

Launch of the “Constitutions Time Machine” project - a Time Machine of the Valais Constitutions until 2107 - at Swissnex San Francisco

San Francisco, November 6, 2018

Conexkt, the Valais State Archives and various institutional partners, including the University of Zurich, the University of Fribourg, and the HES-SO Valais-Wallis are launching the “Constitutions Time Machine” project, which aims to create a digital analysis and visualisation tool bringing together various constitutions of the canton of Valais until 2107. This information platform will be able to help crafting of constitutional articles. It will be previewed at Swissnex San Francisco¹ on November 8, 2018.

Background

On 4 March 2018, citizen of Valais agreed to renew their Constitution of 1907 through a Constitutional assembly. On 24 November 2018, 130 representatives will be elected to write a new constitution for the canton. This work will start in December for a period of 4 years. The draft constitution will then be submitted to a popular vote.

Vision

In order to offer a digital analysis tool to support the elected body, the “Constitutions - Time Machines” (CTM) project aims to create a digital platform bringing together the various constitutions of Valais through the ages, as well as the archives of parliamentary debates that took place before the crystallization of a constitutional article. The purpose of this platform is to explore and better understand the links between constitutional and legislative articles. In a second step, comparative work with other constitutions is planned. Finally, a rigorous prospective analysis system will be developed. Its objectives is to explore the possible future consequences of certain constitutional articles and to guide the crafting of a constitutional articles not only from the past, but also from the possible futures that it will have to take into account.

Goals

- ☐ Creation of a prospective and decision-making tool
- ☐ Creation of a tool available to the general public and the media
- ☐ Shed new light on archives and old constitutions
- ☐ Explore the possibility of creating a link with the [Sion Time Machine](#)
- ☐ Promote science and archival work
- ☐ Encourage reflection on digital democracy
- ☐ Creation of a digital art installation that aims to be a point of dialogue between science (law, computer science, history, future studies), policy and the general public

¹ Swissnex is "the Swiss global network for education, research and innovation" and "an initiative of the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation. See: <https://www.swissnex.org/>

CONSTITUTIONS.CH

Machine temporelle des Constitutions du Valais

Time machine VS 1907-2107

Prototype: <http://constitutions.ch>

This project is part of the international context of digital democracy. One of the project's co-initiators, Johann Roduit, was invited to present it at Swissnex San Francisco as part of a conference aimed at exploring the importance of science communication in public policy development.

Quotes

For **Alain Dubois**: "This project of analysing constitutions over time is very interesting, because it makes it possible to detect links in the elaboration of constitutional articles. In particular, it shows how the 1907 constitution made it possible to set certain milestones and accompanied the development of the Canton of Valais during the first half of the 20th century."

Johann Roduit adds: "Our new constitution should also open up new fields of possibilities. This is an opportunity for Valais to be a key player in the digital revolution. To my knowledge, the use of desirable futures in the construction of constitutional articles is a first. We are in the midst of a digital revolution. We could explore how to use the new tools this revolution gives us."

Partners Partners

- ❑ Archives of the State of Valais, for the "historical" section
- ❑ The Digital Democracy Laboratory at the University of Zurich, for the "present" component, <https://digdemlab.github.io/>
- ❑ Haute école de gestion de Genève (HEG-Genève), for the "future" component
- ❑ Datastory sàrl, for visualization
- ❑ HES-SO Valais-Wallis and the University of Fribourg, for data analysis and management
- ❑ Conexkt sàrl, for project management

Links to other websites

- ❑ Project website: <https://www.constitutions.ch/>
- ❑ Prototype: <http://datastory.ch/constitutions-time-machine/>
- ❑ Preview at Swissnex San Francisco: <https://www.swissnexsanfrancisco.org/event/scicomm-studio-013-can-science-save-democracy/>
- ❑ Feasibility study: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1juUJdhaWJl-veZILqn9qhakr4-T7aXR2/view>

Visuals

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gRliLnPbV08i-b1rUZpsfJUygdQSwfux/view?usp=sharing>

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