



Electronic Disturbance Theater (EDT) 2.0/B.A.N.G. Lab

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Transborder Immigrant Tool

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Arte Útil archive nr:
048

Initiator:
Electronic Disturbance Theater
(EDT) 2.0/B.A.N.G. Lab

Location:
United States and Mexico border

Category:
scientific, politics, social

Users:
Ricardo Dominguez, Brett
Stalbaum, Micha Cárdenas, Amy
Sara Carroll, and Elle Mehrmand
(the artists)

Maintained by:
Calit2 (California Institute for
Telecommunications and
Information Technology) at the
University of California in San
Diego.

Duration:
2007 - ongoing

Description:

Researchers, new media artists, and co-founders of the Electronic Disturbance Theater/b.a.n.g. lab, Ricardo Dominguez and Brett Stalbaum, together with a wider team of poets and professors, devised the Transborder Immigrant Tool (TBT) to improve the odds of a safe crossing of the Mexico–U.S. border. Thousands of people have died in their journey, mostly due to its vertiginous and deserted geography. The TBT consists of a GPS system (in this case, standing for Geo Poetic System) with 24 hours of experimental poetry aimed at providing not only inspiration for survival, but also information on food/water caches, security activities, and directions to potentially safer routes. Its simple, user-friendly interface is designed as an easy hack to low-cost cell phones.

Goals:

To guide the immigrants to water safety sites and to increase safety during border crossing.

Beneficial Outcomes:

While it takes the form of a functional opportunity to save the lives of other human beings, the tool is as much a cultural product aimed at bringing into light an important issue: the inequality between classes, drawn along racial and political boundaries, that has caused a deep resentment on both sides of the border.

Images:

