

Web based display of avalanche events using Google Map application programming

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Recent avalanche activity is a prime indicator of the current avalanche hazard. Knowledge of recent avalanche events and the attributes of the terrain where they occurred help experienced users make good decisions. To provide this information to the public, the Bridger-Teton National Forest Avalanche Center used the google map application interface and Geographic Information System technology to display avalanche events in a simple, user friendly, web based format. The locations of avalanche events are displayed upon topographic elevation contour map and aerial photography backgrounds. Users can pan and zoom in on these locations. Options allow for the selection of date ranges, and to view avalanche events that occurred in the backcountry or at local ski resorts. The table format option lists details about each avalanche and terrain attributes which include the starting zone aspect, elevation and steepness. This application also sorts and displays multiple avalanche events by any of these parameters. This new product was a huge success. It greatly increased the quality and quantity of avalanche observations to our forecast center and was well received by our users as a way to view this important information.