

## UCSD Researcher Captures Video of Fire's Early Stages

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A camera that is part of wireless networking research sits on Mt. Laguna, taking a picture about every 10 seconds. As the wildfires broke out, it also happened to capture the Cedar Fire's early stages. Hans-Werner Braun, a research scientist with San Diego Supercomputer Center, converted the still images into animations that showed the spread of the fire, 300 times faster than it actually happened. The dramatic series shows both the firestorm gathering momentum and enormous billowing clouds of smoke.

On Wednesday morning, Braun posted the animation to a mailing list that included the sheriff's department. The sheriff called Braun and asked if he, Braun, could create about 20 DVDs for a press briefing on the 30th. He did and at the briefing the media pounced on the stirring images - the animation was shown both locally and nationally, including on CNN.

Beyond the media blitz, San Diego City Council members, air pilots, emergency workers, a man involved with San Diego's air quality, and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection all expressed interest in taking a further look at the images.

"This was just a little part of larger scheme," Braun said, "And we happened to be in a good spot [to capture these images]." The camera on Mt. Laguna is one of dozens across San Diego and Riverside counties - and is only one small part of The High Performance Wireless Research and Education Network (HPWREN). The HPWREN team, led by Principal Investigator Braun, is creating a high-performance, wide-area, wireless network. The National Science Foundation-funded network has many uses, including network analysis research and connecting field researchers from several disciplines.

Braun said it's too early to tell what impact the images will have. However, he hopes some good will come. "It's like any research project," said Braun, "You don't know what will come out of it. You just hope new insights will come."