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The Data Rescue @ Home Project

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Climate science as a whole as well as reanalyses as a special case can significantly profit from the recovery, imaging and digitisation of historical observations. The importance of this fact is reflected in large, global data rescue projects and initiatives such as the Atmospheric Circulation Reconstructions over the Earth (ACRE, www.met-acre.org) or the EU FP7 ERA-CLIM project (www.era-clim.eu). From the time before 1957, there are still large amounts of surface data e.g. from former colonies and from overseas territories of European countries (e.g. Portugal, France and Germany) that need to be rescued. Also in case of the very early upper-air observations before the 1930s, even Europe and North America still hold an important quantity of data to be recovered in digital form.

Here, we present the web platform "Data Rescue @ Home" (www.data-rescue-at-home.org), which has been developed at ETH Zurich and Oeschger Centre for Climate Change Research, and which has been designed to take advantage of the voluntary assistance of the thousands of people on the web who are interested in climate or old weather data. On the website, these volunteers can enter meteorological data shown on digital images into entry masks that resemble the original. By registering, the users get access to their personal digitisation statistics and help optimising the project.

At the moment, 4 digitisation projects are online: One project is dealing with German upper-air data from the Second World War period. In a second project, station data from Tulagi (Solomon Islands) is being digitised. Finally, two collaborative projects have been included: One in cooperation with the Instituto Dom Luiz (Univ. Lisbon, Portugal), where Portuguese station data from Angra (Azores) is digitised, and a further one in cooperation with the German Meteorological Service (DWD), in which precipitation data from former German colonies is being digitised. On our poster, we will report on the status of the projects, technical details of the data preparation, and give examples of how the platform can be used by external partners to digitise large amounts of data at relatively low cost.