The Drift Table

The Drift Table allows people to float slowly over the British landscape from the comfort of their own home. The weight of objects on the table controls the slow scroll of aerial photographs displayed on a central view-port. Adding weight causes the table to speed up and 'descend' towards the landscape below. Progress is slow – travelling from London to Devon may take days. The current location is shown by a small screen on the side of the table.

People might use the Drift Table to go on journeys, to revisit favourite holiday destinations, or to take a look at friends' homes. They might even use it to explore particular questions about geography or town-planning.

The Drift Table isn't just a reference tool. By creating a kind of crack in the enclosure of the home, the Drift Table promotes daydreaming and imagination. People might glance at it from time to time to see where they are, and even take the current view as a significant portent. They might just get lost and watch the world

go by, or use it as inspiration for real travel. In any case, the Drift Table isn't 'for' anything in a utilitarian sense: it provides a resource that people can use or play with as they wish.

The Drift Table's top rests on four load sensors that send data to a microprocessor system developed by the University of Lancaster. This microprocessor calculates the centre of gravity of objects left on the table, and controls software developed by University College London that stitches together and displays moving aerial photographs. The photographs, donated by GetMapping.com, cover all of England and Wales and total almost a terabyte of data.

The Plane Tracker field trial.

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