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Installation steps for “Generate Data”

Purpose of the application “Generate Data” and limitations

I found the tool “Generate Data” (<http://www.generatedata.com/>), which is available for free (Open-Source on GitHub). With “Generate Data” you are able to generate randomized data according to user-specific rules. Defining the user-specific rules can be done in the following formula. Unfortunately this is restricted to maximum 100 rows:

generatedata.com

www.generatedata.com

generatedata.com

Login | English

Generate About News Donate

Your data set name here... SAVE

COUNTRY-SPECIFIC DATA ?

All countries

DATA SET ?

Order	Column Title	Data Type	Examples	Options	Help	Del
1		Select Data Type				
2		Select Data Type				
3		Select Data Type				
4		Select Data Type				

Add 1 Row(s)

EXPORT TYPES ?

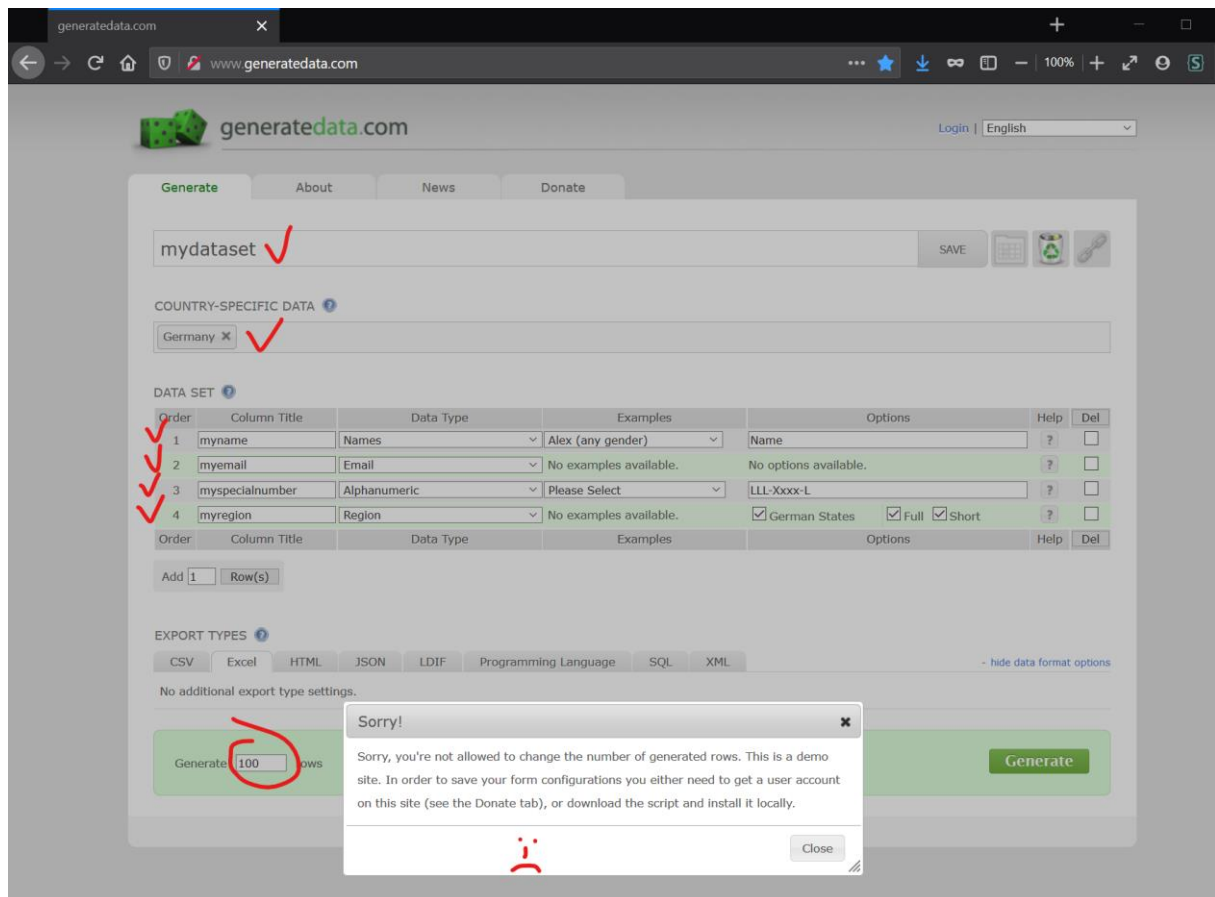
CSV Excel HTML JSON LDIF Programming Language SQL XML + hide data format options

Data format ☒ <table> ☐ ☐ <dl> ☐ Use custom HTML format

Generate 100 rows ☒ Generate in-page ☐ New window/tab ☐ Prompt to download ☐ Zip? Generate

3.4.0 | Documentation | Report a bug

You can define the columns and data types as shown below, e.g. I want “myname” to be a non-gender-specific name, “myemail” to be an E-Mail address, “myspecialnumber” a number according to a special format (e.g. “LLL-Xxx-L” which I will explain later), “myregion” to be region in Germany (e.g. “Bayern”, “Rheinland-Pfalz”,...). These definitions look like shown below:



After having pressed “Generate” an Excel will open, which contains 100 rows of randomized data according to the user-specific requirements, which we defined above, e.g. the Excel-Sheet as shown below:

dgb11jtu6jv4347oqljl7o036dataJun-29-2020.xls

	A	B	C	D	E
1	myname	myemail	myspecialnumber	myregion	
2	Stephen	nascetur.ridiculus@Duisat.net	UBS-5564-R	Berlin	
3	Matthew	ornare.lectus@Quisquepurus.edu	LQB-1518-M	Rheinland-Pfalz	
4	Ferdinand	tincidunt@inceptoshymenaeos.ca	EZZ-6485-D	Hamburg	
5	Shelly	eget.volutpat@nonsapienmolestie.co.uk	VWJ-2227-O	Hamburg	
6	Tana	mattis@mauris.edu	BQJ-8697-U	Hamburg	
7	Rose	vitae@eunulla.com	CCN-9013-Z	Hamburg	
8	Erica	eros.turpis.non@ascelerisque.ca	RBU-7128-C	Berlin	
9	Ella	luctus@risusIn.ca	RFA-2069-D	Hamburg	
10	Elijah	sit.amet@nequeetnunc.edu	BRW-6743-K	Niedersachsen	
11	Andrew	a@dui.ca	VWK-2572-A	Hamburg	
12	Bethany	dolor.quam@Curabiturutodio.ca	GWM-9437-F	Bayern	
13	Tana	tristique.sed	VWJ-2227-O	Hamburg	

The limitation of the browser version of “Generate Data” as described above is, that you can only generate maximum 100 rows of data. If you need more, then you would need to install “Generate Data” on your computer. It is free as the source code is “Open-Source” and available in Github (see <https://github.com/benkeen/generatedata>). But the installation is not easy for beginners. If you are not familiar with MySQL and PHP, then even the official installation guide, which is available “Generate Data” website, won’t be helpful for you (Sorry....).

Official Installation Guide of “Generate data”

According to the official documentation on

<http://benkeen.github.io/generatedata/install.html>

you need to follow

“**Step 1: manual labour**” (which is downloading a zip file and the setup of MySQL and PHP) and

“**Step 2: Installation script**” (which is the creation of a new database, which is necessary for running the “generatedata”-script).

How to Install

The Data Generator comes with its own browser-based installation script so installing it should be a doddle. I tried to make the process as painless as possible.

Step 1: manual labour

1. Download the latest tag from github. This contains everything you'll need.
2. Unzip/untar the file on whatever server you want the script to run, and somewhere within the webroot (i.e. somewhere that can be accessible by a web-browser) Note: this server must meet the (pretty basic) requirements outlined in the [previous page](#).
3. Boot up your web-browser (anything other than crappy old IE browsers is fine) and go to the Data Generator folder. You should be redirected to the installation script.

If you get an error at this juncture, chances are the script is unable to write to your cache folder. This is more likely to happen on a Windows server. Make sure the permissions on your **[generatedata folder]/cache/** are full read-write.

Step 2: installation script

At this point the installation script will lead you through the rest of the installation process. It should be pretty self-explanatory, but I'll explain each step just in case.

1. The first step is to specify your **database settings**. As with all web scripts, the Data Generator expects you to have created a database already; That database can be completely new, or contain other tables - it doesn't matter.

Most of the fields on this page are self-explanatory; if you're not sure about any of them, you'll need to speak to your hosting provider, or do some googling to figure out how to get it working locally.

The language dropdown at the top right changes the language for the current page - it doesn't, however, change it for your actual installation. For that, select the appropriate language in the **Default Language** field.

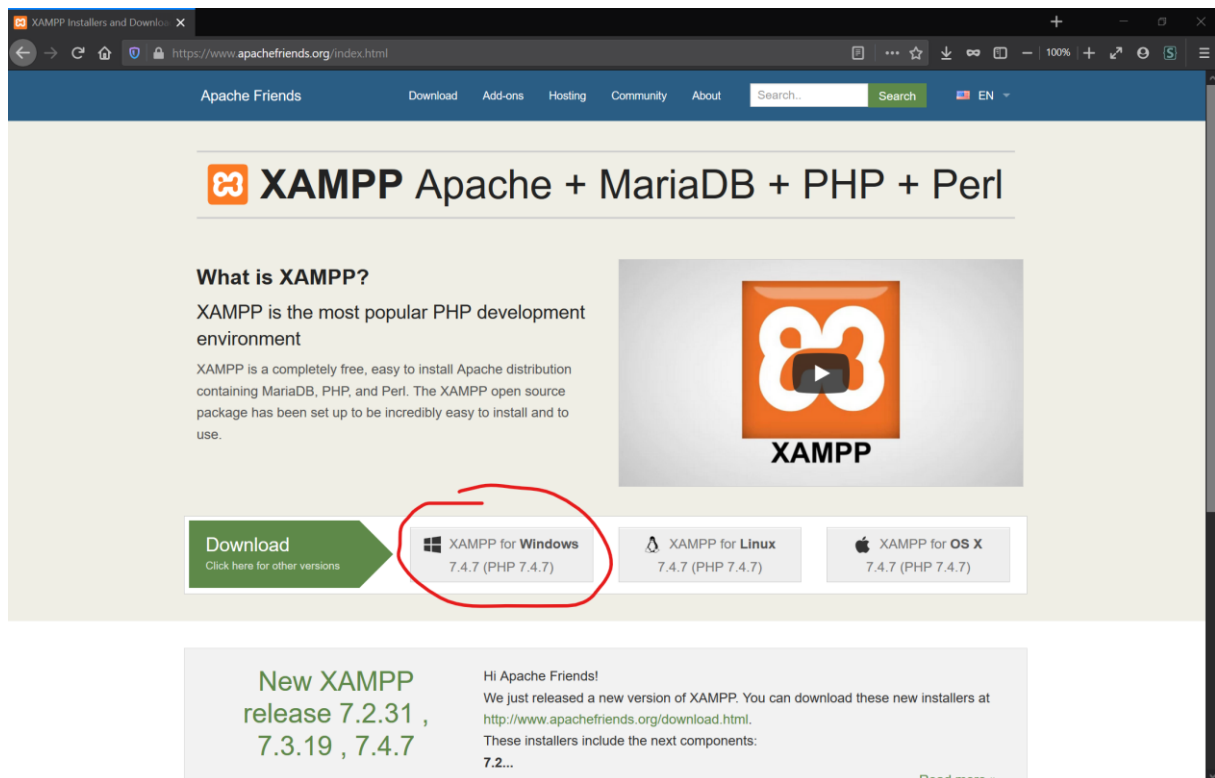
I read in comments that some users were struggling in completing these steps (me included initially, but as I describe here it is also possible to install it for absolute novices). I want to close the documentation gap between “**Step 1**” and “**Step 2**” and make the tool “Generate Data” available also for beginners.

My installation guide

First you need to install “**XAMPP**” (the database and PHP). Therefore go to website

<https://www.apachefriends.org/index.html>

and download the XAMPP file (e.g. for Windows, see red circle):



Follow the installation process. When you are asked for choosing an installation folder, then choose

C:\xampp

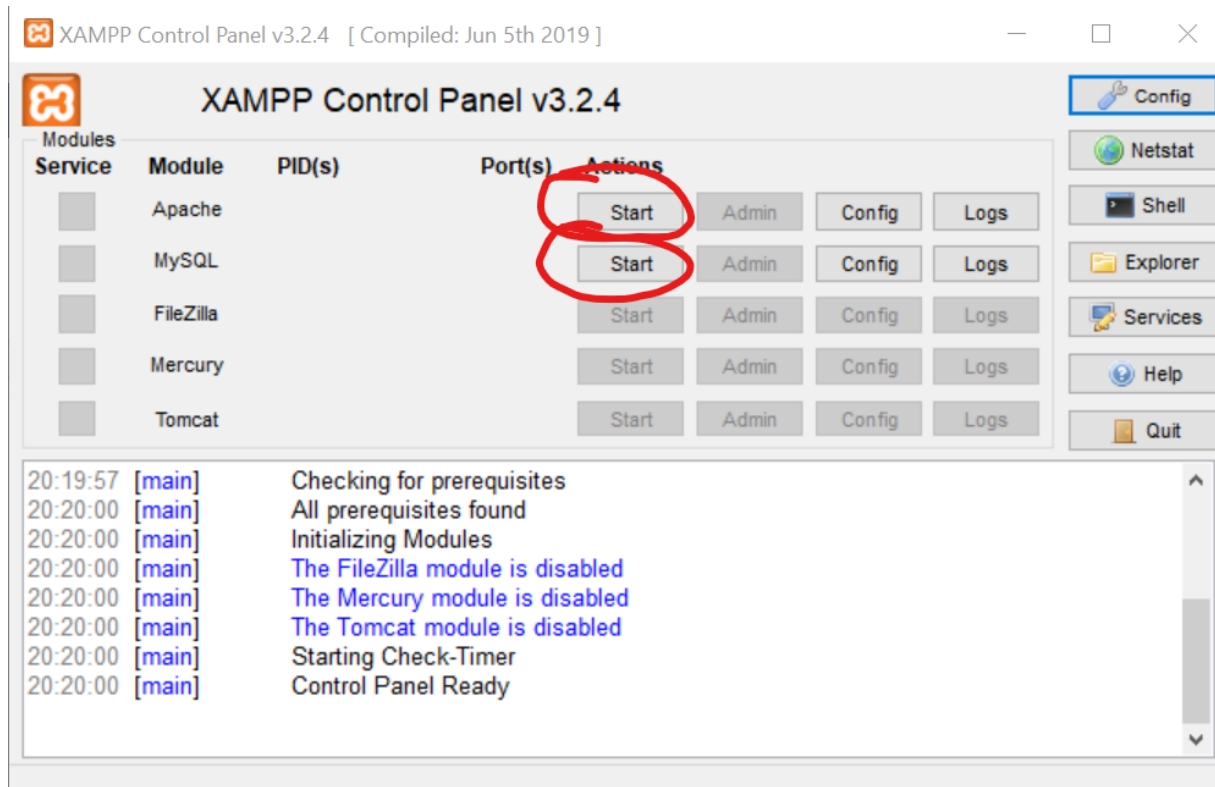
as the installation folder.

You may select only „**Apache**“, „**MySQL**“ and „**PHP**“ only and unselect the other options (e.g. you don't need Pearl, FileZilla, Mercury, Tomcat...).

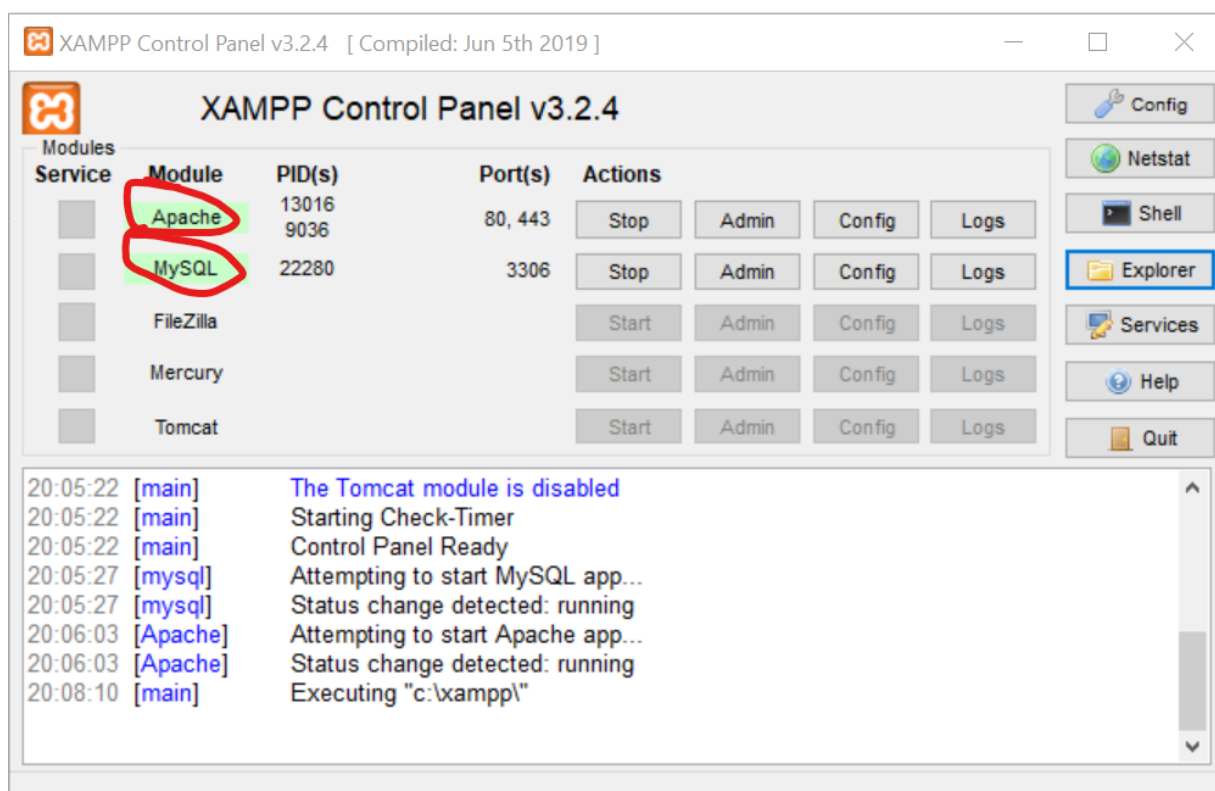
Then goto C:\xampp\ and start the application „**XAMPP Control Panel**“, which is the file called

xampp-control.exe

You will see the following screen. Start „**Apache**“ and „**MySQL**“ by pressing the marked buttons:



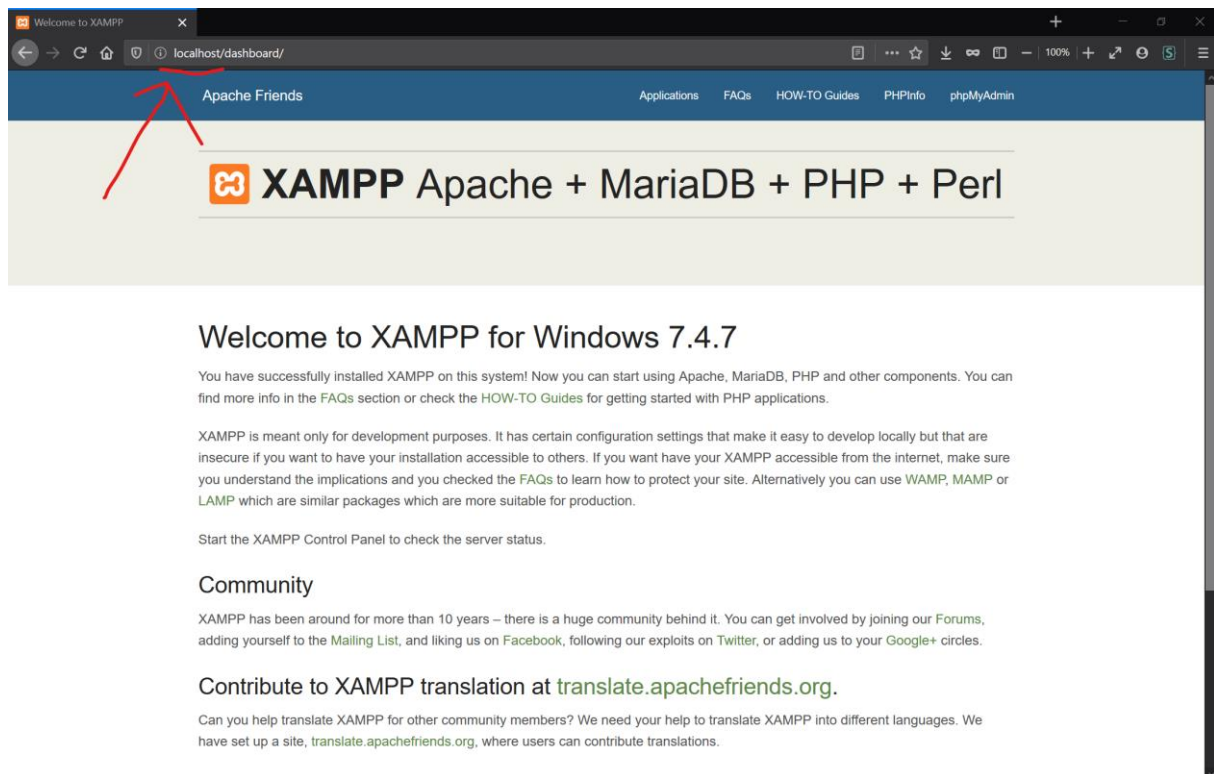
When Apache and MySQL have been started it will look like this:



Then open a browser (e.g. Firefox-Browser) and type:

localhost

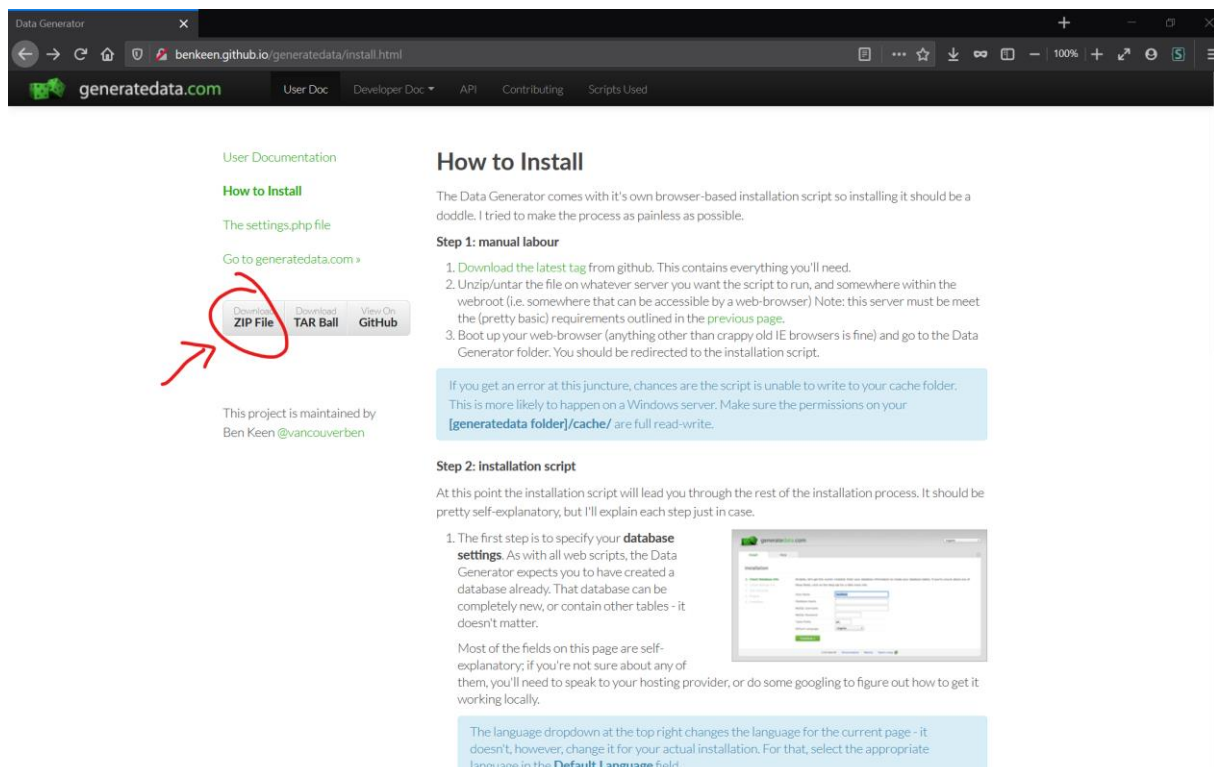
into the browser search window as shown in the screenshot below (red arrow). If everything was successful the welcome “**Dashboard**” of XAMPP will open:



Now open the installation page for “**generatedata**” which is this one:

<http://benkeen.github.io/generatedata/install.html>

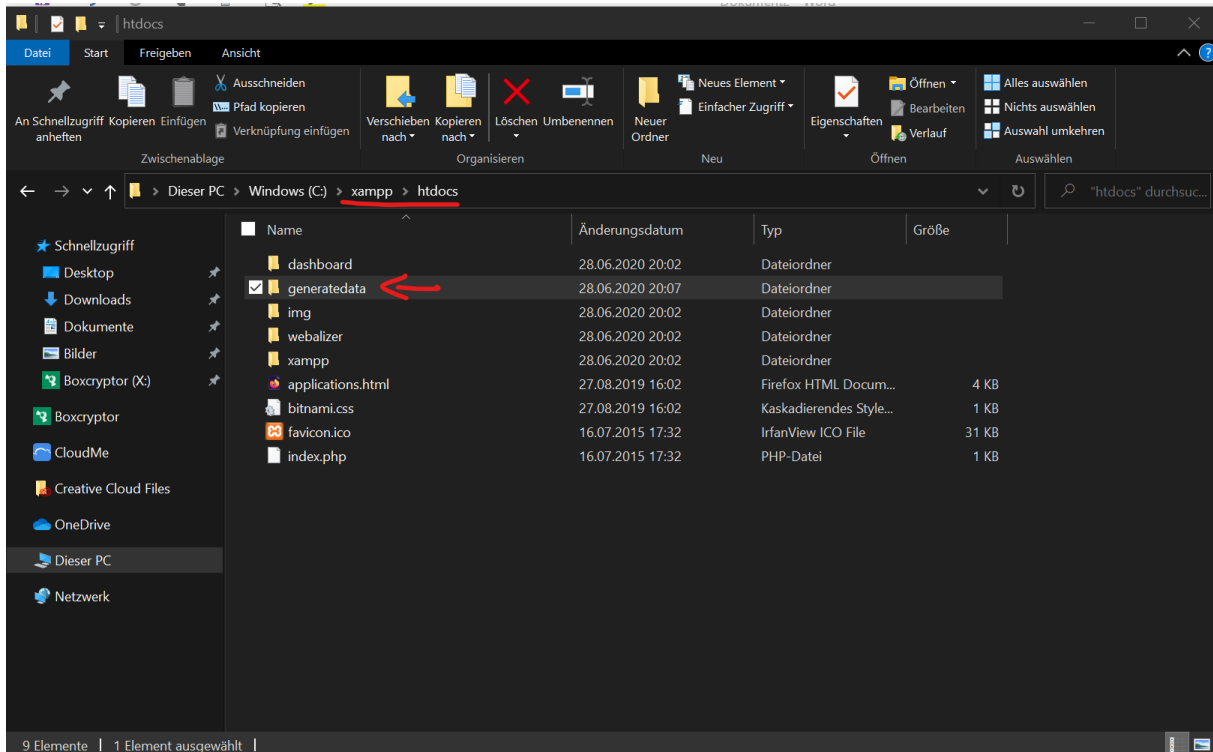
and download the latest version (the **ZIP-file**) as shown in the screenshot below (see red arrow):



Extract the ZIP-File and put it into the **xampp** Folder -> Subfolder “**htdocs**”. For example, if your installation folder in the beginning has been **C:\xampp** as I suggested to do, then put the extracted zip-content of “generatedata” into

C:\xampp\htdocs

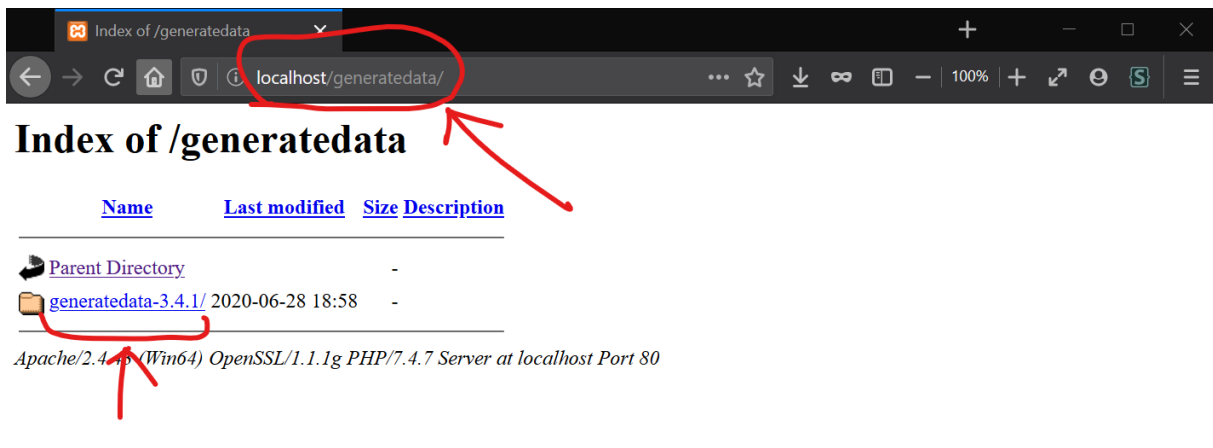
as shown in the screenshot below:



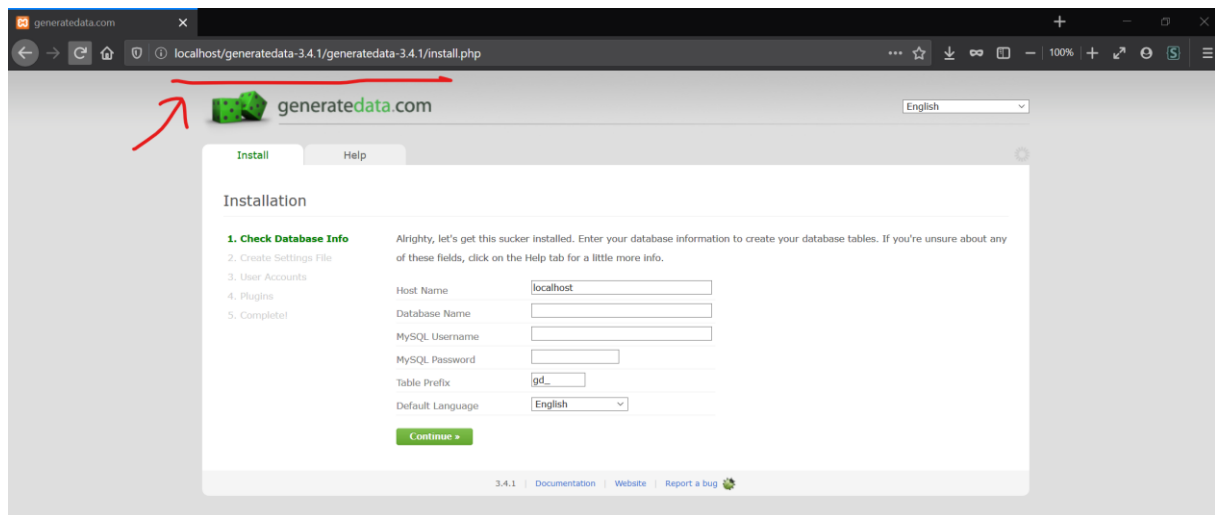
Now open your browser and type

localhost/generatedata

as shown in the screenshot below:

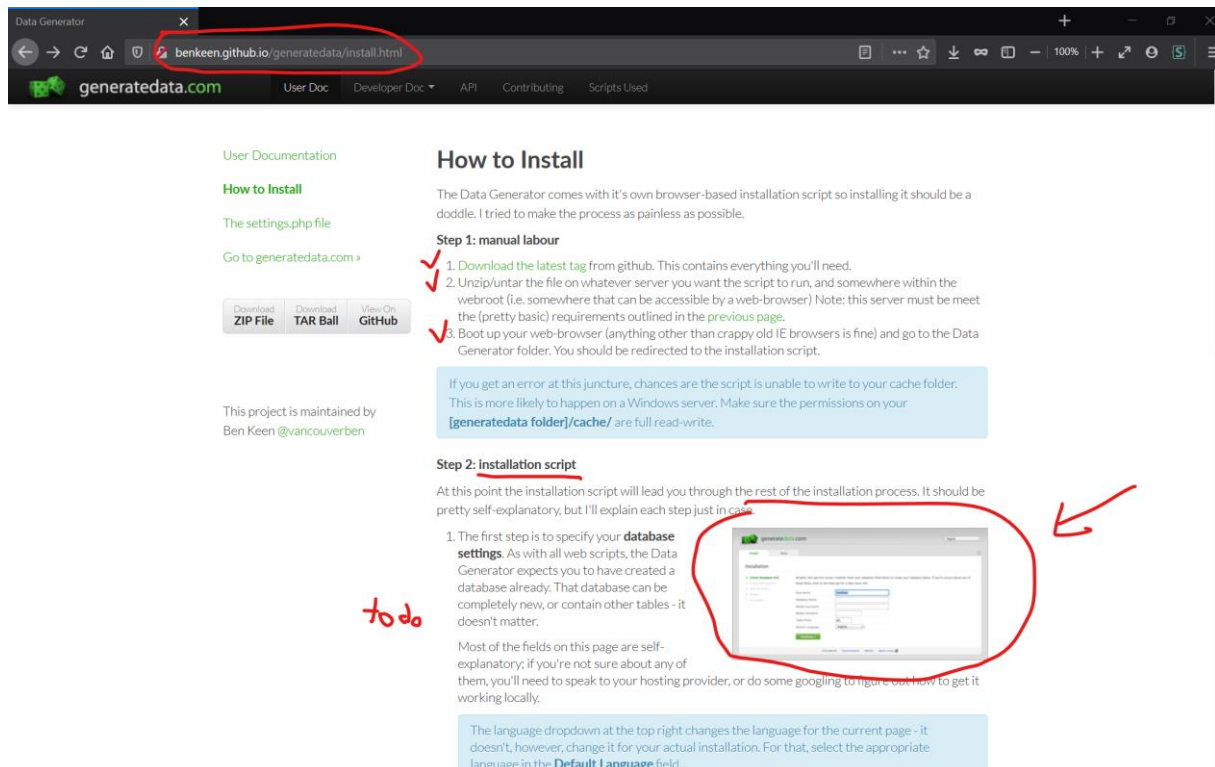


The installation Window for “generatedata” should open as follows:

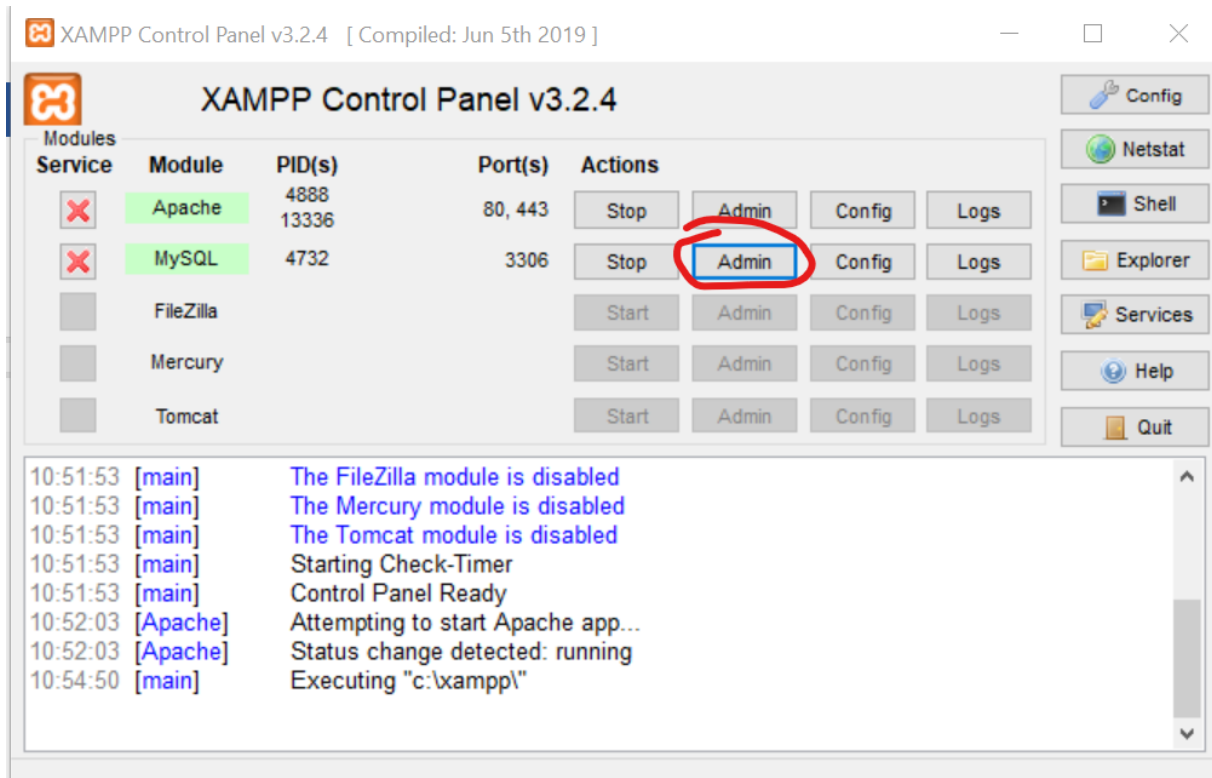


Congratulations: if you see this window above, then you already completed the first three tasks ("Step 1") of the official installation guide, which are described here:

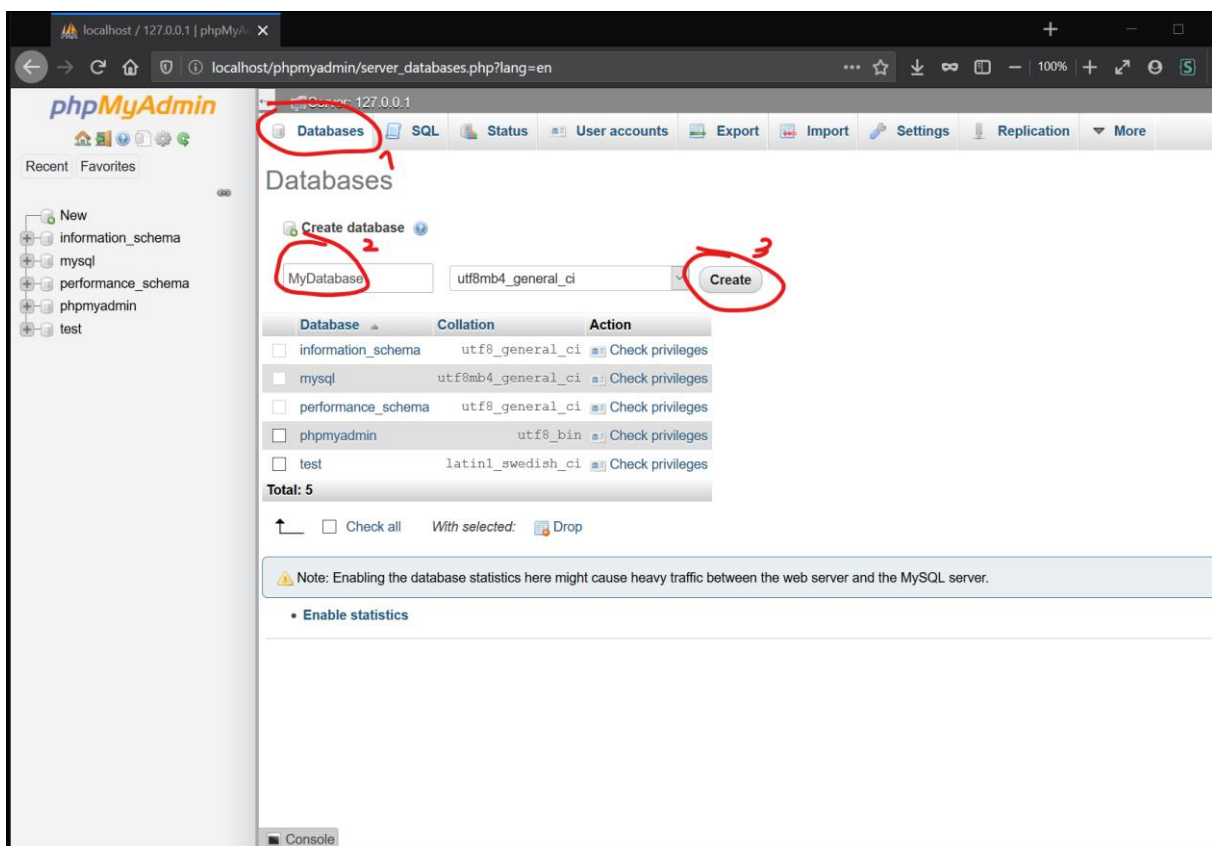
<http://benkeen.github.io/generatedata/install.html>



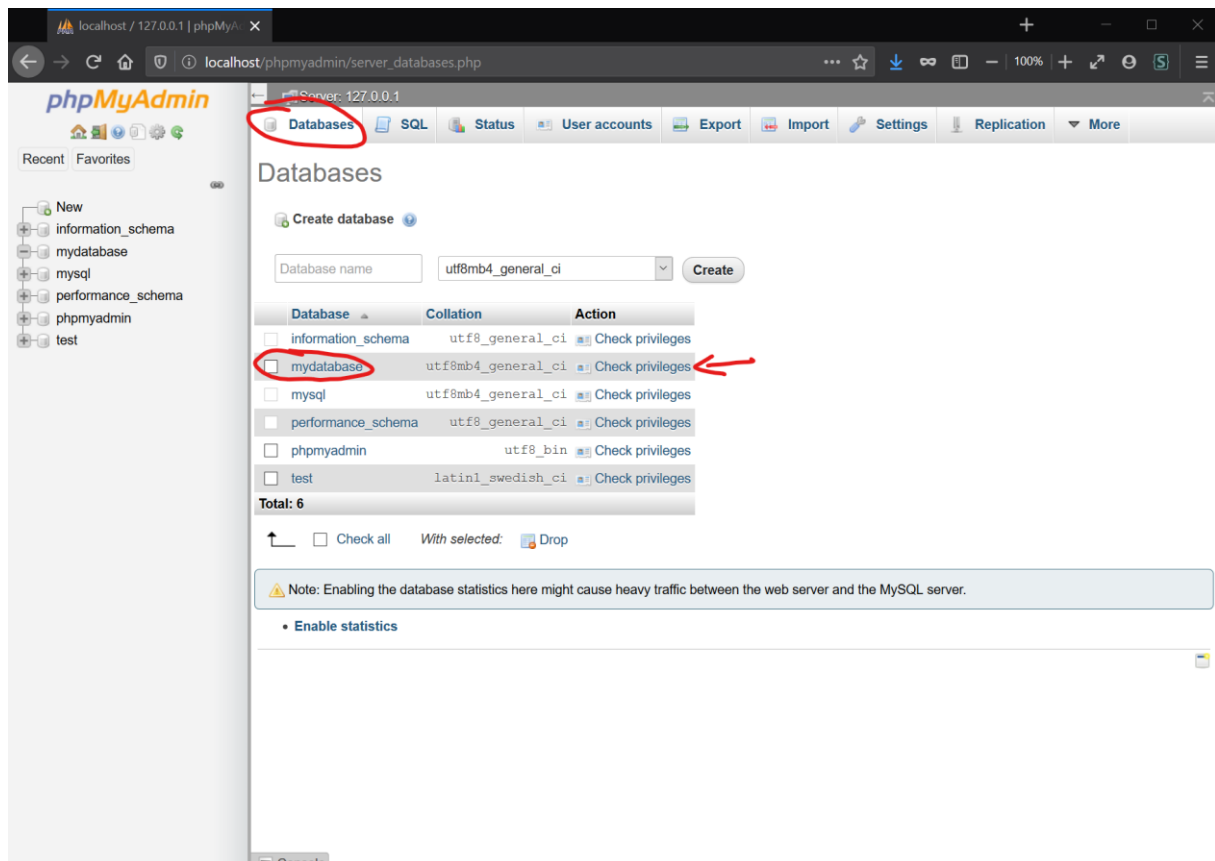
Next would be to complete **"Step 2: Installation Script"**. But before you can do this you need first to create a database and user for it. How can this be done? Well, we need to open the **"phpMyAdmin"** site as follows: go back to the **"XAMPP control panel"** (see above) and press **"Admin"** as shown in this screenshot (alternatively you can also type **"localhost/phpmyadmin"** into the search window in your browser):



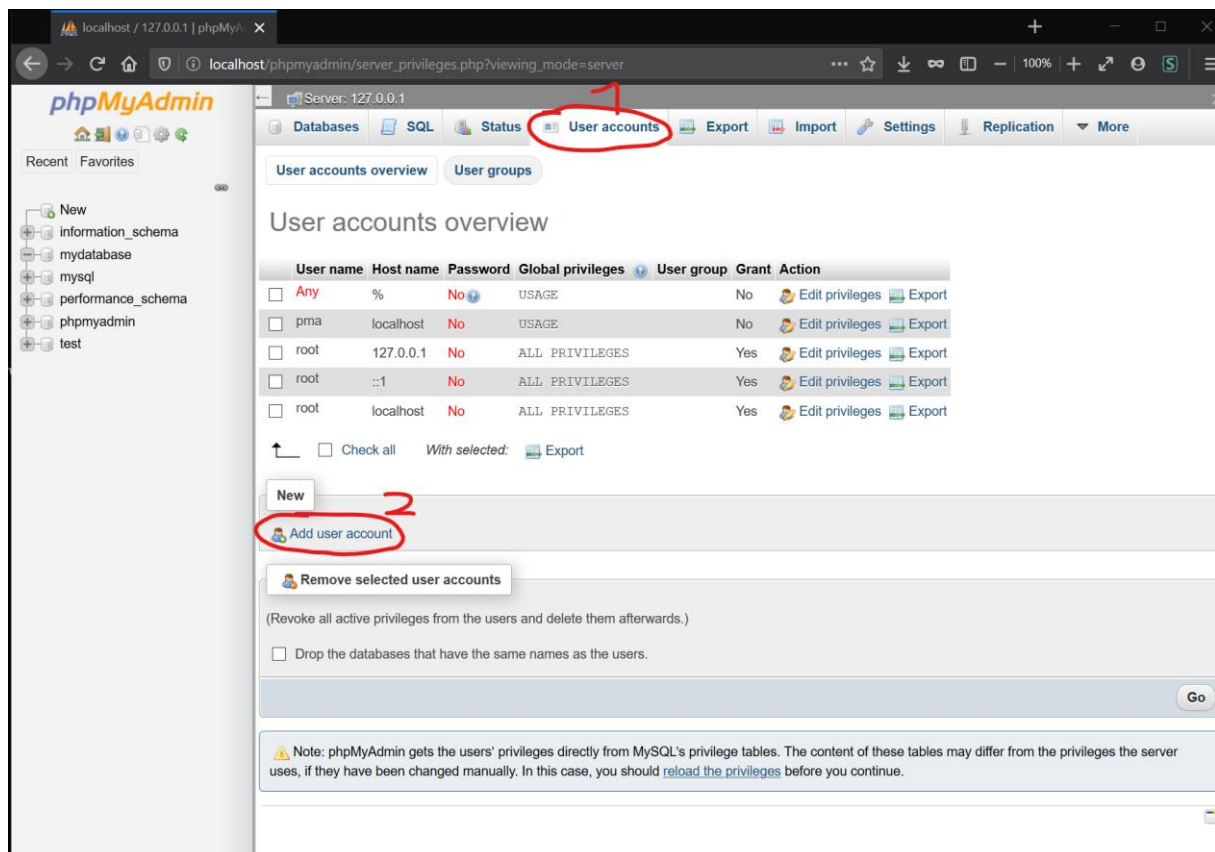
Your browser (e.g. Firefox-Browser) will open. This is the **pypMyAdmin** Page. Goto 1 “Databases” and then create a new database (2 and 3) as follows:



After having done this you will see you new database as follows (see red arrow):



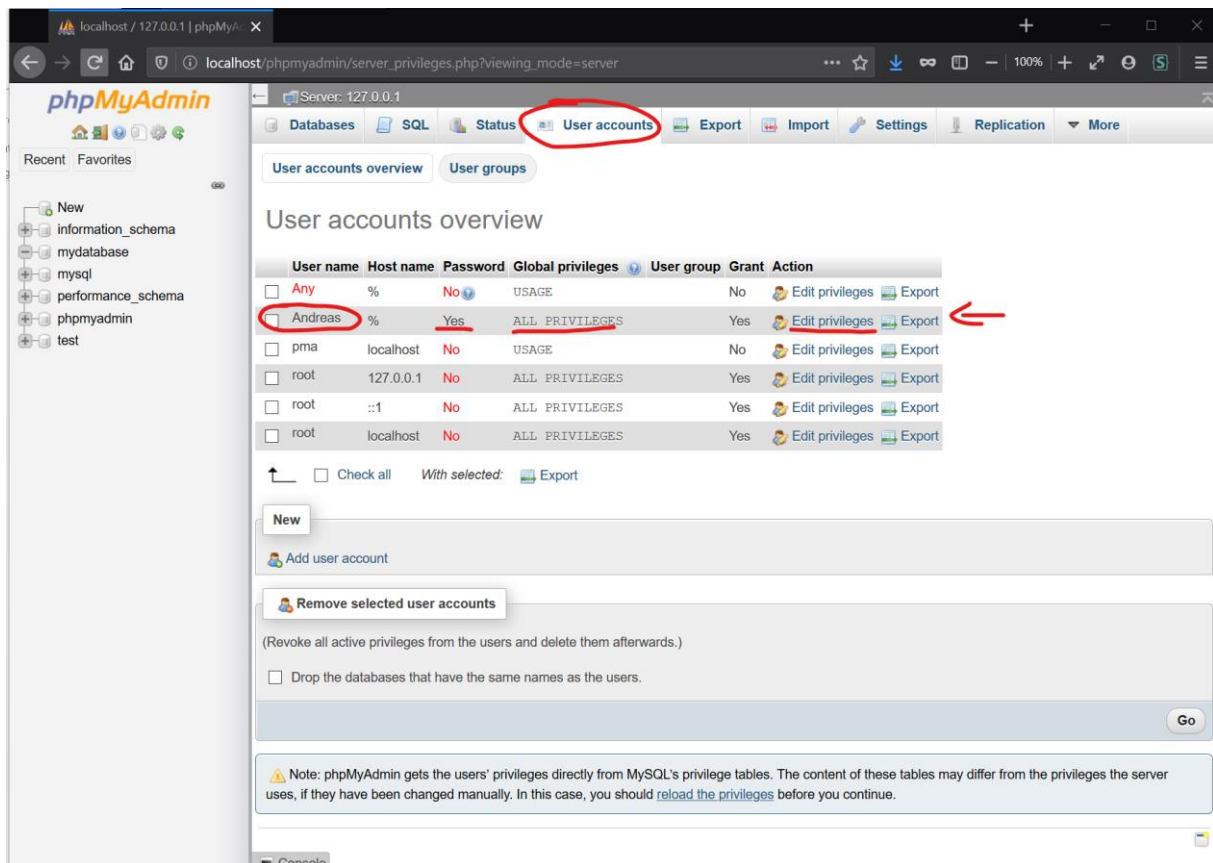
Now we need a new user. Therefore goto 1 “Useraccounts” and then 2 “Add user account” as shown here:



As shown in the screenshot below, define 1 “User name”, “Password” and then select 2 “Global privileges: check all” (this manual is for beginners, and it is easiest to grant all privileges. Later you can come back to this point and limit the access rights a bit, which in my opinion is not necessary: we are not dealing with an encrypted back software here). Then press 3 “Go”.

The screenshot shows the 'Add user account' form in phpMyAdmin. The form is divided into three main sections: 'Login Information', 'Database for user account', and 'Global privileges'. Handwritten red annotations are present: a '1' next to the 'Host name' field, a '2' next to the 'Check all' checkbox under 'Global privileges', and a '3 GO' next to the 'Resource limits' section. The 'Login Information' section includes fields for 'User name' (Andreas), 'Host name' (Any host), 'Password' (masked), and 'Re-type' (masked). The 'Database for user account' section has two checkboxes: 'Create database with same name and grant all privileges.' and 'Grant all privileges on wildcard name (username)_%'. The 'Global privileges' section has a 'Check all' checkbox selected. Below this, there are checkboxes for 'Data', 'Structure', 'Administration', and 'Resource limits'. The 'Data' section has a 'Data' checkbox. The 'Structure' section has a 'CREATE' checkbox. The 'Administration' section has a 'GRANT' checkbox. The 'Resource limits' section has a note: 'Note: Setting these options to 0 (zero) removes the limit.'

After having created a new user you will see it as shown here (later: click “Edit privileges” for changing privileges):



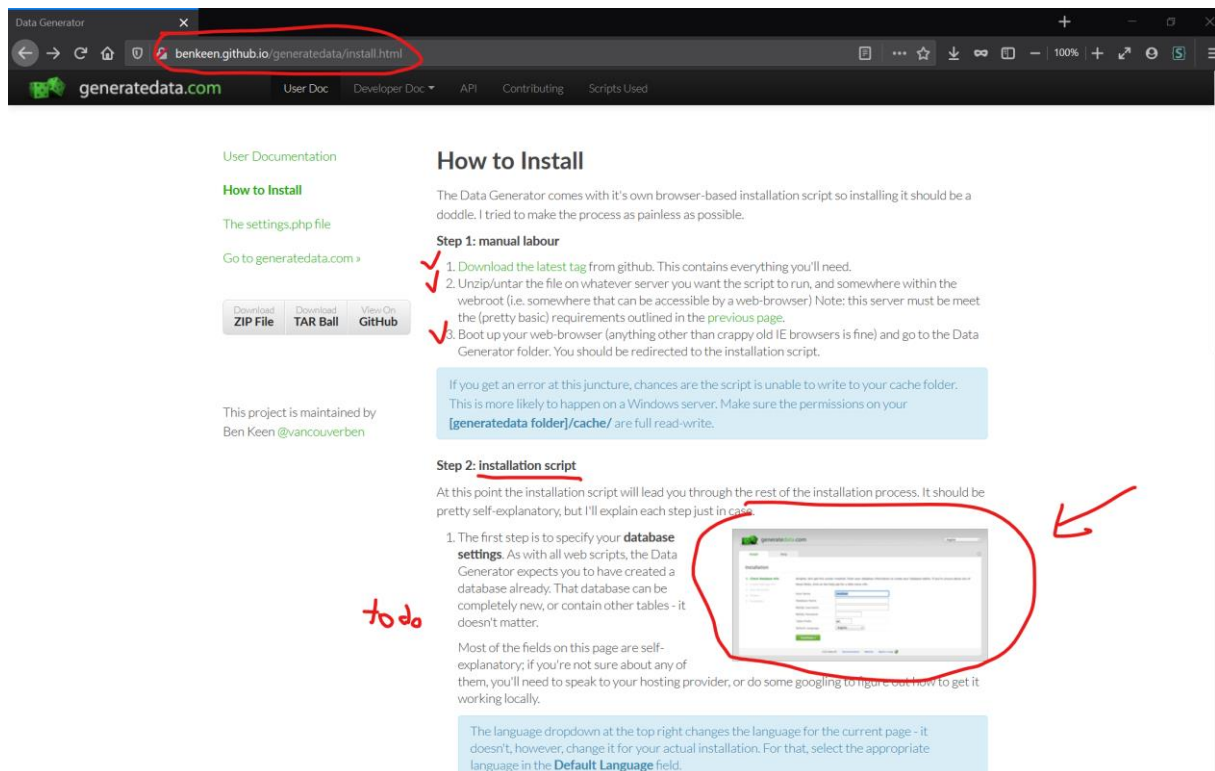
Now open the browser (e.g. Firefox-Browser) and type

localhost/generatedata

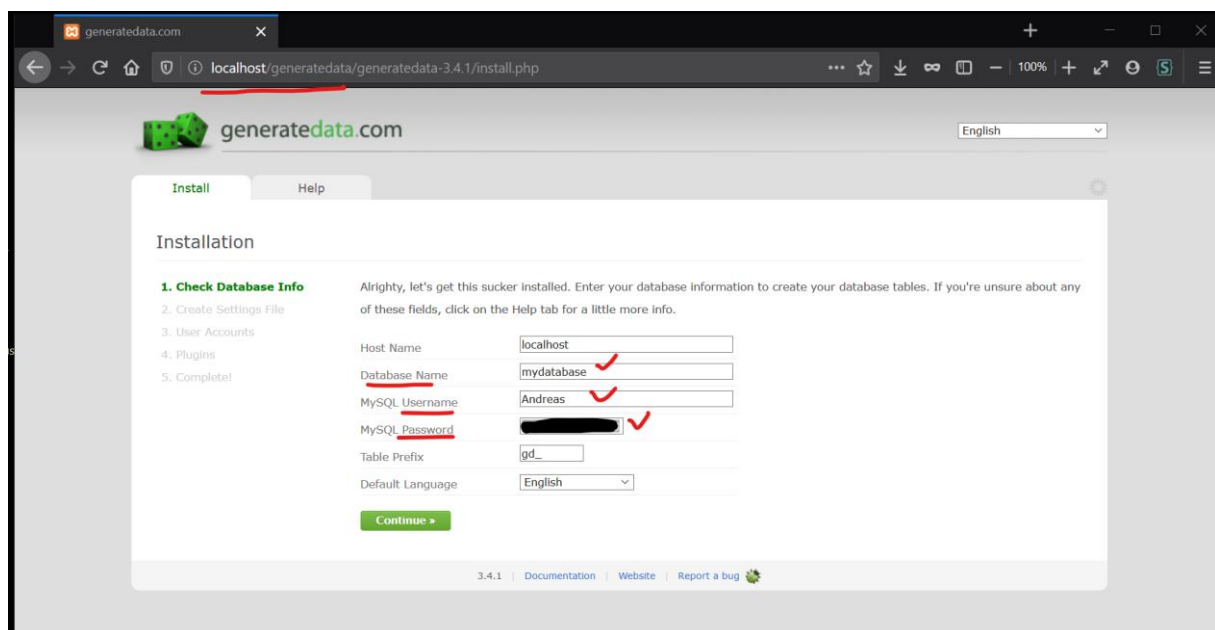
and you will be able to continue the official installation steps “**Step 2: Installation script**” as described in the manual

<http://benkeen.github.io/generatedata/install.html>

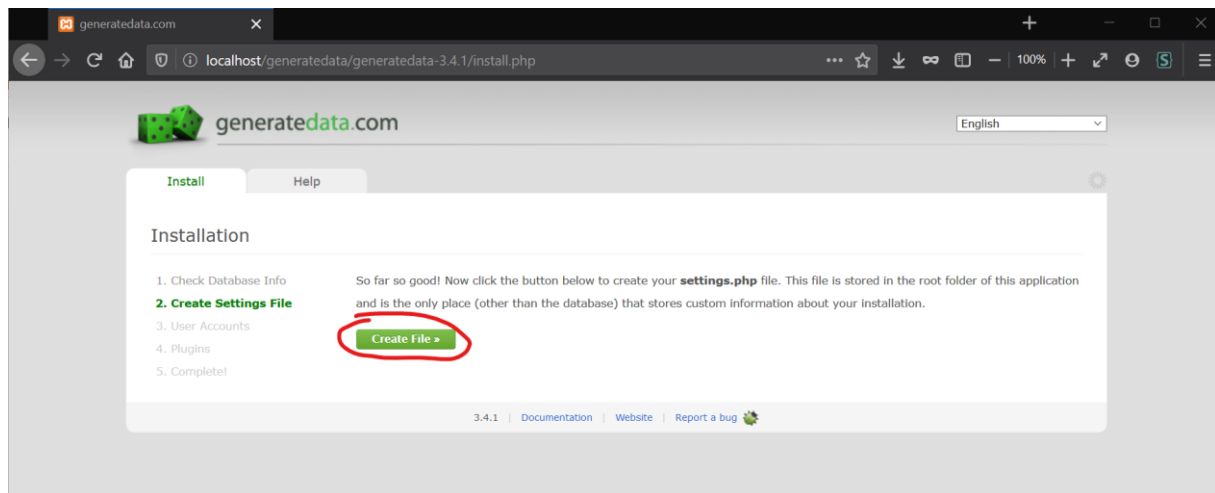
I will show below how this looks like below.



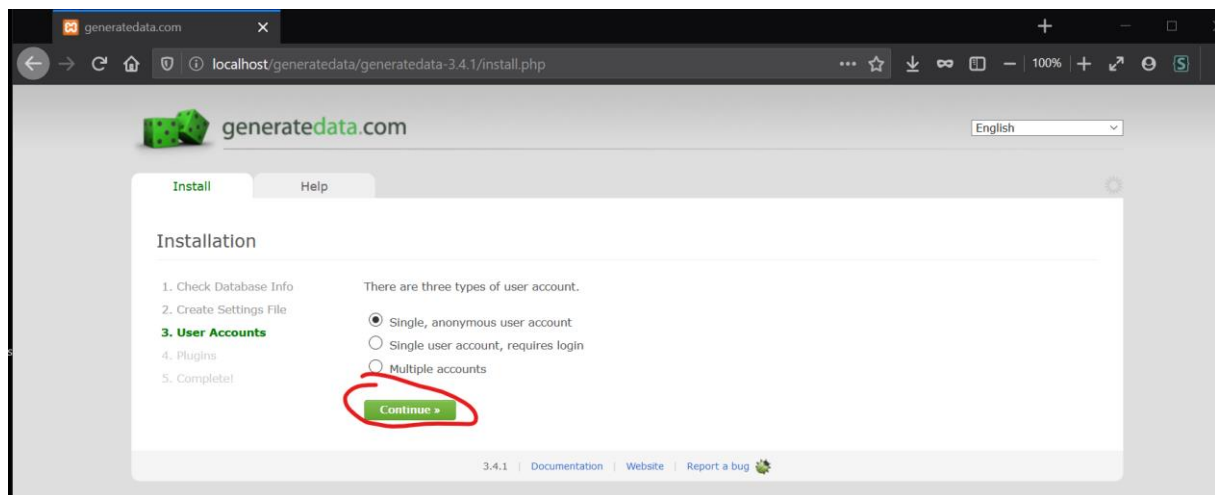
Enter the **database name**, **username** and **password**, which you created above. Press “**Continue**”.



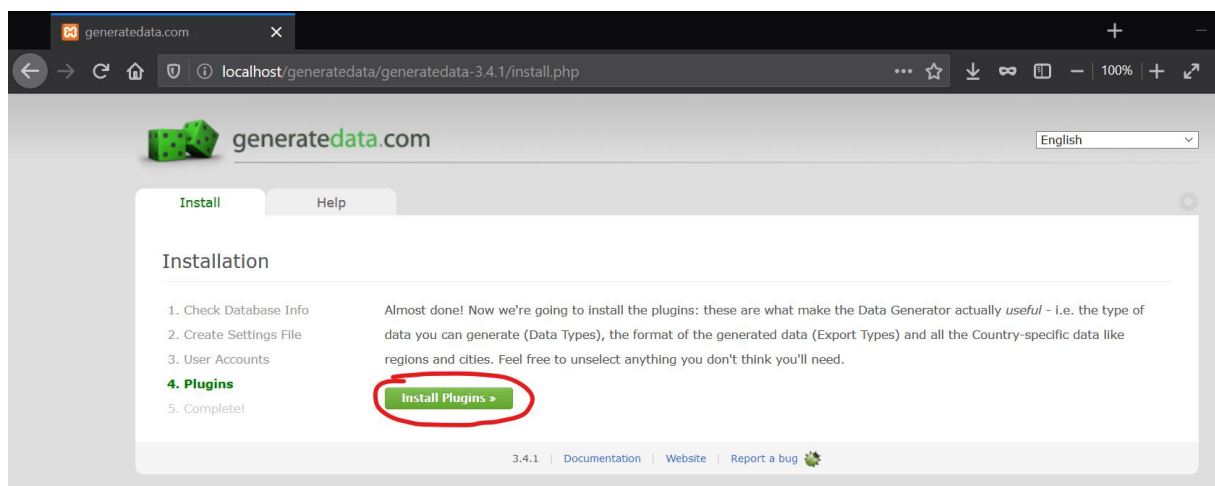
Next press “**Create file**”:



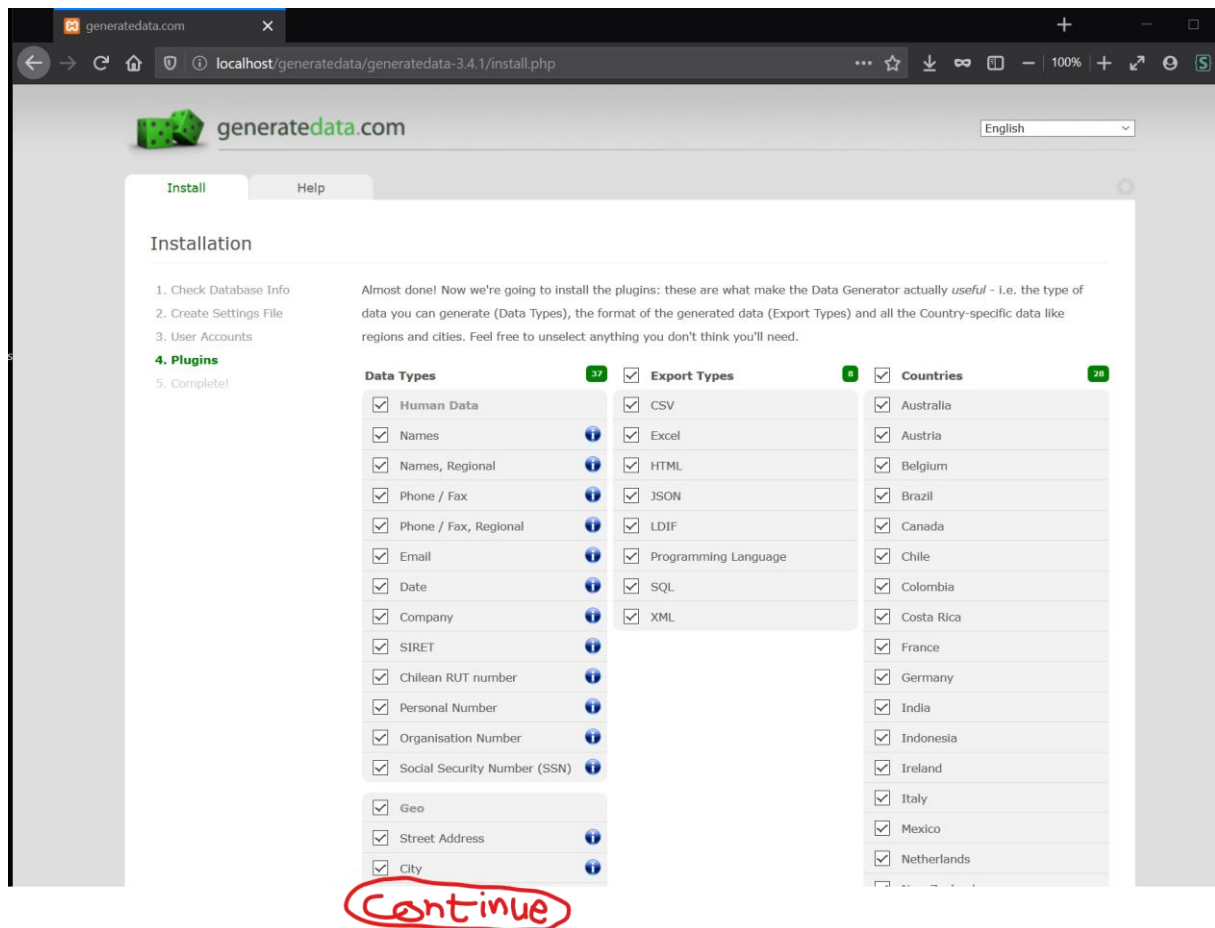
Next select “continue”:



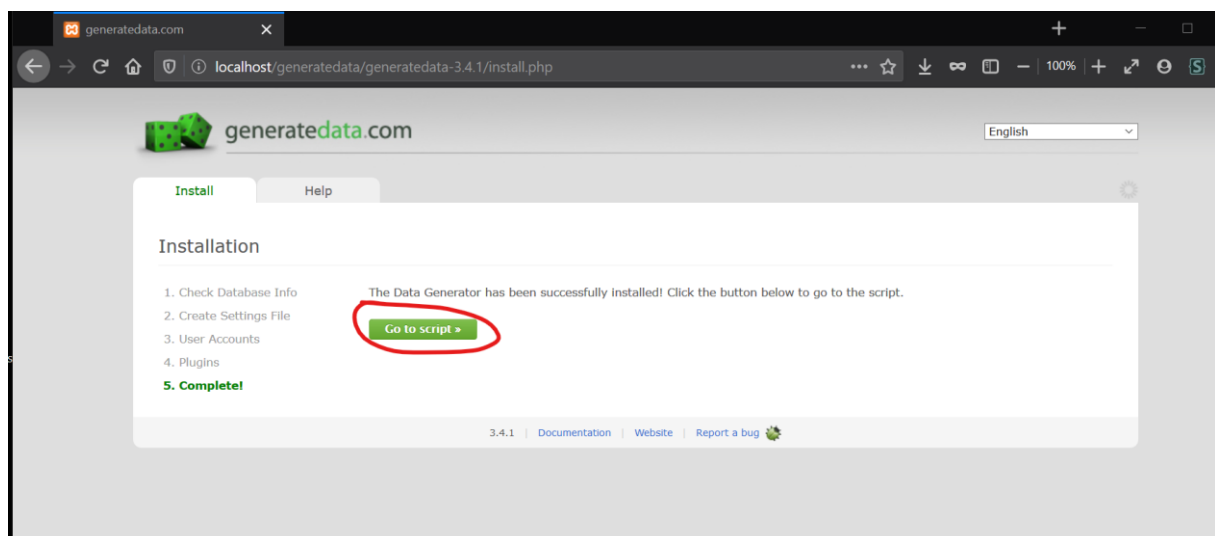
Then press “Install Plugins”:



You can select all plugins. Only if you know for sure, that you don't need all you can deselect some (which I don't recommend). Press “Continue”.

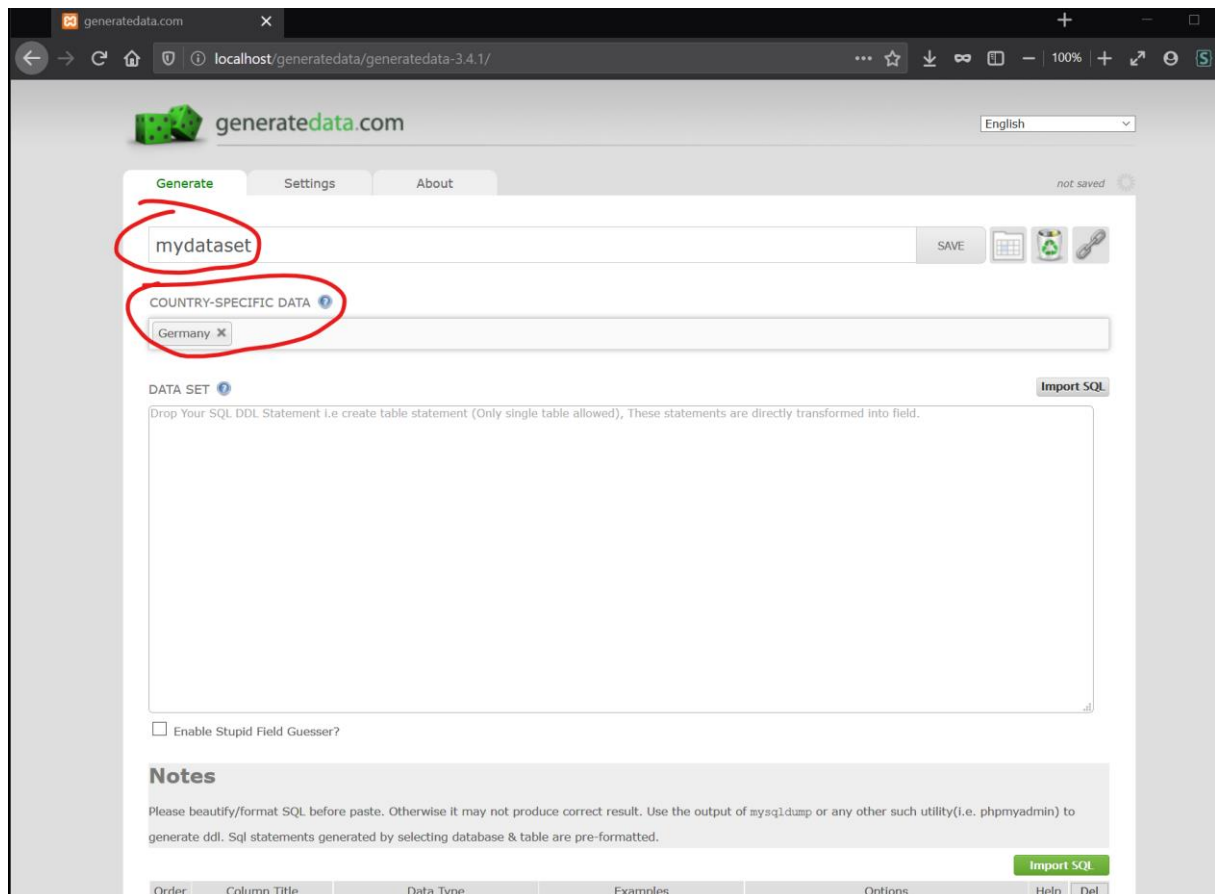


Then press “Go to script”:



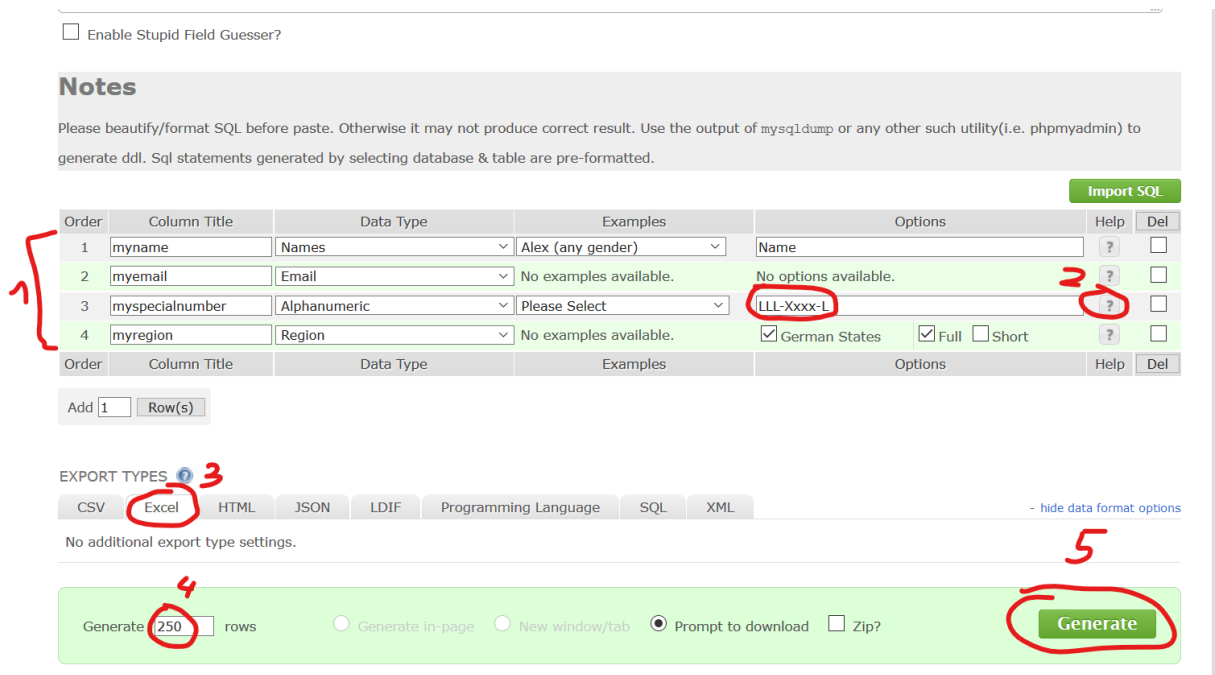
The installation is finished! Congratulations!

You will see the following window and you are ready to create your datasets. Define a name (e.g. “mydataset”) and country-specific data (e.g. “Germany”):

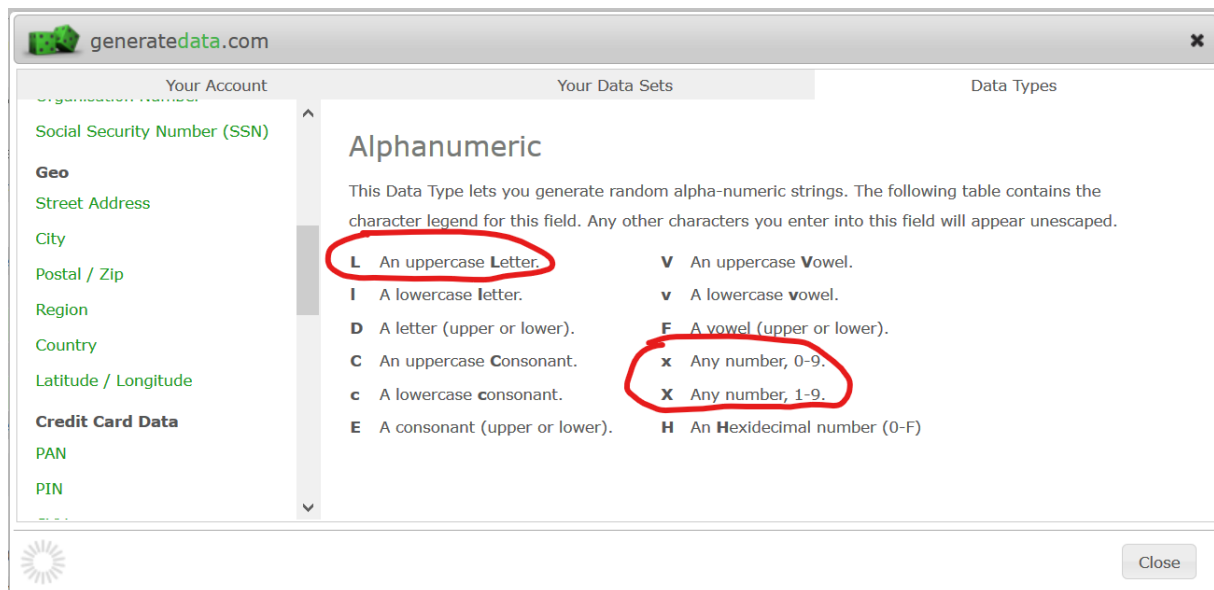


Next you can define “**Column titles**” and “**Data type**” (see 1). If you want specific options, then use the “?” button (see 2).

Select 3 “**Excel**” and 4 “**250 rows**” and then press 5 “**Generate**”.



When you press the button 2 “?” (the question mark) the window below will open and explain the various options. For example “L” is an uppercase Letter and “x” / “X” are numbers. I defined “LLL-Xxxx-L” as my special format (see above):

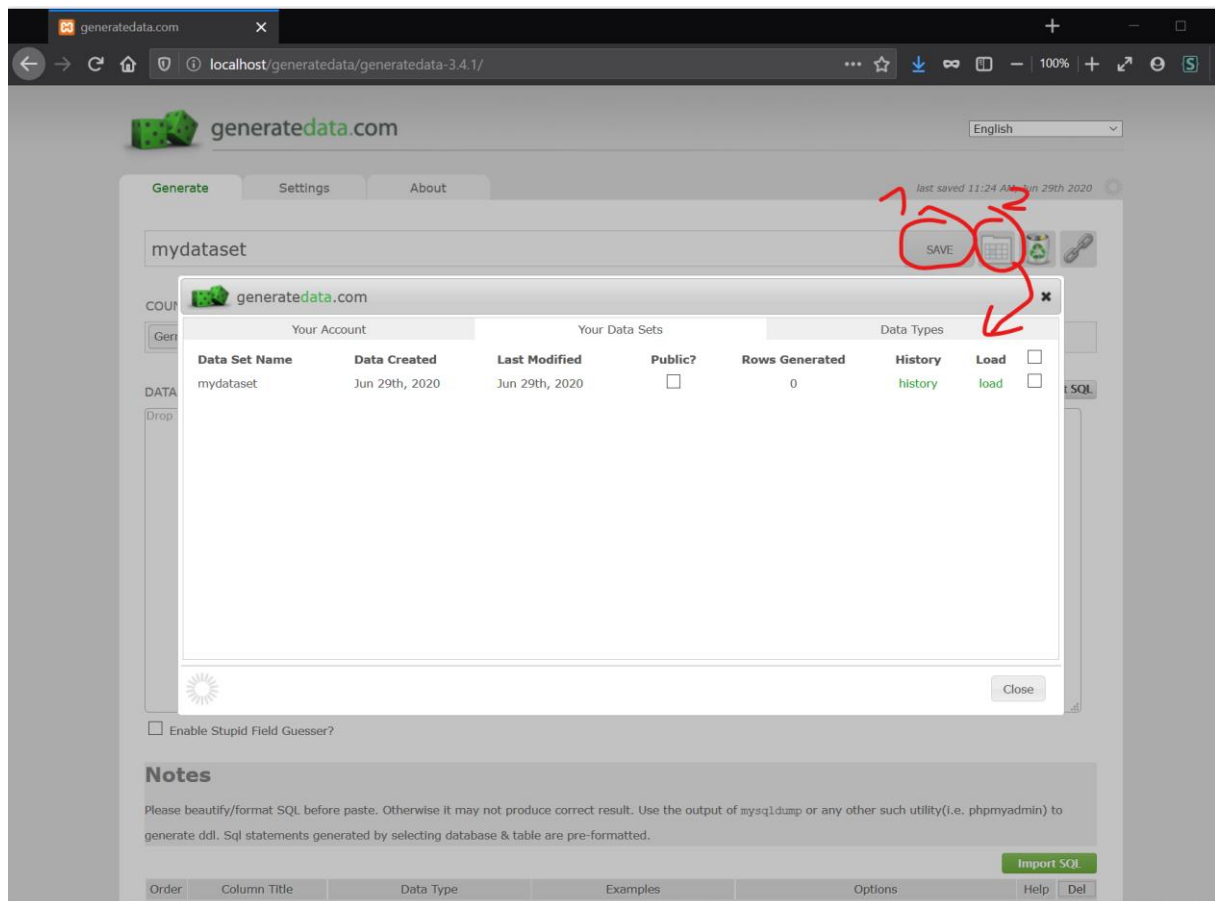


After having pressed the 5 “Generate” button, an Excel file will open. In my case it looks like the one below:

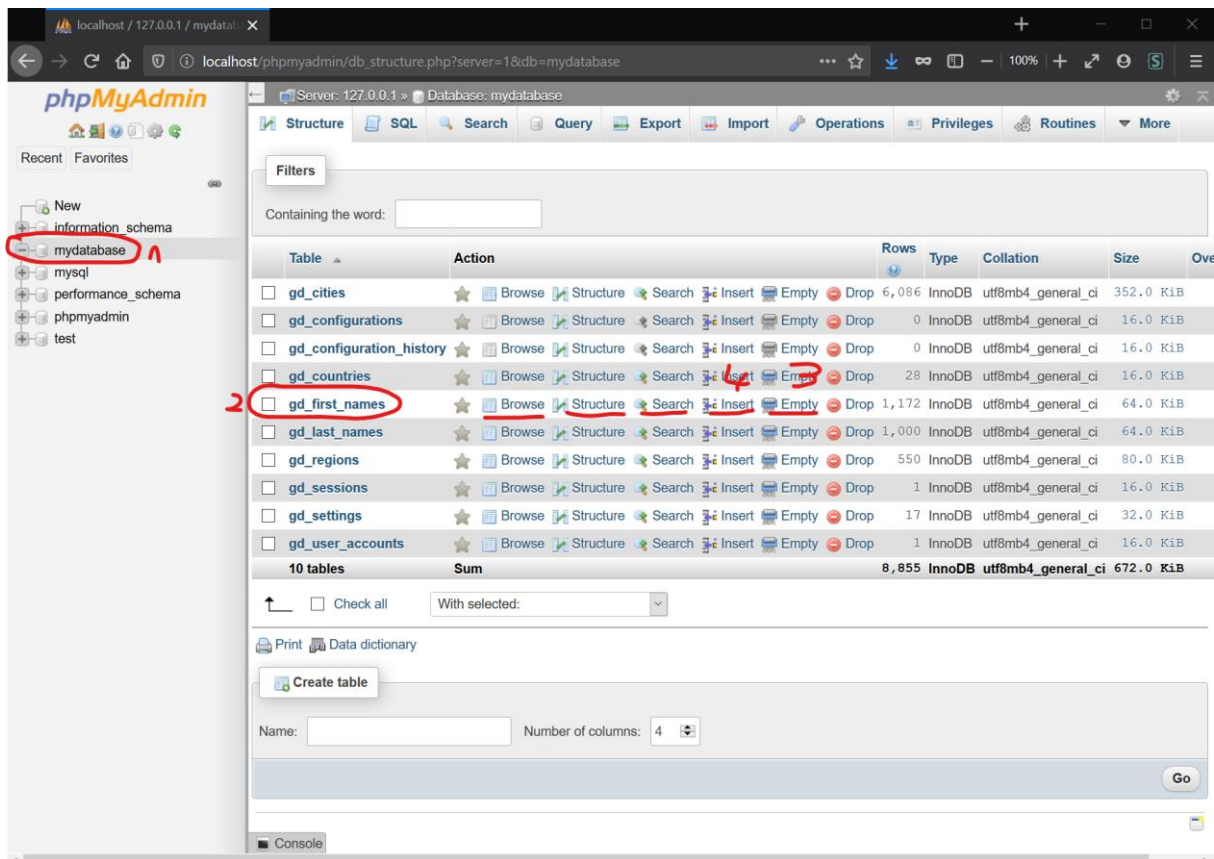
The screenshot shows an Excel spreadsheet with the following data:

	A	B	C	D	E
1	myname	myemail	myspecialnumber	myregion	
2	Stephen	nascetur.ridiculus@Duisat.net	UBS-5564-R	Berlin	
3	Matthew	ornare.lectus@Quisquepurus.edu	LQB-1518-M	Rheinland-Pfalz	
4	Ferdinand	tincidunt@inceptoshymenaeos.ca	EZZ-6485-D	Hamburg	
5	Shelly	eget.volutpat@nonsapienmolestie.co.uk	VWJ-2227-O	Hamburg	
6	Tana	mattis@mauris.edu	BQJ-8697-U	Hamburg	
7	Rose	vitae@eunulla.com	CCN-9013-Z	Hamburg	
8	Erica	eros.turpis.non@ascelerisque.ca	RBU-7128-C	Berlin	
9	Ella	luctus@risusIn.ca	RFA-2069-D	Hamburg	
10	Elijah	sit.amet@nequeetnunc.edu	BRW-6743-K	Niedersachsen	
11	Andrew	a@dui.ca	VWK-2572-A	Hamburg	
12	Bethany	dolor.quam@Curabiturutodio.ca	GWM-9437-F	Bayern	
13	Lea	tristique.sed@et@estrius	VWJ-2227-O	Hamburg	

If you need this format more frequently you can save it for being use later again. Press 1 “Save”. Use button 2 to load saved datasets:



Obviously the names above (e.g. “Stephen”, “Matthew”,...) must be saved somewhere. Yes, exactly: they are saved your database (mine was “**mydatabase**”, see 1 in the screenshot below). You can open the according database-table by going to the **phpMyAdmin** site (have a look in my documentation above, if you don’t remember how this can be done). Then goto 2 “**gd_first_names**”. As you can see you can 3 “**Empty**” the table and 4 “**Insert**” new names:



I think if you reached this point, then you should be fine for progressing yourself.

I hope this helped a bit some people, who are not too familiar with MySQL or PHP and want to run "Generate Data" on their own personal computers without limitations.

Greetings

Andreas