



# Crowd Compiler

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1. EARLIEST EVER PHOTOGRAPH OF A CROWD, 1848

Ever since the very first photograph of a crowd was taken in 1848, these images have been controversial for what they purported to show and what they did not show. Even today, most representations of the crowd aim to rationalise and quantify the crowd rather than show its curious dynamics of both density and fluidity. The Crowd Compiler software tries to present the 'crowd in time' rather than a static snapshot.

A fixed camera takes photographs at regular intervals which are then sequentially processed by the software. Using a simple algorithm all the visual changes between the frames are composited and made simultaneously visible. The resulting images widen our senses to this normally invisible 'temporal crowd' which occupies public space.

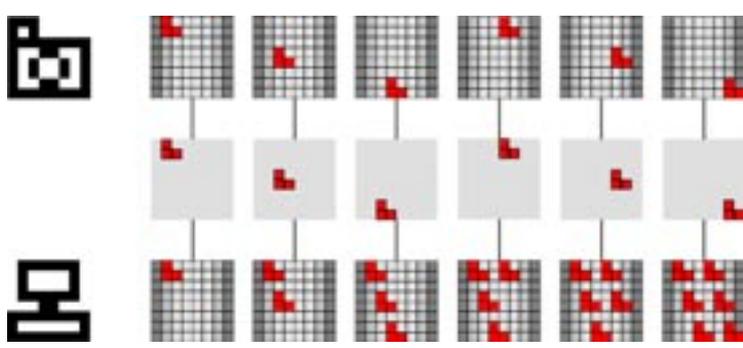


2. AERIAL CROWD-NUMBER SURVEY, 2003

Is this just a special effect? No, the images carry real information about the effect of architecture and urban design on group behaviour. Of equal importance is the fact that the images are created by a process that is legible. The political and technical logic of the

representation becomes visible in the image itself rather than being hidden away. Legibility = visual information + social context + technical transparency

## ORIGINAL SEQUENCE OF PHOTOGRAPHS



## SEQUENCE PROCESSED BY CROWD COMPILER

The Crowd Compiler software operates by comparing each individual pixel between the photographic frame and the background image. If the colour has changed a significant amount, the new pixel is copied to the background. The process continues until all the photographs have been processed.

A functioning prototype of the software that allows you to input and export your own images can be downloaded from:

[www.softhook.com/compiler.htm](http://www.softhook.com/compiler.htm)

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- Picture Captions:
1. The earliest ever photograph of a crowd. The Great Chartist Meeting on Kennington Common, 10th April 1848
  2. Aerial photograph taken as part of a crowd-number survey of the anti-war demonstration in San Francisco 16th February 2003