ABSTRACT: Human factors are well recognized as primary variables in avalanche accidents. Individual decisions as well as organizational culture are often cited as contributors. The goal of this poster installation is twofold. One, to collect individual and organizational data that describes the decision making setting for avalanche professionals. Two, elicit respondents’ opinion on why accidents happen to avalanche professionals as well as other ISSW attendees. ISSW attendees will be active participants in the poster by taking an online survey comprised of four parts: demographic questions, on the job procedural and attitudinal questions, questions pertaining to organizational culture, and a problem identification exercise. Emergent word clouds with accompanying meta data will be generated and available for viewing during the meeting (Figure 1). Data will be analyzed later using traditional statistical reporting methods. All data will be confidential and conform to Montana State University Institutional Review Board procedures for research involving human subjects. No identifying information such as name, email, or IP address will be collected.

KEYWORDS: avalanche accidents, avalanche professionals, decision-making, survey, word cloud
Figure 1: Example of a word cloud generated from a previous ISSW paper (Anatomy of a post control release: the Liberty Bowl event at Big Sky Resort, S. Savage 2010).