



A new website with real-time dissemination of information on fire activity and meteorological fire danger in Portugal

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In Portugal, like in Mediterranean Europe, fire activity is a natural phenomenon linking climate, humans and vegetation and is therefore conditioned by natural and anthropogenic factors. Natural factors include topography, vegetation cover and prevailing weather conditions whereas anthropogenic factors encompass land management practices and fire prevention policies.

Land management practices, in particular the inadequate use of fire, is a crucial anthropogenic factor that accounts for about 90% of fire ignitions. Fire prevention policies require adequate and timely information about wildfire potential assessment, which is usually based on fire danger rating systems that provide indices to be used on an operational and tactical basis in decision support systems.

We present a new website designed to provide the user community with relevant real-time information on fire activity and meteorological fire danger that will allow adopting the adequate measures to mitigate fire damage. The fire danger product consists of forecasts of fire danger over Portugal based on a statistical procedure that combines information about fire history derived from the Fire Radiative Power product disseminated by the Land Surface Analysis Satellite Application Facility (LSA SAF) with daily meteorological forecasts provided by the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF).

The aim of the website is fourfold; 1) to concentrate all information available (databases and maps) relevant to fire management in a unique platform so that access by end users becomes easier, faster and friendlier; 2) to supervise the access of users to the different products available; 3) to control and assist the access to the platform and obtain feedbacks from users for further improvements; 4) to outreach the operational community and foster the use of better information that increase efficiency in risk management.

The website is sponsored by The Navigator Company, a leading force in the global pulp and paper market. Since the operational start of the website, the number of registered users has been steadily increasing up to a total of 300 users from a wide community that encompasses forest managers, firemen and civil protection officers, personnel from municipalities, academic researchers and private owners.