

WHITE RISK INSTRUCTOR – A PRESENTATION TOOL FOR AVALANCHE EDUCATORS

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ABSTRACT: Many avalanche educators meanwhile use the interactive avalanche learning-CD 'White Risk' for presentations in avalanche courses. Since this CD is designed mainly for autodidactic learning, it is not ideally suited to teach a class. However, all the movies, animations, photos, graphics and sound in 'White Risk' offer huge potential for other educational uses like presentations in avalanche training courses. Therefore SLF developed a presenter tool called 'White Risk Instructor' together with all Swiss organisations involved in avalanche education. This tool based on Flash contains a media folder with all movies, animations, photos and graphics from 'White Risk', a creator- and a player application. With the creator-application one can select e.g. movies or photos and order them into a slide show. Presentations can be saved as an xml-file, which does not use much space because each animation, video or photo is only saved once. Therefore presentations are very economic in disk space and can be exchanged easily among other educators e.g. by email. The player-application then will be used to run the presentation. White Risk Instructor is available in German, French and English.

KEYWORDS: avalanche education, risk, white risk, didactics, teaching, presentation

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the main goal of the SLF is to reduce people's exposure to avalanche risk. The main exposure applies nowadays to recreationists in backcountry terrain. Therefore the demand on avalanche education has increased. 2006 the SLF released in collaboration with the National Accident Insurance Company (SUVA) the interactive avalanche learning CD 'White Risk' (Harvey, 2006). 'White Risk' is a comprehensive e-learning product for autodidactic avalanche education. It is designed in a modern multimedia-based way with interactive elements, commented movies and animations, as well as exercises to test personal avalanche knowledge. It appeals to the young as well as to the young at heart, to beginners as well as to professionals. Many avalanche educators meanwhile use this attractive media for presentations in avalanche training courses. Since this CD is designed mainly for autodidactic learning, it is not ideally suited to teach a class.

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The photos, graphics, animations and movies first of all are to small and secondly are surrounded by text, which disturbs a presentation. Further an educator has to be quite sophisticated with the application to find his way through 'White Risk' during a presentation.

Possibilities of being able to use all the audio-visual content for presentations were demanded. Therefore SLF developed, together with all associations in Switzerland, who are involved in avalanche education, as well as with the company Atfront GmbH, a tool called 'White Risk Instructor', to create presentations and avalanche training courses.

2. OBJECTIVES

The goal of this instructor tool was to create a separate application to build presentations with photos, graphics, movies and animations out of 'White Risk'. A presentation should run on any PC or Mac independent of age and software. To avoid presentation problems with movies in certain programs, we wanted to approach a Flash based, simple to use tool. Therefore the only requirement you would need is a flash player, which can be downloaded for free from the world wide web. Finished presentations should be saved as an xml-file.

3. STRUCTURE

'White Risk Instructor' contains a media folder, a creator and a player application (Fig. 1). The media folder comprehends 506 photos, 78 graphics, 24 animations and 33 movies from 'White Risk'. This audio-visual material is filed in folders arranged in the same way as the chapters in 'White Risk'. So specific photos in the interactive CD e.g. can be found in the according folder of the instructor tool.

With the 'creator' presentations can be built containing several slides (Fig.2). Presentations can be saved as xml-files, where as photos, movies etc. stay in the media folder. That way presentations use little disk space. A player application allows displaying the created presentation in full screen size.

Own pictures saved as jpg-file or movies converted to flv-files can be put into the media folder and therefore are available to supplement presentations in 'White Risk Instructor' (a free video converter can be found e.g. under www.winff.org).

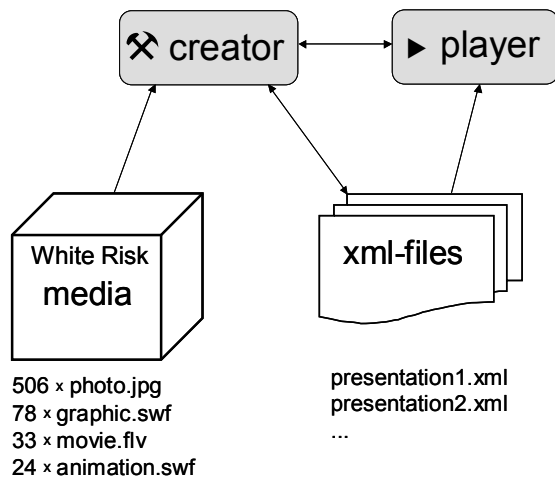


Figure 1: Structure of 'White Risk Instructor' with the two applications creator and player.

4. CREATE A PRESENTATION

Fig. 2 shows the interface of the creator application. At the beginning empty slides have to be created and filled with photos, graphics, animations or movies, which can be chosen from the media folder. You can complete a slide with text or other graphic objects. 'White Risk Instructor' also offers the opportunity to copy slides or objects from existing xml-presentations. That way, new presentations can be created quickly out of others. You can copy presentations with movies or images and change them to your needs, without using a lot of disk space as each image is only saved once. A play button allows starting the presentation in full screen size. Due to the flash based solution, movies or animations can be interrupted anytime through the instructor himself. There is also the opportunity to do hand drawings with the mouse while presenting.

5. CONCLUSION

'White Risk Instructor' offers avalanche educators to do professional presentations with audio-visual material from the interactive learning CD 'White Risk'. All photos, graphics, animations and movies are stored in one media pool. This pool containing 640 files can be supplemented with own photos or movies. Educators can exchange presentation easily with disk space saving xml-files and present them, if they all have the media folder with the same content. 'White Risk' and 'White Risk Instructor' complement one another for avalanche training courses. The interactive learning CD is ideal for participants to learn autodidactic, while the avalanche instructor can use the presentation tool for teaching. 'White Risk Instructor' is available in German, French and English. It runs on PC and Mac and is available under www.whiterisk.org.



Figure 2: User interface of the creator application in 'White Risk Instructor'. ❶: Folders and slides in the media folder arranged in the same way as the chapters in 'White Risk'. ❷: Bar showing content of a selected folder. ❸: Order of slides. ❹: Content on slide called 'new snow'. ❺: Tools to edit objects on slide. ❻: Flags to switch around opened xml-files. ❼: Buttons to save, open or create new presentations as well as play button to start presentation.

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7. REFERENCE

Harvey, S. 2006: White Risk – Interactive avalanche learning CD. Proceedings International Snow Science Workshop, Telluride CO.