

Google Earth Environment Guide

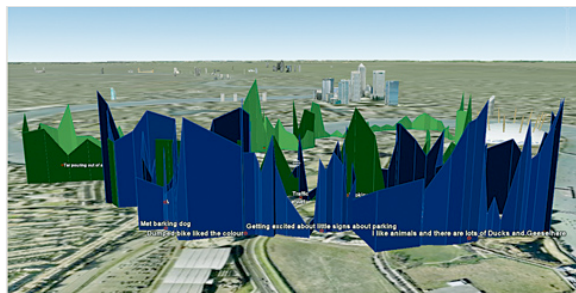
The free software from Google gives scientists a new world view

By Michael Behar Posted 06.13.2008 at 1:59 pm

Emotion Map

Thousands of well-measured steps show how to build a city

Google Earth always bothered Christian Nold. "There is something odd about the way it makes the whole world look the same," says Nold, an artist and designer who lives in London. "It has no representation of local differences." Three years ago, he set out to change that. He wired 100 volunteers in Greenwich, England, with wearable devices that recorded their GPS location and "galvanic response"—the same sweat test used in lie detectors. He then instructed his subjects to go for a walk and note any flurries of excitement. After about six months, Nold combined all the data in Google Earth and unveiled the first interactive map that melded geography with human sensory data. A fly-through tour of Greenwich is jammed with color-coded sensory spikes (each volunteer is assigned a unique color) and accompanying textual annotations. "I like animals . . . lots of ducks and geese here," comments one user. "Ugly. How can anyone live there?" asks another, who registers a sharp rise on her emotion meter. And perhaps most distressing, "New roads make it confusing to get to the pub."



Taking Heart: Graphs show people's biological responses to a cityscape.

Bluesky/Infoterra/The Geoinformation Group/Digital Globe/Google Earth

Nold dubs the process "biomapping," which he conceived of as an art project. But when city planners and community groups saw his work, they immediately enlisted him as a consultant. His emotion maps, they reasoned, could be used to pinpoint urban blight. "We could see how people were reacting to social spaces, like parks and plazas, or where there were strong reactions at traffic crossings," Nold says. He was, in effect, bringing hard data to the guesswork of urban planning.

Thanks to Nold and more than 1,000 volunteers, there are now emotion maps of Suomenlinna, Finland; Siena, Italy; Rotterdam, the Netherlands; San Francisco; and half a dozen areas in England. Next up: an emotion map of Paris, and a map of noise pollution near a London airport that's slated for expansion.

[Download the Greenwich, England biomap here \[KMZ file\]](#)

Page 3 of 5

[« first](#) [« previous](#) [1](#) | [2](#) | [3](#) | [4](#) | [5](#) | [next](#) [» last](#) »

2 COMMENTS

[MindBodyHealthP...](#)

Article Rating: ☆☆☆☆☆

08/08/08 at 2:20 pm

Google earth, is amazing, and if it can help to detect geothermal threats, it should be developed for such use to detect natural phenomenon, such as Methane gas escaping from the sea floor have long been suspect as the cause of misterious engine malfunctions within the Bermuda Triangle, it makes sence that we should track and moinitor areas of high concentration of methane and other geothermic gases above ground and at sea, which may hinder the lift of planes causing crashes and water displacements causing floating vessels to lose buoncy or sink. Dr Joyce Peters, Mind Body Health Programs, Products, Productions, Publications & Practice Expansions, Inc.

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[m7mad](#)

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10/05/08 at 4:11 am

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