The Web-based SWISS WORLD ATLAS interactive –
Evaluation of User Experiences

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Focus Points

1. Characteristics of the SWISS WORLD ATLAS interactive

2. The Potential Use of the SWISS WORLD ATLAS interactive

3. Adoption and Current Use

4. Final Remarks
1. Characteristics of the SWISS WORLD ATLAS interactive

The Printed SWISS WORLD ATLAS

Published since 1910

Publisher: Konferenz der kantonalen Erziehungsdirektoren (EDK) 
(≈ Conference of the Education Ministers of the Swiss Cantons).

Former editors-in-chief: August Aeppli, Eduard Imhof, Ernst Spiess.


Status at present:
- Map collection of more than 400 maps or representations.
- Exemplary approach.
- Languages: German, French, Italian.
- Most used school atlas in Switzerland.
1. Characteristics of the *Swiss World Atlas Interactive*

**Deficits of the Printed School Atlas**

- Only static maps and representations.

- Only orthogonal views.

- Map content often too dense and too complex

  (especially in ... geological maps, economic maps, land use maps, etc.).

Example of an economic map section of the printed *Swiss World Atlas, 2010.*
1. Characteristics of the **SWISS WORLD ATLAS interactive**

**Concept and Functionality**

**Technical concept:**
- Programmed in Java.
- Start by Java Webstart.
- Based on raster maps (tile technique).

**Graphical User Interface:**
- Attractive Design.
- Intuitively to handle.
- Easy to learn.

**Special functions:**
- Different map search (by regions, themes, overview maps).
- Split screen and synchronizing tools.
- Tools for teaching aids (print, export, safe favourites).
1. Characteristics of the *SWISS WORLD ATLAS interactive*

**Types of Map Representations (1)**

Interactive topographic and thematic maps, city maps, etc.
1. Characteristics of the *SWISS WORLD ATLAS interactive*

Types of Map Representations (2)

**Block diagrams**

(for large scale map section)
1. Characteristics of the SWISS WORLD ATLAS interactive

Types of Map Representations (3)

Virtual globe
(for world wide topics)
1. Characteristics of the *SWISS WORLD ATLAS interactive*

**Types of Map Representations**  (4)

**Dynamic, interactive (2D and 3D) models and visualisations**
(for static illustrations, info graphics, etc.)
Launch and Promotional Activities

Launch of the free version: October 2010

Written contributions:
- Journal articles.
- Bulletin notifications.
- Flyers and leaflets.

Presentations and demonstrations:
- Press conference (incl. video clip in Swiss TV News).
- Demonstrations at didactic exhibitions and invited visits.
- Workshops in teacher education programs and courses.
- Video clips (on public screens).

Internet:
- Website (www.swissworldatlas.ch).
- Newsletter.
2. The Potential Use of the **SWISS WORLD ATLAS interactive**

Potential Use in Teaching Situations

- Wall maps (for in-class situations).
- Computer lab work.
- Students’ individual or home work.
- Derivation of teaching materials.
2. The Potential Use of the **SWISS WORLD ATLAS interactive**

Additional Value of the **SWISS WORLD ATLAS interactive**

- New possibilities for map presentation and analysis.
- Layer technique (for enhanced or reduced map content).
- Adapted functionalities.
- Better support of students at individual or home work with maps.
- Increase of motivation.
2. The Potential Use of the SWISS WORLD ATLAS interactive

Limits of the SWISS WORLD ATLAS interactive

- Limited map content.
- Limited presentation modes (author driven).
- No possibility of data import.

- High dependency of functioning technical equipment and infrastructure (computers, Internet, computer labs, etc.).
- Dependency of IT support.
3. Adoption and Current Use

Indicators of Current Use Rate (1)

Indicators:

- Number of server access.
- Number of logins.
- Statistical key figures.
- Processor load.
- User feedbacks.
- Newsletter submissions.
3. Adoption and Current Use

User Feedback

Asked aspects:

- Anonymous user data.
- Performance and Internet capacity.
- Technical information.
- General comments.

![User Feedback Form](image_url)
Indicators of Current Use Rate (2)

However: Indicators give only quantitative numbers of server access (incl. multi use).

**Missing aspects:**

- No qualitative indicators about purposes, thematic diversification, utility and profitability, etc.

- No detailed information about map use (e.g. selected maps and layers, used presentation modes, length of stay, etc.).
3. Adoption and Current Use

Survey about Current Atlas Use (1)

Systematic, but non-representative user survey (by Lorenzo Oleggini, January 2013):

- 200 asked points of 12 aspects.
- Response of 31 Swiss geography teachers (German speaking).
- Secondary school levels I and II (7-9th; 10-13th grade)

Results about the use of atlases in general:

- Use of a printed atlas: 30 (96.7% of 31).
- Use of the printed SWISS WORLD ATLAS: 29 (93.5%).
- Knowledge about the SWISS WORLD ATLAS interactive: 28 (90.3%).
- Use of the SWISS WORLD ATLAS interactive: 23 (74.2%).
3. Adoption and Current Use

Survey about Current Atlas Use (2)

Results about the use of the SWISS WORLD ATLAS interactive (28 teachers):

- For deriving teaching materials: 19 (67.9%)
- For projected wall maps: 18 (64.3% of 28).
- In combination with the printed SWISS WORLD ATLAS: 10 (35.7%).
- For students’ individual work or computer labs: 7 (25.8%).
- For students’ home work: 3 (10.7%).
3. Adoption and Current Use

Survey about Current Atlas Use (3)

Reasons why not to use the **SWISS WORLD ATLAS interactive**:  
- No thematic ideas or no intention to use: 5 (17.8% of 28).
- No added value: 5 (17.8%).
- Problems to reserve a computer lab: 1 (3.6%).
4. Final Remarks

Conclusions and Future Activities

Conclusions:
- SWISS WORLD ATLAS interactive is well-known.
- Plays a vivid role in Swiss geography education.
- Teachers feedback positive (in general).
- Use rates reasonable.
- Expectations higher!

Future activities needed:
- More systematic and detailed surveys.
- More testing in in-class situations.
- Increasing promotional activities (esp. workshops and demonstrations).
- Adaption and developments of computer technology (e.g. mobile devices).
- Monitoring of didactic and societal trends (e.g. social media).
Visit and explore the SWISS WORLD ATLAS interactive:

www.swissworldatlas.ch

Thank You for your Attention!

Any Questions?

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