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Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv BAR
Archives fédérales suisses AFS
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Swiss Federal Archives SFA

Swiss Confederation

DATA CHALLENGE

At the Swiss Federal Archives, we're looking for creative ways to improve access to our documents.
Take up the SFA's data challenge!

Write an app using our data search API and maybe we'll incorporate it into the Federal Archives' online access platform.



Upload your app to **GitLab** or **GitHub** and send an e-mail to **bundesarchiv@bar.admin.ch**.

The participants in the most exciting projects will be invited to the Federal Archives.



The challenge opens on **18 May 2020** and closes on **18 August 2020**.



Contact for questions:
bundesarchiv@bar.admin.ch

1 SFA data challenge

At the Swiss Federal Archives (SFA), we're looking for creative ways to improve access to our documents. Take up the SFA's data challenge! Write an app using our data search API and maybe we'll incorporate it into the Federal Archives' online access platform.

Online access, which went live at the end of 2019, enables millions of freely accessible data sets from the Federal Archives catalogue to be searched and filtered using an **API**. You decide what the app does with the data: for example, you can develop a graphic search engine that links search results to metadata from other archives or libraries, or design a conversational agent. Two actual examples can be found in section 3. Help us improve access to the treasures of the Federal Archives!

Applications can be submitted until 18 August 2020. Upload your app to **GitLab** or **GitHub** and send an e-mail to **bundesarchiv@bar.admin.ch** containing the following information:

1. Details of the project:

- Names, addresses and e-mail addresses of participants
- Link to the project (GitHub / GitLab)
- Link to the web app (if available)

2. Brief description of the project (max. 1 A4 page)

3. Answers to the following questions:

- Can the Federal Archives' data be used?
- Is the technical access usable?
- Where can improvements be made?
- Is there anything completely missing??
- How can the Federal Archives help data analysts exploit the data?

1.1 Our data

The Swiss Federal Archives hold documents from the Federal Administration, the Federal Assembly and the Federal Council, from foreign resident dossiers and parliamentary debates to customs treaties and trade agreements. In most cases, the online catalogue contains only brief metadata on the documents that are kept in our stacks: the title, reference code, creation period and accessibility under the Federal Act on Archiving (**ArchA, SR 152.1**). Some fonds are described in greater detail in the metadata: one example is the **Schweizer Filmwochenschau**, where transcripts of the spoken texts are also catalogued.

The search API accesses the catalogue's structured metadata. Documentation on the API can be

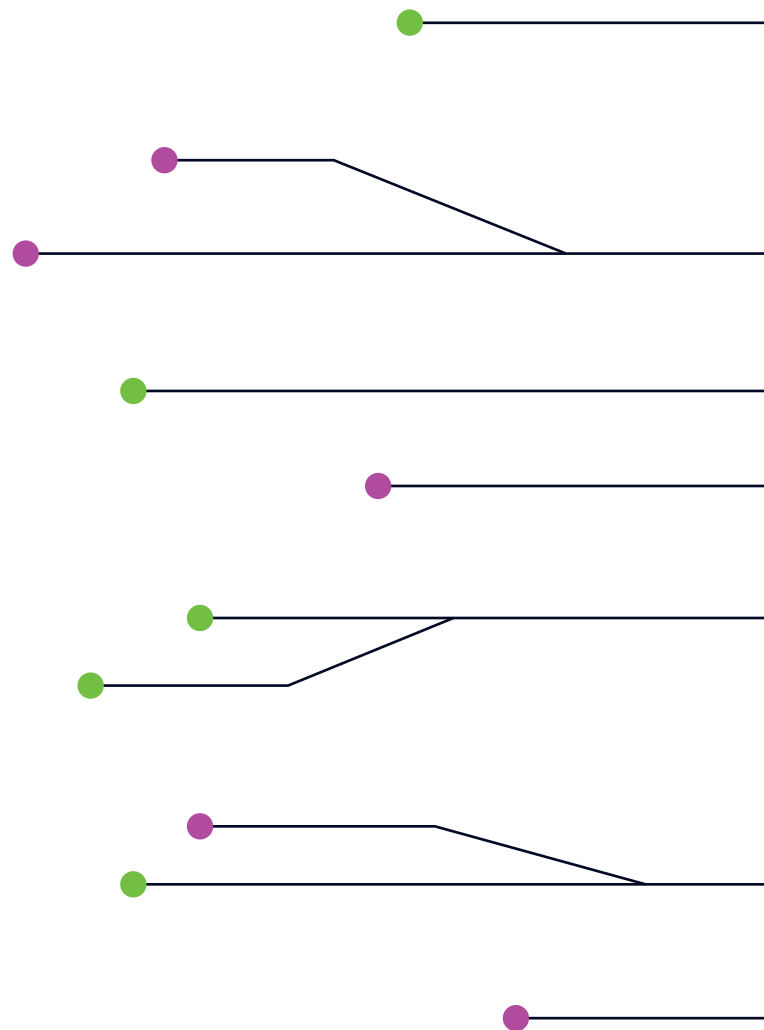
found here: www.recherche.bar.admin.ch/recherche/#/en/information/api

The number of results per search request is limited to 10,000. For this reason, the app should be designed for a specific topic or for certain search functionalities rather than attempting to capture the data as a whole.

1.2 Incentive

The participants in the most exciting projects (max. 25 people) will be invited to the Federal Archives. They will receive an exclusive guided tour of the archives and the opportunity to meet other challenge participants and staff of the Archives at a drinks reception. The date will be set as soon as it is clear that the restrictions associated with COVID-19 are going to be eased.

Selected submissions will also be presented on our online channels. We may also contact individual developers or teams to integrate the functionalities into our offering. A payment will be made if this leads to a collaboration.



2 Formal considerations

2.1 Conditions

Participation is open to individuals, teams and companies. Submissions can be designed as a web app or desktop application. To qualify, they must be usable on a standard Windows 10 installation and the code must be made accessible with an open-source license on **GitLab** or **GitHub**. For web apps we require a link to the app. For local apps, please also upload installation instructions to the Git repository.

2.2 Jury and assessment criteria

The projects submitted will be assessed by a jury made up of members of Federal Archives staff from both the technical and historical / archival science fields.

We look forward to receiving entries that enable existing archive users or another target audience to access data from our catalogue in a different way from the options available via **www.recherche.bar.admin.ch**.

The jury will assess the entries on the basis of the following criteria:

- Does the application have a clear objective?
- Are the data processed using an innovative and creative approach? Does the application expand on the search options available on **www.recherche.bar.admin.ch**?
- Is the application user-friendly?

2.3 Time period

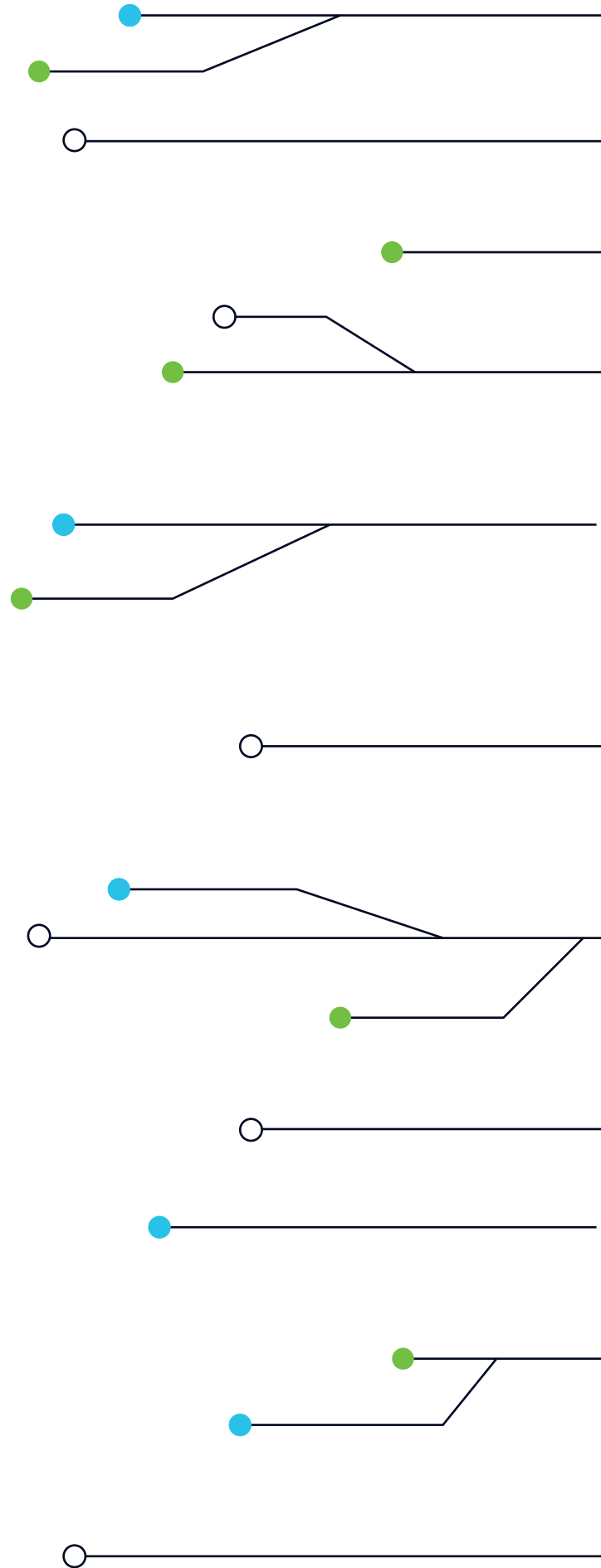
The challenge opens on 18 May 2020 and closes on 18 August 2020.

The jury's decision will be announced in mid-September 2020.

Subject to the situation, the challenge will end with a visit to the Federal Archives some time during 2020.

2.4 Contact

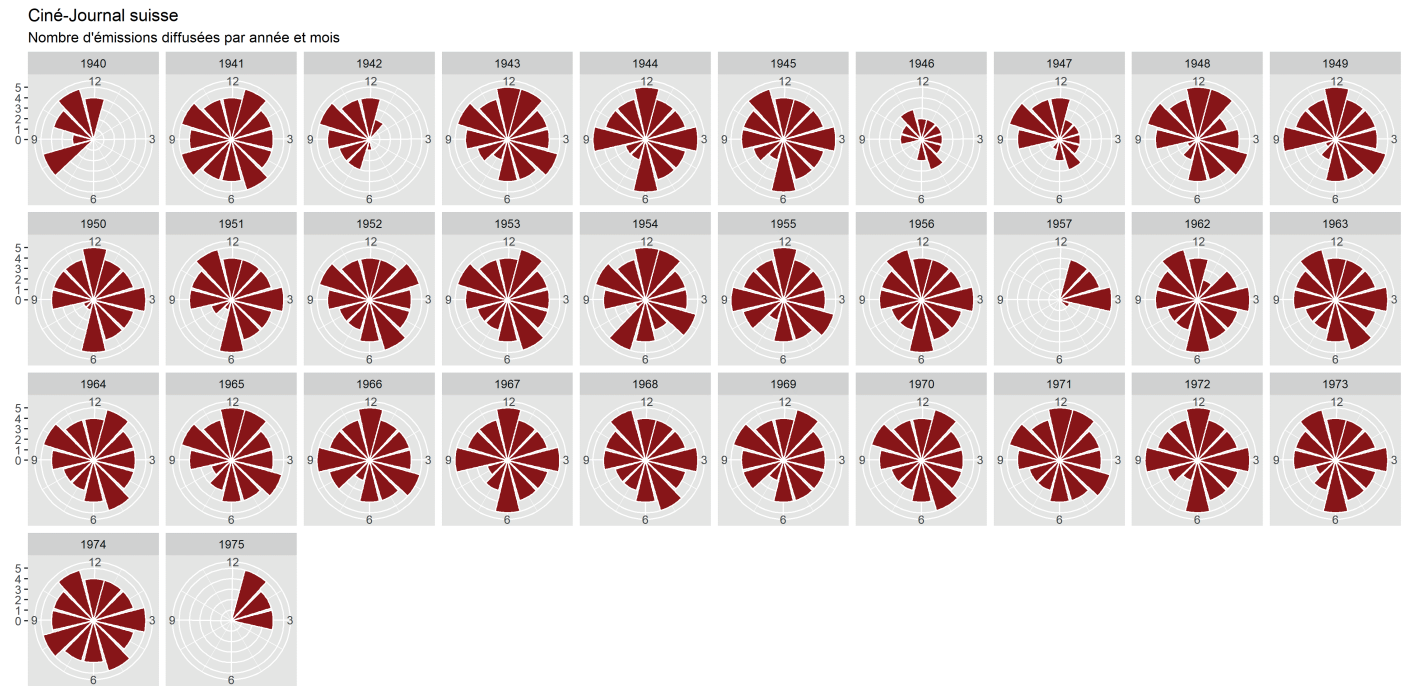
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3 Examples

3.1 The Cinematographic Journal

This small app fetches SFA metadata pertaining to the Swiss Cinematographic Journal, and shows the number of documentaries shown per year and month. The R code is available here: <https://gitlab.com/SwissFederalArchives/data-search-api-workshop>



Source: Archives Fédérales Suisses

3.2 The Conversational Agent

The Swiss Federal Archives provide a beta Chatbot service, which can be used directly on the main search portal (www.recherche.bar.admin.ch). Among other things, this conversational agent can accomplish searches via Search API.

You can test the Chatbot here: <https://chatbot.bar.smartive.cloud/>

The source code of the Chatbot is not available but the following behavior can be imitated by using our Data Search API.

