"My research needs rather a lot of computing power. So I use SWITCHengines, also for some of my teaching. It is protected and I can reconfigure the necessary tools very easily when I need to."

– Tara Andrews, Professor of Digital Humanities

My Research
I teach six courses a year. Two focus on theory, the other four on technical skills, including Python programming and the use of tools and techniques from a variety of disciplines. Students learn, for example, how to create a map or a chart from a data series. In the theory course, we look at how technology is transforming the challenges we face and the risks inherent in using computers to simplify research. At the end of the course, I ask my students to write an essay on the nature of digital humanities.

My Challenges
Digital Humanities often entails statistical analysis of texts. This can be traced back to the 1940s, when a Jesuit priest called Roberto Busa wanted to produce a concordance of the works of Saint Thomas Aquinas. This is an index of all the words used in the works, together with their context. Busa managed to persuade the head of IBM to support this first-ever digital humanities project, which lasted 30 years. So still today we need rather a lot of computing power. Those compute tools need to be set up quickly and should easily and flexibly adapt to our changing requirements. And last but not least, our institution should approve the tools.

My Solution
SWITCHengines is perfect for us since it is unique in a way that it provides these computing tools directly to the researcher or the research department, has a transparent tariff and provides support for academic researchers. The servers of SWITCHengines are located in data centers of Swiss universities, hence the motto „SWITCH made – Swiss made“. So I know exactly where my data is and who has access to it. It is protected via the academic identity management of SWITCH and I can reconfigure the tools very easily when I need too. Thanks to SWITCHengines I can really focus on what I like to do best - my research and teaching in digital humanities.

Further information:
swit.ch/engines