

AN INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR THE CANADIAN AVALANCHE COMMUNITY

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ABSTRACT: Exchange of avalanche related information among professionals has become crucial for avalanche safety programs. The success story of the Canadian avalanche industry-wide information exchange (InfoEx) is a strong testimony of this trend. Recent expert reviews of the Canadian public avalanche safety program pointed out that, in addition, an increased information exchange between the industry and the public would be highly desirable. In the summer of 2003 the Canadian Avalanche Association recognized that it is necessary to have a sound information management strategy to meet this increasing demand of data and initiated the development of a comprehensive information system for the Canadian avalanche community. In this presentation we would like to share its general architecture and explore our vision for the future of the system. We will be touching on the requirements for such an information system and discuss some of our approaches for meeting these needs. For example, the wide variety of users ranging from industrial operations, research institutions to recreational skiers requires a flexible architecture that allows everybody to contribute to and benefit from such a system to the fullest. It is also crucial for the acceptance and success of such a new data initiative to incorporate existing data systems and encourage the distributed development of new tools. In the addition to the general overview, we will discuss some of the crucial parts of the system, such as the XML standard CAAML, which was developed for the transfer of avalanche related information.

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