Portfolio Paper

Cyclone.soc: an Interactive Artwork Visualizing Internet Newsgroup Postings as Cyclonic Weather Conditions

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Fig. 1. *Cyclone.soc* exhibited at Perimeters Boundaries and Borders, Lancaster UK, 2006. Image shows a visitor immersed in virtual storm fronts. Photograph John Marshall.

The artwork *Cyclone.soc*, is an immersive interactive environment that combines Internet debates between extremist religious and political groups with severe weather conditions. Streamed live, newsgroup postings are fitted to the atmospheric topologies of visualizations of cyclonic weather fronts to give the effect of the conversational churn and eddy of newsgroup argument and counter-argument. Postings can then be read by either walking round the space or using controls to manoeuvre to specific formations and conversations. The project uses an edited concentrate of data from different storms derived from publicly available satellite forecasting for the eastern coast of the United States during the autumn of 2005. The information was then re-worked as vector animations traced from the original isobar projections in adobe Illustrator and given depth, dimension and interactivity by being re-programmed using the open GL platform. In resituating newsgroup postings as weather precipitation, the project frees pictorial elements to act as metonyms for different types of cultural and ideological tension enabled and produced through technological domains and develops a suggestive link between these extreme belief systems and their potential wider ecological impacts on the material world.

Further information about this project can be found at the artist's website: http://www.reconnoitre.net.