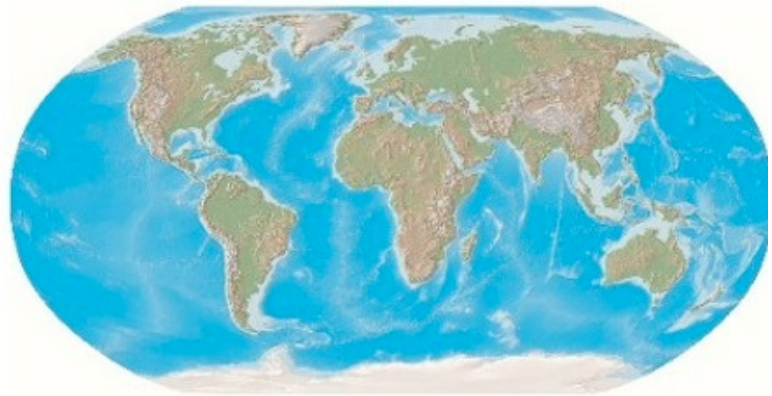


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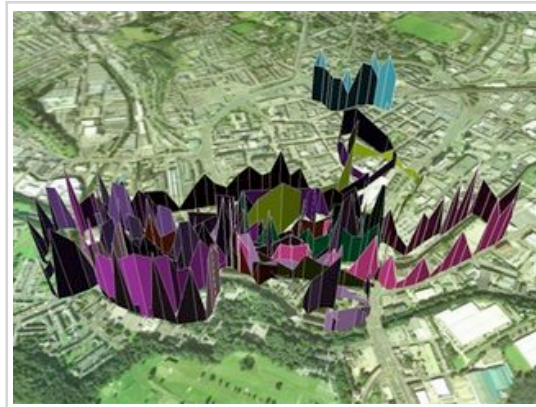
A Mapping & Navigation Blog



[APR 29, 2007](#)

Artist's Maps Don't Lie

Rather than mapping geographic features, London-based artist, [Christian Nold](#) combines GPS receivers with polygraph technology to map a city's "emotions".



The [San Mateo County Times](#) profiles Mr. Nold's latest mapping effort: an emotional map of San Francisco:

First, he outfits volunteers with global positioning system devices and the sensors used in lie detector tests. Then, he sends his subjects out to wander their neighborhoods. When they return, Nold asks them to recount what they saw and felt when the polygraph recorded a quickened heartbeat or an elevated blood pressure.

He's the first to acknowledge the intimate portraits that result from his work won't help a confused tourist get from Fisherman's Wharf to Golden Gate Park.

Instead, by taking polygraph technology out of the criminal realm, his goal is to offer a commentary on the subjective nature of reality. Maps, he notes, have always been influenced by whoever makes them, citing the globes that used to show Europe as being considerably larger than Africa.

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"There are different ways of mapping the city that aren't strictly about the practicalities or financial sensibilities that we usually guide our urban planning with," he said.

Mr. Nold noted that one limitation of his technology is that it cannot detect whether someone's emotional arousal is positive or negative. The artist told the Times that he has spurned most attempts to put his application to more commercial uses, though he is working with a government agency in London to gauge residents' perceptions of crime in public housing. One thing he has discovered is that people tend to respond to social interactions much more than to buildings.

Mr. Nold's mapping project in San Francisco is scheduled to last five weeks and will require 80 to 100 volunteers to map one square mile.

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posted by Roger Hart @ [4/29/2007](#)

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