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Leveraging Different Visual Designs for Communication of Severe Weather Events and their Uncertainty

Ananya Pandya[1], Nathalie Popovic[2], **Alexandra Diehl**[1], Ian Ruginski[1], Sara Fabrikant[1], and Renato Pajarola[1]

[1]University of Zurich, Informatics, Informatics, Switzerland (diehl@ifi.uzh.ch)

[2]Federal Office of Meteorology and Climatology MeteoSwiss, Switzerland

Effective communication of potential weather hazards and its uncertainty to the general public is key to prevent and mitigate negative outcomes from weather hazards. The general public needs effective tools at hand that can allow them to make the best decision as possible during a severe weather event. Currently, there are many approaches for weather forecast visualization, such as contour and thematic maps [5]. However, guidelines and best practices in visualization can help to improve these designs and make them more effective [1, 2].

In this work, we present several interactive visual designs for mobile visualization of severe weather events for the communication of weather hazards, their risks, uncertainty, and recommended actions. Our approach is based on previous work on uncertainty visualization [5], cognitive science [6], and decision sciences for risk management [3, 4]. We propose six configurations that vary the ratio of text vs graphics used in the visual display, and the interaction workflow needed for a non-expert user to make an informed decision and effective actions. Our goal is to test how efficient these configurations are and to what degree they are suitable to communicate weather hazards, associated uncertainty, risk, and recommended actions to non-experts. Future steps include two cycle of evaluations, consisting of a first pilot to rapidly test the prototype with a small number of participants, collect actionable insights, and incorporate potential improvements. In a second user study, we will perform a crowd-sourced extensive evaluation of the visualization prototypes.

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