

Interactive comment on “Modeling rapid mass movements using the shallow water equations” by S. Hergarten and J. Robl

P. Bartelt

bartelt@slf.ch

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As developers of the software system RAMMS, we certainly welcome model comparisons and see the necessity of continually improving numerical models. However, the authors of this paper, term RAMMS a "commercial software". This is certainly not true, as all money generated from RAMMS is used for further research in natural hazards. Money is used to finance doctoral students, buy and construct sensors to measure the dynamics of avalanches, rockfalls and debris flows. And, more importantly, to educate users in model application. There are certainly no personal or commercial profits generated from RAMMS. In fact, the WSL invests far more money than we obtain from all the license agreements with engineering offices. It is an unfortunate situation that funds

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for natural hazard research are sparse and not continuous enough to support long-term research. The authors would like to suggest they are providing a service to the natural hazard community by introducing open-source codes. However, our experience is that users demand support, education and experience, especially the selection of starting conditions and model parameters, when solving real-life problems. This is particularly important as the software is used for hazard mapping and mitigation measure planning, the primary reasons for model development. In our opinion it is simply dangerous to provide software without extensive calibration, support and education, endangering the credibility of all models in practice. With RAMMS we have found a sustainable solution to provide the necessary support and education, while, at the same time, establishing open collaborations for future model developments.

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