GPS, lie detectors and emotion maps

Christian Nold's biomapping projects use a combination of GPS, lie detector technology and Google Earth to create emotion maps of place.

Christian Nold is an artist and researcher with an interest in mapping the ways in which people feel about space and place. Biomapping participants, usually gathered together by Nold at arts or community centres, are briefed and handed a special biomapping device, designed by Nold, which combines GPS and galvanic skin resistance recording. A digital camera completes the kit, and off the biomappers go, requested to take an hour's walk around the local area, taking pictures as they go.

Back at base, the mappers hand over their devices and images. Nold quickly maps the

The biomapping kit

walkers' routes on to Google Earth with each walker's series of jagged 'emotion' troughs and peaks clearly illustrated.

The rest, as they say, is magic. Encouraged and stimulated by seeing the feelings so graphically visualised, mappers are keen to talk about their experiences and feelings relating to place – likes and hates, memories, ideas for improvement. Nold takes down the information, later using the notes, digital images and the mapper's comments and drawings to create both online and, with the help of colleague Daniela Boraschi, beautifully drawn printed maps.

So far, Nold and his team have mapped many parts of London including Greenwich, Fulham, Brentford and Newham, as well as Stockport, Manchester, and San Fransisco, California. The Stockport project also involved developers

Biomapper's route plotted on Google Earth

in a bid to assess community aspiration in a regeneration zone.

Biomapping may not be hard science, and may not compete with the complex and megadata-driven spatial analysis tools used by commercial practices. Yet it definitely gets people talking and sharing views, and that has to be a plus in anyone's book.

Brentford Biopsy data plotted on Google Earth

Find out more:
http://www.softhook.com
http://biomapping.net
A multimedia presentation of Christian Nold's work is available on the RUDI website
ww.rudi.net

Technology is powering a car-sharing revolution

Car sharing clubs are one of the business stories of 2008, in spite of the economic downturn and rises in fuel prices. USA-based Zipcar, launched eight years ago in Boston and operational across the US and in London, is showing us how technology-based sharing ought to be done

Using Zipcar, technologically designed on the essence of eBay-style trust, new members sign up to an account online, and make reservations as and when they need a car using a personalised credit card-sized smart card called a Zipcard. Once the card is activated online, personal reservations can be made in seconds online on via a mobile phone. The Zipcar is unlocked and locked by placing the Zipcard over the reserved car's windscreen reader. The next step is to extend the technology to service trip and expense sharing, as GoLoco, a company started by Robin Chase, founder and former CEO of Zipcar, is doing in the US. A system of alerts notifies potential riders when friends or interest groups are going places you may want to go. GoLoco technology works out the cost of the shared trip and debits each sharer's account.

Zipcar's custom-built in-house telematic's system enables it to provide its 250,000 members with real-time, online mileage recording and billing, an efficient service and support for companies looking to integrate with Zipcar's fleet management platform. The technology also allows members to rapidly search by vehicle, availability, model and price. Optional email-to-text telephone reminders are also available.

Architects of new build developments and eco towns are busy rethinking the ways cities and urban environments work. Within the mix, car clubs are making their mark in order to enable town planning and property developers to minimise the need for expensive parking infrastructure. Property developers must already consider car clubs as a result of section 106 agreements.

www.zipcar.com