

RAISING AWARENESS OF NATURAL HAZARDS THROUGH IMAGE DISSEMINATING AND POPULARISING THE UNDERSTANDING OF HAZARDS; TWO COMPLIMENTARY INITIATIVES

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INTRODUCTION

The right to information on natural hazards has existed in France since the law of 22 July 1987. With the occurrence of different disasters over time, the law has been continually expanded and added to, resulting in a list of different procedures which are rarely connected and thus having disputed effectiveness. The recent report by the Conseil Général de l'Environnement et du Développement Durable on the flooding of the Var in June 2010 provides a further reminder: the legally recognised measures for the dissemination of preventive information are too seldom used (e.g. the DICRIM) and when they are, they are rarely truly effective (e.g. IAL information). In the Var, as in other parts of France, two points are worth highlighting:

- The lack of understanding of hazards by the population and the local authorities does not result from a lack of information or technical understanding of the subject (PPR have been validated, hazard and flooding maps have been drawn-up and hydrological studies are being carried out) but rather from limitations in the dissemination of that information.
- The technical nature of the studies and the complexity of the hazards concerned mean that the simple dissemination is insufficient and a popularisation of the information is necessary, to facilitate its understanding and allow for the development of an appropriate risk-aware behaviour.

Over the last decade, IRMa has been attempting to tackle these two issues through its work on preventive information:

- The dissemination of information is mainly based on the use of different websites and databases.
- The popularisation of the information is based on the use of photography and more recently, video.

THE WEBSITES: DISSEMINATION AND SHARING OF INFORMATION



Fig. 1
www.irma-grenoble.com



Fig. 2 www.risques.tv



Fig. 3
www.mementodumaire.net



Fig. 4 <http://www.irma-grenoble.com/10veurey/>

www.irma-grenoble.com: The global website providing information on hazards in the Rhone-Alpes region. This site includes an event and natural disaster database which is linked to a database containing photographs. The site also includes a catalogue of on-line publications, a weekly press review and news updates (articles, events diary, bulletins), based on work provided by an archivist.

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The website also offers a regional cartography providing a visual update on the progress of different procedures. Individual files are also available which summarise the list of necessary information concerning each ‘commune’ (district). In 2010 the website received 834 000 visitors and 5 million viewed pages.

www.mementodumaire.net: The website ‘Memento du maire’ (Guidelines for a mayor) provides a series of files which are designed to help the mayor to understand his role in the management of risk in his district. The information, based on the current legislation, describes the range of tools available for the implementation of preventative measures. The website is essentially aimed at locally elected representatives and their technical services. In 2010, the site received 244,000 visitors and 710,000 viewed pages.

www.risques.tv: This ‘web-TV’ (video-based website) targets the general public and was launched in 2010 to allow for the reorganisation of the video library within IRMa’s main website. Six themed channels are populated with interviews, news clips, documentaries and conference excerpts. Certain videos are produced and edited by IRMa while others are provided by external partners (France 3 Alpes, districts, local television and other non-profitmaking organizations). In 2010 the site received 54,000 visitors and 237,000 viewed pages.

COMMUNICATION TOOLS THAT TARGET THE GENERAL PUBLIC: POPULARISING AND FACILITATING UNDERSTANDING OF CURRENT KNOWLEDGE OF RISK

The work carried out using photography, whether images taken by IRMa or via their collection from archives, is promoted through exhibitions but also through diverse publications (brochures, magazines, DICRIM, reports, photographic books, etc.). The use of video provides both a platform for the voice of the expert and an accessible medium to promote the understanding of the general public.



Fig. 5 Mobile exhibition



Fig. 6 Photo exhibition



Fig. 7 Photo book



Fig. 8 Documentary film on seismic risk.

SUCCESS THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

The work of communicating and disseminating preventive information on hazards is made possible by the contribution of the different organisations who work on improving the knowledge of risk as well as on the methods and tools for prevention (DDT, Préfectures, ONF/RTM, Cemagref, universities and research centres e.g. LGIT, etc.) The communication tools proposed can only be effective if they are disseminated by the different actors concerned notably the mayors, schools, professionals (mountain guides, assurance companies, property lawyers, etc.), publishers of books and magazines, owners of websites and all other organisation who work in the field.

REFERENCES

- DICRIM: Document d’Information Communal sur les Risques Majeurs (district information booklets on hazards present)
- IAL information: Information Acquereur Locataire (info provided by the seller or landlord of a property to the buyer or tenant)
- PPR: Plans de Prevention des Risques (risk prevention plans)
- IRMa: l’Institut des Risques Majeurs

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