposium (https://cdsbasel.github.io/LLM4BeSci_2025Unibas/) taking place on February 10-12, 2025, at the Faculty of Psychology, University of Basel.

With so many new models and providers around it is hard to keep track and even harder to decide which models are best for tasks within your research projects. Therefore we are currently implementing a benchmarking environment for common data extraction tasks in the Humanities and Social Sciences at Basel University. This will give you the opportunity to make decisions based on more than the anecdotal chat-bot trial or very general benchmarking leaderboards. We will present our first findings from the implementation process in our latest revision of the benchmarking AI crash course.

The AI crash course series is now open for registration (<https://rise.unibas.ch/en/news-events/>) and includes

- Practical Basics of AI/LLM, Wednesday, February 26th, 1400-1600
- Practical Basics of AI via API, Wednesday, March 5th, 1400-1600
- AI Benchmarking, Wednesday, March 19th, 1400-1600
- Coding with AI, Wednesday, April 2nd, 1400-1600
- AI Workshop: Bring Your Own Data, Wednesday, April 9th, 1300-1700

Nodegoat workshop with the developers

We are excited to announce DaSCH & RISE are conducting an introduction to working with Nodegoat on February 14th. Nodegoat is an online research environment that allows researchers to create a highly customizable database for their project. The workshop will demonstrate the basics of data modelling and the various analysis and visualization options. The strengths of Nodegoat lie in the analysis of networks over space and time. The workshop will be held in English on-site at the Kollegienhaus by the development team and is primarily aimed at researchers from the humanities and social sciences. Please sign up for the three-hour workshop at <https://rise.unibas.ch/en/event/details/nodegoat-workshop-1/>

RISE crash courses

In addition to the AI course series, we once again offer a suite of crash courses on research tools and methods. This semester's program (<https://rise.unibas.ch/en/news-events/>) includes:

- Data visualization with RStudio, Tuesday March 4th, 1000-1200 (online)
- Network analysis with Gephi, Friday March 14th, 0900-1100 (online)
- Automated text recognition with Transkribus, Monday March 17th, 1400-1600 (online)
- Source management with Tropy, Friday March 21st, 0900-1100 (online)
- Version control and documentation with GitHub, Friday March 28th, 0900-1100 (online)
- TEI and scholarly editions, Friday, April 11th, 0900-1200 (online)

For more detail and course registration please visit our website (<https://rise.unibas.ch/en/>). All courses are also available as project training upon request (rise@unibas.ch).

Farewell Elena

We are both proud and a little bit wistful to announce that Elena Spadini will be leaving us to conduct her own research project at the University of Bern, starting in March. Elena joined RISE in February 2022 and has been an integral part of the team, both through her work with edition projects and her courses and workshops on TEI and scholarly editing. Having secured a prestigious starting grant by the SNF, Elena will be leaving us to pursue her own project about born digital literary archives. While we are sad to see her go, we are thrilled for the incredible opportunity that lies ahead of her and wish her the very best in this new chapter of her career.

In order to guarantee a smooth transition, the position of José Luis Losada Palenzuela was increased. He will take over responsibilities from Elena and will be your first point of contact in the fields of linguistics, literature and editions.

Towards a sustainable research support infrastructure

With the departure of Thomas Schmidt at the end of July 2022, Eric Decker has taken over the management of RISE on an interim basis from 1 August 2022. Also thanks to the great preparatory work of Thomas, we have steadily expanded our range of services since then and have grown even closer together as a team. We are therefore all the more pleased that the Rectorate has recognized the achievements of RISE in its decision of 2 July 2024 (<https://www.unibas.ch/dam/jcr:63d6789a-d387-4cbe-a500-bfaca0e31028/RB-2024-27-143.pdf>) and has consequently approved the allocation of the strategic funds earmarked for RISE beyond 1 September 2026. RISE's permanent extension is linked to the condition that the Quality Development team carries out a content evaluation in the autumn semester of 2025.

In order to further advance the formal appointment process in a transparent manner, the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences has advertised the management position (<https://jobs.unibas.ch/offene-stellen/leitung-research-and-infrastructure-support-einheit-rise/9445c11c-cab2-4af1-828b-ee726c405d6d>). This will end the status of interim director and give Eric and all other candidates the opportunity to apply for the director position.

Consulting

Of course, we continue to offer our regular research support to members of the university. We offer consulting for all project phases starting in the proposal and with the preparation of data management plans.

Implementation Service

At RISE, we offer comprehensive support for implementing digital workflows across various stages of your project. Our team can assist with data modeling, helping you set up digital data structures such as databases or XML schemas. We also provide expertise in workflow management, helping to automate and reorganize tasks for greater efficiency. When it comes to data cleaning and transformation, we can help you eliminate inconsistencies or convert data between formats. Our services also include data annotation, using automatic processes to enrich your data with additional information, and we can assist with data analysis, including quantification and statistical analysis. Additionally, we support data visualization, helping you create clear and impactful visual representations of your data.

While we do not operate our own technical infrastructure for data storage or running applications, we are available to advise you on these matters. Our implementation services (<https://rise.unibas.ch/en/services>) are charged at a rate of 80 CHF per hour.

Training materials and code

You can find training materials, papers and open source code in our Zenodo community (https://zenodo.org/communities/rise_unibas/about) and Github repos (<https://github.com/RISE-UNIBAS>).

We are looking forward to seeing you in our crash courses and please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Best wishes,

the RISE team