

SAFE FLYING



A VIRAL VIDEO OF A PERSISTENT BEAR CUB HAD A MOTIVATIONAL MESSAGE – JUST NOT THE ONE EVERYONE THOUGHT

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Like the bear cub depicted in it, 'Fallen Bear Cub Climbs Back to Mama' (<https://youtu.be/DjYH7D3sWFg>) went from outcrop to outcrop of Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and other social media services notching up millions of likes and just as many exclamations of "Ah! How sweet!"

On LinkedIn, it was the motivational video par excellence – the ultimate illustration of 'if at first you don't succeed, try, try again,' as the baby bear climbing the snowy mountains slipped down then climbed back up dozens of metres of treacherous ice, before slipping back down again, only to resume its upwards journey yet again and finally be reunited with its mother. How many people saw in that video proof that their careers could do the same, if only they redoubled their efforts? At the very least, if they shared it, they could convince potential employers of their employability and tenacity.

Naturally, in this era of #FakeNews and people no longer able to tell what is real and what is fake, there was cynicism, with some people who've been in the geospatial industry maybe a little too long suggesting that the cub was actually a robot, for example ("Look at how it doesn't need to breathe after each fall"). But for the most part, people simply admired the bear cub and were heartened by an apparently moving story.

Then the animal experts got to see it – and were horrified. What everyone had failed to notice was that a UAV with a camera had taken this video and that bear cub fell and

nearly died because of it. The mother bear even pushed her cub away from herself at one point because she thought the UAV was an eagle, ready to swoop on her cub. And although it's hard to prove, it's likely the bear and cub were only on such a dangerous slope in the first place because they'd been trying to get away from their nosey pursuer.

All of which should be the true motivational message from the video for UAV users everywhere – use them wisely and safely, because you could be putting lives at risk. In this issue, two of our articles look at that often-overlooked aspect of UAV-use. On page 26, Roman Paulus and Gisbert Sacher explain how they were able to safely use their UAV to survey a church located near an airport in gusting winds, with pedestrians walking around them. Not all UAVs are created equal when it comes to safety and sometimes, stability and resilience are even more important than the usual factors such as battery life.

We also look to the future of UAV and air safety, as well as the present. On page 19, Alistair MacLenan considers the advent of flying cars and wonders if geospatial artificial intelligence is the only way to make them truly safe. And on page 22, Piotr Sirko looks ahead to a time when UAVs are not just unmanned but completely autonomous and wonders both how to fly them safely and who'll take responsibility if there's an accident.

I hope you enjoy the issue and find it useful in your work.

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