

## Owning the Weather by 2025

My previous minor digital craft project revolved around giving control to an uncontrollable entity, the wind. I build a device which can be used by the wind to set a digital controlling device in motion to create forms and shapes using software resulting in a 2D visual.

In this project my focus was on the device itself, looking for ways to make it work properly and look visually attractive. The end result for the project lacks a firm conceptual base and I decided to pay more attention to this aspect through research on controlling wind or other weather phenomena.

I started my research referring to an article I read after the Beijing Olympic games in 2008. This article informed about the Chinese government using technology to prevent rain showers during its opening ceremony. Using aircrafts and rockets filled with the chemical silver iodide to inject the clouds and release the water particles on a desired location.

Researching this technique, I stumbled across the fact China was not the first to apply this in real life. At first this technique was used by the US air force during the Vietnam war to extend the rain season and hopefully destroy the supply routes used by the enemy. The results where almost zero and there are no known other attempts to use the weather for military purposes.

The concept of using the weather as a weapon of mass destruction interested me and made me want to continue researching this topic. The find of the paper "Owning the Weather by 2025", released in 1996 by the US air force, was crucial. This paper tells the vision on the development of using the weather as a weapon in the year 2025. Different techniques are pointed out and their functioning on or outside the battlefield. It pays not only attention to the practical side of these technologies, it also addresses the legal and social issues concerning this topic.

The interesting part for me is the fact that they are shaping an ideal world in which the weather is controlled by the United States. Telling us a story of 'wouldn't it be great if,..', which would be filled in by most of the designers and future thinkers with something positive. The writers of this paper have a clear goal and direction what finishing the phrase is concerned. The fact that a tropical storm has energy equal to 10.000 one-megaton hydrogen bombs, fed the imagination of many generals and scientists through history.

Scientists are divided what this topic is concerned. In the perspective of changing the weather to stabilize for example global warming, some scientists want to keep the weather neutral and look for solutions from 'the ground'. Others say it is simply too late to fix our climate and see potency in artificial weather, for example the use of nanotechnology to make clouds reflect sunlight or making the outer shell of our atmosphere less penetrable.

What seems to be widely accepted is the fact that altering or interfering with the largest force on earth, is a risky and dangerous thing. What are these risks? What is the worst case but also the best case scenario? Is there a way to protect ourselves and the weather against altering its natural ways, or should interfere and change the course of our future?



