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IN BEIJING, CITIZENS BUILD AND FLY KITES EQUIPPED WITH AIR POLLUTION MONITORS



TELECOMMUNICATIONS

FLOAT is an initiative to teach residents of Beijing how to build and use kites equipped with air pollution monitors.

We've seen numerous technology-based efforts aimed at giving citizens the power to monitor their environment, including the [Montre Verte](#) project for assessing air quality in Paris. Taking an airborne approach to much the same problem, [FLOAT](#) is an initiative to teach residents of Beijing how to build and use kites equipped with air pollution monitors. Beijing is infamous for its extremely [poor air quality](#), so the topic is of particular concern to residents there. The brainchild of two students from the Harvard School of Graduate Design and Carnegie Mellon University, the [FLOAT](#) project aims to use the playfulness of kite-flying to spark dialogue in the city on urban environmental health issues. The basic premise is to build air quality monitors that can be attached to kites and flown in the city. Instructions and [code](#) for building the necessary components are published on the [FLOAT](#) site, and the project team has been conducting workshops within Beijing to teach residents how to do this themselves. The end goal is to empower city dwellers "to map, record and engage actively in the monitoring of their environment," in the project's own words. Here is a [video](#) that describes the project in more detail. Between today's smartphones and inexpensive DIY components, there's virtually no limit to the monitoring citizens can take part in. One to emulate in a congested urban area near you? Spotted by: Murray Orange

27th September 2012

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