



Newsletter No. 3 – October 2015

After a long preparation period, several new HADES products are now available or just about to be launched. Users usually don't notice the large amount of work that goes into preparing a new product such as the learning medium or the new interactive atlas. However, Felix Hauser, one of the principal investigators of HADES, is intimately familiar with the long journey to a complete product. In the interview below, he explains the steps that are taken to make HADES fit for the future.

On May 22, the learning medium "Understanding Water" was presented to the public. "Understanding Water" offers a new approach for teaching students about hydrological extreme events.

This summer, hikers could hardly complain about the weather. If anything, there was too much sun! Such sunny weather was perfect for testing the three new "Water World" excursions in the Lower Valais, which fortunately offer many opportunities to cool off. Now that the test phase is complete, the excursion guides will be revised and prepared for the final layout. Since printing is only possible after the end of the 2015 hiking season, here is a pictorial taste of the varied walks.



Excursions "Tracks along the Water World", Series 7

The Lower Valais offers hikers many well-known attractions. The three new HADES excursion guides complement this diversity with new combinations and lesser-known background information. Each excursion is self-contained, and all the necessary information is available in a practical book in postcard format. The new excursion routes offer significantly different levels of difficulty:

very easy

Excursion 7.3

Large parts of excursion 7.3 around Saillon are easily accessible for families and, with a hiking time of only about 2 hours, offer the possibility for a pleasant half-day trip. Excursion topics connect the region's past with the present and future. From the Rhone on the Salentse to Canal de Gru, this excursion sheds light on some of the secrets of water. Saillon itself delights the imagination with its well-preserved medieval core and invites you to linger and relax.

easy

Excursion 7.2

Paths along the old water canals (Bisses) in Savièse above Sion can be followed even with small children. However, some of the paths are narrow and uneven in places, and the beginning of the path through the Lentine vineyard runs across an exposed terrace where cautious steps are important. The whole tour can be completed in half a day, but as you will come across many interesting places that invite you to linger, you can easily spend a full day enjoying this excursion. You will learn about the water problems that have always confronted residents in this area, and about their often-astonishing solutions.

challenging

Excursion 7.1

The starting point for excursion 7.1 to nearly 3000 meters above sea level is open to all, thanks to the availability of mountain railways. After a comfortable arrival, you will find breathtaking views from the Pointe de la Plaine Morte, which offers an interesting backdrop for learning about

how water is managed in this intensively used tourist region. Only surefooted hikers should continue from here, but those who dare will encounter varied and impressive landscapes full of the traces of water. The travel time for excursion 7.1 is about 5 hours, and hikers should be prepared for about 1400 m of descent. Everyone can again visit the last stage of the hike along the Tseuzier reservoir, where hiking trails lead around the reservoir and a road provides access to the region.



Impressions of the three new excursions in Series 7 (Photos: Tom Reist)

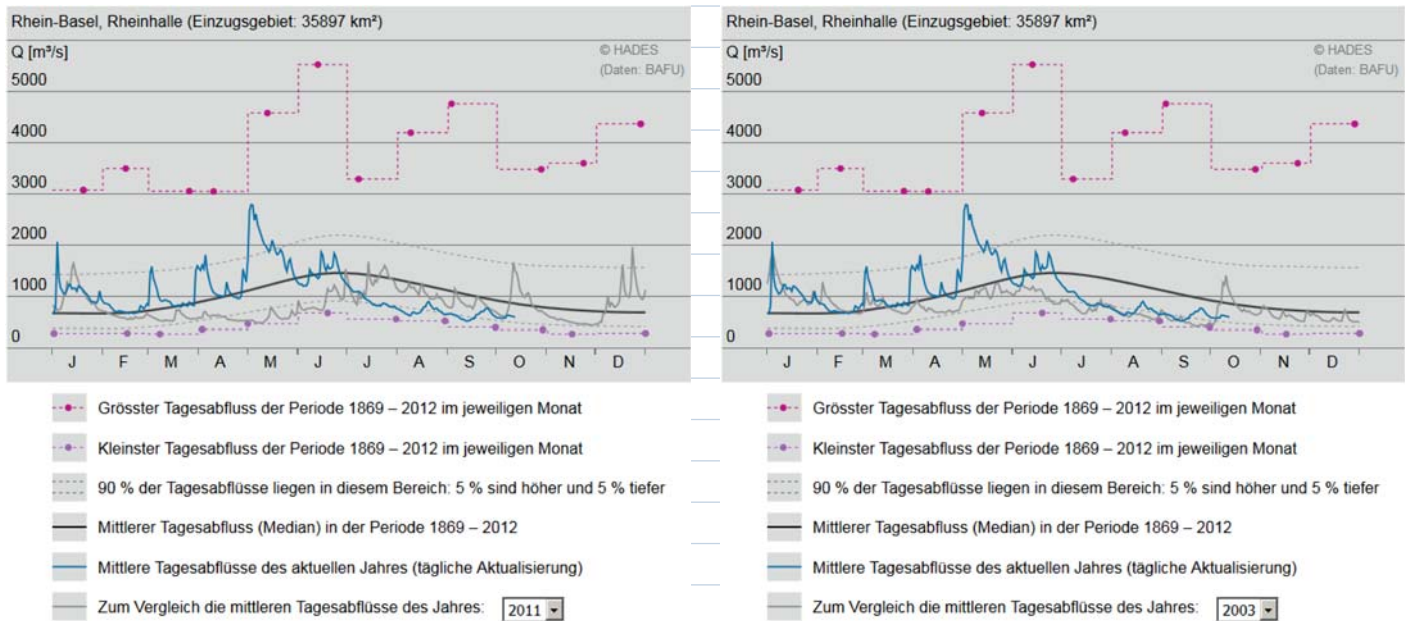


“Understanding Water” – Teaching material for high schools

As project manager Rolf Weingartner noted during the press conference in May, extreme weather events have intensified over the last 30 years. Thus, the choice of hydrological extreme events as the framework theme for the first module of the learning material “Understanding Water” is both timely and relevant, as many students have already experienced examples of floods, water shortages and heavy precipitation. This module allows students to build on their own knowledge and personal experiences, and to use the fact sheets to verify their impressions. As the author Matthias Probst has found during the course of his dissertation work at the University of Bern, knowledge gained through such analysis-experience-oriented learning is easier to retain and apply later in life.

The electronic versions of the fact sheets are linked to a variety of image, text and audio documents. This wealth of background information helps students make the connection between reality and the concise information in the tutorials. The homepage also offers an exciting and stimulating environment for active visitors. For example, clicking on a discharge station for one of the great Alpine rivers summons a diagram of the current

annual discharge from Switzerland. This can then be compared with previously measured load curves, which date back to 1869 in the case of the Rhine River. This allows spontaneous insight into nearly 147 years of Swiss hydrology. For example, students can compare the current summer with hot summers of the past, such as those of 2011 and 2003.



Examples of the discharge diagrams available at www.hades.unibe.ch/de/produkte/learnmedium

The learning tool is available online free of charge. Printed versions of the fact sheets will be sold by the educational publishers HEP (D) and LEP (F).



HADES – Fit for the future?

Interview with Felix Hauser, HADES co-principal investigator

HADES: The printed version of HADES has been successful for nearly 20 years. Why have you decided to abandon this concept?

Hauser: The benefits of a digital atlas are obvious, especially the fact that a digital version is much more accessible than the printed cards. Digitizing the atlas also very elegantly solves the problem of regularly updating the material.

HADES: HADES has been criticised for its limited accessibility and lack of timeliness. Is the decision to stop printing the maps a capitulation to the spirit of modernity?

Hauser: Our goal remains the same: to ensure that as many people as possible are able to use the data and products of HADES. But times have changed. In the early days of HADES, there were just the printed maps, which encouraged a democratisation of knowledge. The atlases were available in public places and could – in contrast to the then very restricted access to digital data – be used by all. Today, it is usually very cumbersome to produce and use a printed atlas. However, the Internet is now widely available and accessible at any time.

HADES: Then everything is only available online now?

Hauser: Not at all! The atlas is still available in print form, as are the excursion guides. The new learning medium – currently in the second work phase – is available both in print and online. The printed worksheets from 2000 are also still very much in demand. However, access to all of these products is almost exclusively via the website.

HADES: Your record shows that HADES has achieved a considerable product range. In your view, what is still missing?

Hauser: We keep an eye on new possibilities and technological developments that make the user experience more pleasant. New apps are conceivable, as are new print products on selected topics. But in my opinion, it is more important that we continue to develop the content of existing products, keeping them up to date and filling any thematic gaps.



HADES: What thematic gaps?

Hauser: There are quite a few. For example, urban hydrology is not well represented, and issues of water supply and sanitation are largely missing from the atlas. A new chapter on "Water and People" should help fill this gap. There is also a big gap with regard to soil hydrology, and of course the spatial and temporal resolution of the atlas as a whole can be improved.

HADES: Is the HADES therefore "fit for the future"?

Hauser: Yes, of course. However, we try to avoid fashion trends. Technology is changing very rapidly, and it is quite difficult to adapt scientific content to such rapidly changing trends. We therefore rely on media that will remain relevant over a longer time frame.

HADES: We reported earlier on the nearly completed excursion guides. Do you have a special relationship with the series "Tracks along the Water World"?

Hauser: The story begins in 2003 with a competition for the Year of Water. The challenge was to raise awareness of the importance of water and to deepen the public's understanding of key water issues. We decided to combine the old-fashioned instrument of excursion guides with the contents of the HADES in order to share hydrological knowledge with the public in an engaging, "hands-on" way. We didn't win the competition, but we were able to publish the first of the excursion guides in 2004.

HADES: In your opinion, which excursion guide has been the most successful?

Hauser: That's difficult to say. Personally, I like the multi-faceted guides that pick up on and explain local peculiarities. Many excursions are scenically attractive and varied, such as "The Saltina Flood". But I also like the guides that follow water to places you don't normally see or visit, such as those for Zurich or Lausanne.



Felix Hauser has worked on the HADES project in various positions since 1990. In 2011, he assumed responsibility for the operational management of the project. Thematically, his heart beats the fastest for urban water issues. (Photo: Eliane Debrunner)

HADES: Finally, what excites you about working for HADES?

Hauser: In particular, the variety of topics that comes together in the HADES. It's not just about hydrology, but about many facets of physical geography. For me, it is important to share this view with a wider audience. HADES offers many opportunities for doing so via its various products, so working for HADES is always challenging and interesting.

HADES map will be the "Map of the week"

As part of the International Map Year 2015–16, the Zurich Central Library and the SGK will publish a new "map of the week" every week from September 2015 through 30 December 2016 (www.kartografie.ch/imy/intro.html). On Friday, 11.20.2016, the map of the week will be HADES' "Influence on rivers by water power stations and the lake control" (HADES 5.3).

We thank everyone for their interest in HADES and wish you all successful projects and enjoyable experiences on the water!

HADES Project Management, October 2015

Rolf Weingartner

Felix Hauser

Tom Reist