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a conversation at the crossroads of media, marketing and technology

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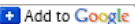
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Mapping the emotional landscape

Artist Christian Nold's [Bio Mapping project](#) uses [galvanic skin response](#) detectors, the [Global Positioning System](#), and [Google Earth](#) to create maps that link physical locations with levels of emotional arousal.

"The Bio Mapping tool allows the wearer to record their Galvanic Skin Response (GSR), which is a simple indicator of emotional arousal in conjunction with their geographical location. This can be used to plot a map that highlights point of high and low arousal. By sharing this data we can construct maps that visualise where we as a community feel stressed and excited.

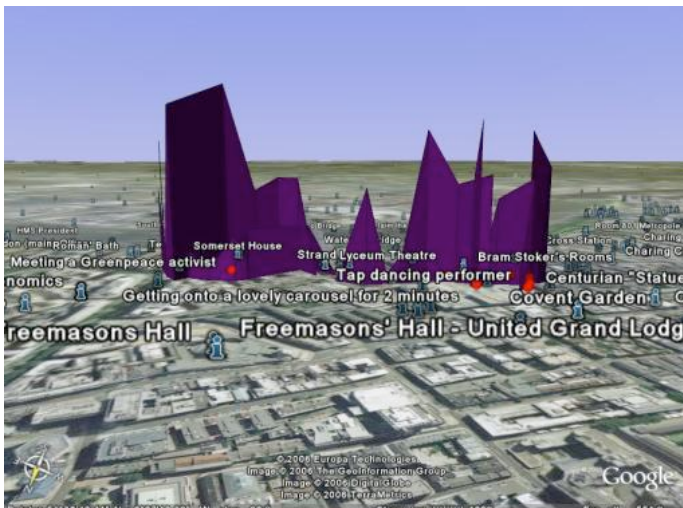
"How will our perceptions of our community and environment change when we become aware of our own and each others intimate body states?"



The emotional maps of six pedestrians on the London Strand

Participants put on the finger cuffs of Nold's Galvanic Skin response sensor/data logger, which also records the wearer's location every 4 seconds. Then they simply walk around, look at things, and interact with the people around them as usual. Nold loads the collected information into a custom software program that maps each person's trek. (The device can hold up to 48 hours' worth of data.) He then uses Google Earth and another open source tool to visualize these maps.

Participants annotate their maps to explain what caused the galvanic spikes during their journeys. For example, here we see that the emotional peak of the walk that the BBC's Tom Hagler took through Covent Garden was "Meeting a Greenpeace activist":



Tom Hagler rides a carousel, encounters street performers and an activist

"I have had an amazing range of people come and show their interest for this project. Everybody from marketing people trying to gauge shopping habits to grassroots activists in Palestinian (sic) trying to demonstrate the stress caused by checkpoints. Bio Mapping visualises our subtle relationship between the emotional world and the external world - anybody who is interested in this juncture might have a 'use' for Bio Mapping."

The Guardian's David Smith [describes his Bio Mapping results here](#), first in a country village, then along Upper and Lower Clapton Roads in London.

Imagine the information that this could provide to - just to give two examples - theme parks, or to vendors at a trade show. Which booth or event excited customers the most, and what left them flat? Of course, excitement isn't always a good thing. An emotional peak at a Disney park restaurant could indicate a surprise visit from Mickey, or a waiter dumping soup in the guest's lap.

(Via [we make money not art](#))

Tags: [Bio Mapping](#), [Google Earth](#), [GPS](#)

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posted on Thursday, June 22, 2006 9:02 AM by [Wade Rockett](#)
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