

DTL 2017 Grant Program handbook

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1. What is the Data Transparency Lab Grants Program 2017?

The Data Transparency Lab (DTL) is a collaborative effort between universities, businesses and institutions to support research in tools, data, and methodologies for shedding light on the use of personal data by online services, and to empower users to be in control of their personal data online.

DTL will award in 2017 up to 6 research grants for a gross amount sum of up to 50,000 Euro per grant to academic institutions worldwide. Through this program, DTL aims to support projects whose output will be made openly available to the research community.

The criteria for applications and further information about the application process are described in this document.

2. Key Dates for DTL Grants Program 2017

The DTL Grants program has been organized as a set of stages with associated deadlines, as detailed below:

- Call for proposals opening date: March 15th, 2017.
- Proposal Submission deadline: May 10th, 2017 (11:59 pm), Madrid (CEST) time.
- Notification of grants awarded: June 15th 2017.

Call for Proposals

This is our third Call for Proposals, part of our Grants Program, through which DTL supports the development of technologies that foster privacy and transparency online.

Applications will only be considered for the review and evaluation phase if they have been submitted following the Proposal Guidelines and have been received by DTL before the submission date. Proposal documents should be submitted as a single PDF file along with applicant information on our HotCRP submission site: <https://dtlresearch.tid.es/dtl2017>

For any questions or issues, please contact DTL at grants@datatransparencylab.org

Proposal evaluation and notification of acceptance

Once received by DTL, applications will go through a comprehensive evaluation process carried out by the following committee of experts:

In alphabetical order

- Committee Chairs: Claude Castelluccia (INRIA) and Nikolaos Laoutaris (Telefónica)
- Committee Members:
 - Jose Luis Agundez - AT&T (US)
 - Nataliia Bielova INRIA (France)
 - Joe Calandrino - Federal Trade Commission (US)
 - David Choffnes - Northeastern University (US)
 - Yves-Alexandre De Montjoye - Imperial College London (UK)
 - Phillipa Gill – University of Massachusetts Amherst (US)
 - Oana Goga - Max Planck Institute for Software Systems (Germany)
 - Saikat Guha- Microsoft Research (India)
 - Krishna Gummadi - Max Planck Institute for Software Systems (Germany)
 - Antonio Guzman – Telefónica (Spain)
 - Hamed Haddadi - Queen Mary University of London (UK)

- Marit Hansen - Unabhängiges Landeszentrum für Datenschutz Schleswig-Holstein (Germany)
- Jaap-Henk Hoepman - Radboud University Nijmegen (Holland)
- Demosthenes Ikonomou - European Union Agency for Network & Information Security (Greece)
- Balachander Krishnamurthy - AT&T Labs Research (US)
- Nick Nikiforakis - Stony Brook University (US)
- Javier Parra Arnau - Universitat Rovira i Virgili (Spain)
- Sylvain Peyronnet - Qwant (France)
- Josep Maria Pujol – Cliqz (Germany)
- Salvatore Ruggieri - Università di Pisa (Italy)
- Vincent Toubiana - Commission Nationale de l'Informatique et des Libertés (CNIL) (France)
- Christo Wilson - Northeastern University (US)
- Joss Wright – Oxford Internet Institute (UK)

Upon approval of the grant awards by the Steering Committee as proposed by the Research Committee, the grantees will receive a formal notification from the Committee Chairs.

The decision will be communicated to the Principal Investigator listed on each proposal and will also be announced on the DTL website www.datatransparencylab.org.

Grants assignment and contract signatures

Once the successful applicants have been sent an award notification, a set of individual processes will begin with each granted institution to complete the necessary legal and administrative steps to transfer funds. Data Transparency Lab cannot guarantee to provide individual feedback on proposals not selected for funding.

Throughout the process, DTL will be providing email support via grants@datatransparencylab.org

3. Eligibility and requirements

The Data Transparency Lab funding will generally be structured as unrestricted gifts to universities and academic institutions, and overhead should not be assessed over them.

The grants are aimed towards fully or partly supporting the work of a Principal Investigator (PI) and at least one PhD student or postdoc for approximately 1 year. Generally, each grant will not exceed a gross amount of 50,000 euros.

We do allow applications from professors at non-for-profit research institutions (*e.g.* degree-granting research universities and institutions).

There are no limits on the number of proposals that can be submitted by different PIs (or co-PIs) from the same university.

Joint proposals by co-PIs from more than one institution are encouraged, but the whole funding will be allocated and delivered to one of them acting on behalf of the other institution/s. In this case the proposal must appoint the institution charged to receive the funding to the first institution listed in the author's list of the proposal.

The primary PI on a proposal will remain as the point of contact for all communications regarding the proposal, including funding decisions. All emails regarding the application will go to the primary PI, who is responsible for notifying any co-PIs and university administrators if needed.

The Data Transparency Lab Grants Program is designed to support roughly one year of work. The DTL Grants Program will not generally fund consecutive years for a Research Grant Project.

Data Transparency Lab Grants Program for 2015 had an acceptance rate of roughly 10%.

Restrictions:

All Grants payments and recipients will be reviewed for compliance with all relevant EU, US and international laws, regulations and policies. The Data Transparency Lab reserves the right to withhold funding that may violate any laws or regulations. The above-mentioned gross amount may be subject to specific local tax deductions according to each destination country regulation. Institutions whose tax residence country is listed in EU or US tax-haven lists are not eligible to receiving a grant under the Data Transparency Lab Grants Program.

Documents:

The awarded institutions will sign a legal document proposed by any of the DTL partner institutions acting on behalf of the DTL, regulating the delivery of the grant. The signature of this document is a necessary condition to be beneficiary of the grant. The institutions awarded must fulfil all conditions about the process to receive the grant. The non-fulfilment of conditions included in the mentioned document shall be cause of refusal of the grant.

4. Grant budgeted amounts

The awards have been designed to cover a gross amount of up to 50,000 Euros/year per grant.

5. Grant Research topics

On submission, proposals should be categorized in one or several of the following list of topics and areas enumerated below. This is not an exhaustive list, but will be used by the Research Committee to categorize the proposals.

A necessary requirement for all proposals is that they aim to build a tangible tool or platform, which would be used by one or more specific audiences (end users, regulators, etc.), to be delivered in due time by the end of a maximum time window of 12 months from the start of the project. Such tools aim at letting these audiences understand, at different levels and scales, the flow and usage of personal data online (e.g.: Browser plugin, interactive visualizations, auditing tool/platforms, etc.).

DTL also encourages projects whose output will be made available to the public and to the Data Transparency Lab research community, by means of publishing data sets or publishing code via open source licenses. The DTL Technical Program (see www.datatransparencylab.org/techprogram) will support such open source outreach activities.

Privacy-related topics:

- Detection and analysis of algorithmic bias and discrimination, personal filter-bubbles, societal polarization, etc.
- Detection and analysis of fake news and other manipulation techniques through social and other media.
- Detection and analysis of large scale censorship/filtering efforts.
- Detection and analysis of anti-competitive practices in online platforms.

- Detection and analysis of large scale (commercial or governmental) surveillance/monitoring efforts.
- Detection and analysis of geoblocking in e-commerce, content distribution services, etc.
- Detection and analysis of tracking, including advanced finger-printing methods.
- Detection of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) leakage.
- Detection and analysis of online behavioral targeting on advertising, search, recommendation, etc.
- Detection and analysis of location tracking.
- Detection and analysis of cross device/platform tracking.
- Reverse engineering online pricing (e-commerce, spot/surge pricing for cloud, transportation, accommodation and other services).
- Transparency of physical location where personal data are stored as well as of network paths crossed during transfers.
- Transparency challenges around new crypto-currencies and blockchain technologies.
- Transparency of Artificial Intelligence and Machine learning algorithms.
- Explainable Artificial Intelligence.
- HCI challenges in demonstrating transparency/privacy/algorithmic bias concepts to user.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Awarded applicants terms and conditions

Successful applicants are expected to present their ongoing work in the annual DTL Conference by the end of 2017, make their software available online (by the end of the 12 months after receiving the grant, at the latest), and acknowledge the funding source on their Project websites and communications when appropriate. Reporting obligations will be minimal and successful applicants will be eligible to apply for additional follow up funding to further curate their tool.

A list of awardees will be made public on DTL websites and the Principal PI will receive notification through the email address declared in the proposal. Note: If awarded a grant, a project abstract/overview proposal may be published on DTL websites, unless applicants request the contrary.

The Data Transparency Lab will strongly encourage a fluid flow of information between the DTL Research Committee and the PI, by acting as receptor of any intermediate results that the PI may choose to share.

If a proposal is selected for funding, a designated contact from DTL is expected to do the following:

- Act as point of contact for PI for questions related to Data Transparency Lab activities or the Project.
- Receive and share with Data Transparency Lab copies of papers or publications produced by the research that the PI may choose to share.
- Invite PI or student to participate in DTL-community organized activities and presentations that contribute the dissemination of their work among research and other user communities.

In addition to this, applicants are highly encouraged to publicize that they participate in the Data Transparency Lab Research Grants Program on their personal websites and/or social media channels.

Role and responsibilities for Grant Program Committee Chairs

In addition to selecting the research topics of interest, and evaluating the proposals, the Research Committee Chairs for DTL Research Grants will be expected to oversee DTL research work in 2017. Before final selection of applications, call submissions will be taken to the Data Transparency Lab's Steering Committee for approval of grant assignments.

Possible conflicts of interest with the Steering and/or Research Committee members will be handled and collected during the submission and the review process.

Role of Steering Committee and escalation process

Data Transparency Lab's Board of Directors, composed by one representative per Founding Member, is the Grants Program Steering Committee. The Steering Committee shall set an overall policy and provide strategic guidance and review DTL Research Program Task Force activities, including the final assignment of grants to academic partners, the allocation of resources and other policy statements issued in the form of "DTL Recommendation" documents. All policy documents will be posted on the DTL website (www.datatransparencylab.org).

7. Grant proposal format

The application process includes filling out an online form requesting some basic information at the submission site, as well as uploading a PDF proposal via this online form.

As part of the online form, applicants will be requested to select a topic area from a subset of several areas. Applicants are encouraged to select carefully, as this will help the DTL Research Committee to assign the appropriate proposal reviewers.

Data Transparency Lab Grants PDF proposal files shall contain the following:

- An abstract or overview of the proposal. Note: If awarded a grant, a project abstract/overview proposal may be published on DTL websites, unless applicants request the contrary.
- A proposal body (length should not exceed 3 pages with a minimum font size of 9pt) clearly describing:
 - What will the produced software tool do?
 - Who will benefit from using it (end user, regulators, data protection authorities, privacy / anti-discrimination activists)?
 - What is the intended plan for recruiting users?
 - What is the novelty & technical excellence of the proposal?
 - Justify the technical expertise of the applicants in the area.
 - Deliverables that will be produced and what you intend to do with these (*i.e.* developing a tool or platform, releasing a dataset, platform, publishing as open source code, etc.). Please note that one of the main goals of DTL Grants Program is to support work whose output will be made available to the broader research community. However, any such declaration will not legally bind applicants because DTL grants are awarded as unrestricted gifts.

Formatting is up to applicants (margins etc.), but the total length should not exceed 3 pages (with a minimum font size of 9pt).

- Applicants should also include a PDF of the CV of the Principal Investigator and main student (2 pages each) in the proposal.

Both documents (proposal body PDF and CVs) should be submitted as a single PDF file along with the

information of the applicants at the Telefónica HotCRP submission site of DTL at <https://dtlresearch.tid.es/dtl2017>.

Please note that we cannot under any circumstances accept proposals that contain confidential or proprietary information.

8. Proposal evaluation criteria

The proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Relevance of the research to the Data Transparency Lab research areas (as set forth at: <http://www.datatransparencylab.org/grants-program.html>)
- Potential to produce software tools and platforms that enable end-users to better understand or control how their data is being collected and used in deployed online services.
- Potential to release datasets to the research community, or publish code as open source license.
- Ground-breaking potential and innovative approach of the proposed research work.
- Potential societal or business impact of the research trajectory on the overall area of personal data transparency.
- Potential for the research to inform other work / lead to opportunities for further research and insights.

9. Postdoc positions [NEW!]

In addition to the standard DTL Call for Projects, INRIA, Queen Mary University of London and other academic affiliates of DTL will fund up to 3 grants to work on one of the DTL topics (see above for non-exhaustive list).

The nature of the expected work is to contribute to the research of data and/or algorithmic transparency. Although the development of an experimental prototype would be appreciated, it is not a requirement for this position.

Candidates must have defended their PhD thesis in Computer Science (or related topics) at the beginning of the contract of employment. The application must include:

- A main description, of up to 3 pages (9pt font), of the research statement and its relevance to DTL.
- The candidate's CV, a list of the candidate's publications as well as the two most significant publications provided in full.
- The names of 2 references.

Both documents should be submitted as a single PDF file along with the information of the applicants at the submission site of DTL at: www.datatransparencylab.org.

The selected post-doc will be paid and hosted by either INRIA, in Grenoble or Lyon, France, or QMUL in London, UK, and she/he will have the opportunity to visit other DTL partners.

Applicants should indicate which postdoc they are applying for in both their application documents and through the relevant field in the application form.

- For more information about the INRIA post-doctoral program visit:
<https://www.inria.fr/en/institute/recruitment/offers/post-doctoral-research-fellowships/post-doctoral-research-fellowships>).
- For more information about the QMUL postdoctoral program visit:
<http://www.databoxproject.uk/jobs/>