

GCP Technical Note: Global Harmony 1998 – 2007

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A preliminary global harmony analysis by Nelson (2001b) that explored the effect of organized global meditations and active engagements for peace in the world on the Global Consciousness Project's REG/RNG "EGG" network had found a significant cumulative overall result ($p = .0035$) in an initial dataset of 17 events. This dataset was extended to 56 events three years later, and a reexamination of it using normalized z -scores found an overall cumulative result that, while reduced in significance ($p = .029$), was consistent with the normalized result from Nelson's original dataset ($p = .011$) (Williams, 2004). A second update to the dataset that currently extends it to 78 events by the end of December 2007 is presented here, and the analytical result continues to support those of the previous analyses ($p = .012$). A basic exploratory examination of the effect size for specific categories of events contained within the dataset is also reported.

Introduction

Global meditations and active engagements that seek to promote peace and harmony around the world make up one category of social event which could be conducive to a hypothesized global consciousness "field" effect because they both aim to bring together large groups of people to collectively focus on a single common goal: a positive state for the future of Earth and all of its inhabitants. The kind of shared unity that may result from such a mass gathering of minds could possibly be described as being socially and mentally "coherent" at times, and may somehow correlate with subtle displays of increased order, or "material coherence," in what are expected to be independent and purely random physical systems. In addition, there is at least some experimental evidence to suggest that mind-matter interaction effects (which may underlie global consciousness effects) could be facilitated through certain forms of meditation (Gissurarson, 1992, pp. 306 – 311; Honorton, 1977; Honorton & May, 1976; Nelson & Schwartz, 2006; Schmidt & Pantas, 1972; Winnett & Honorton, 1977).

As a preliminary test of the hypothesis that coordinated human social activity on a global scale may correlate with statistical changes in the output of random systems, seven independent laboratories had participated in a "FieldREG" study that was carried out during the highly publicized GaiaMind meditation in January of 1997 (Nelson, 1997). Fourteen random event generators/random number generators (REGs/RNGs) located in the United States and Europe had independently collected random data throughout the course of the meditation event, which was held synchronously around the globe. When collectively analyzed, the data had shown a small but statistically significant deviation from standard randomness ($p = .047$). Other field REG/RNG studies conducted during group rituals, ceremonies, and healing sessions that also carried a positive focus had obtained similar results (Jahn, Dunne, & Dobyns, 2006, pp. 19 – 24; Nelson et al., 1996, 1998; Nelson & Radin, 2003; Radin & Atwater, 2006; Radin, Rebman, & Cross, 1996; Rowe, 1998). Most recently, Mason, Patterson, and Radin (2007) had reported highly significant deviations from randomness in two types of REG/RNG device that were actively running during a series of Transcendental Meditation sessions. These field studies seem to offer some promise in exploring the above hypothesis.

In August of 1998, the Global Consciousness Project (GCP) was founded with the purpose of attempting to explore possible statistical correlations in random data with the occurrence of

major world events (Nelson, 2001a), which may perhaps subtly reflect the hypothesized global consciousness “field” effect. To do this, volunteer researchers from various countries around the world helped to establish the first Internet-based, worldwide network of REG/RNG devices, collectively known as the “Electro-Gaia-Gram,” or “EGG,” network. As of December 2007, there are approximately 60 individual REG/RNG “EGGs” in the network that continually produce purely random data output based on either electronic or thermal noise and send it over the Internet to the GCP central server in Princeton, New Jersey, for archiving. Formal pre-planned analyses of the EGG network data corresponding to approximately 240 global events occurring between 1998 and 2007 collectively show a highly significant deviation from nominal randomness, with odds of about a million to one against chance.¹

Among the global events formally examined by the GCP are a number of worldwide meditation events akin to the Gaiamind meditation, as well as several active engagements and other related events that help to promote global peace, harmony, and awareness of improving the current condition of Earth. In early 2001, GCP director Roger Nelson (2001b) had carried out an exploratory analysis of 17 such “global harmony” events existing in the formal GCP database at that time in order to assess their cumulative effect on the EGG network. This preliminary global harmony database had collectively produced a significant result ($p = .0035$), with odds against chance of nearly 300 to 1.

A notable increase in the number of peace meditations and active engagements had occurred soon after, apparently fueled by the waves of anxiety and unrest that had followed the tragic events of September 11, 2001. The increased threat of terrorism that lingered long after that day, as well as the outbreak of a second (and still ongoing) war in Iraq in March of 2003, had also likely contributed to the increase as people saw a need to focus again on the positive. As a result, the author had contributed an update to the global harmony dataset three years after Nelson’s preliminary analysis (Williams, 2004), with a total of 56 events in the dataset by the beginning of December 2004. This update to the dataset was also motivated by a full conversion of the formal GCP database to normalized z -scores that had occurred around that time, and Nelson’s original 17 event dataset was reexamined as part of the update in order to see if this conversion had had any considerable effect on his initial results. The updated dataset of 56 events had collectively produced a result that was lower in significance ($\chi^2 = 77.81$, 56 df , $p = .029$), but still reasonably consistent with the normalized result from Nelson’s original dataset ($\chi^2 = 32.97$, 17 df , $p = .011$), suggesting further promise and warranting further study.

With the passage of another three years since the first update (at the end of December 2007), a second update to the GCP global harmony dataset is presented that extends it up to this time, along with a basic exploration of effect size as a function of event category.

Method

The normalized z -scores for the global meditation and active engagement events that had had a test prediction formally registered in either the GCP Prediction Registry (<http://noosphere.global-mind.org/predictions.html>) or the Registry of Formal Specifications for Global Events (http://noosphere.global-mind.org/pred_formal.html) between August 1998 and December 2007 were extracted from Table 2 of “The Primary Results” webpage of the GCP Internet website (see Footnote 1 for URL). The selection criteria were limited only to the

¹ See “The Primary Results” page on the GCP Internet website (<http://noosphere.global-mind.org/results.html>) for the most up-to-date statistical result for the formal database.

necessity that a given event had to have occurred within the time range specified above, and that in order to be considered as a global harmony event, a given event should be reasonably in line with the two following conditions, with the second being the prime determining factor for inclusion in the dataset:

- 1.) the event has the word “meditation,” “prayer,” “peace,” “Earth,” “Global,” “vigil,” “ceremony,” “ritual,” “demonstration,” “healing,” “summit,” or any similar derivations thereof in its listed title in Table 2; and/or
- 2.) the general description of the event’s activities, as it appeared either in its detailed results webpage (linked from Table 2 of “The Primary Results” webpage) or in its GCP Prediction Registry entry, is detailed enough such that it would be reasonably apparent that the event had a goal which was in line with the promotion of global harmony (e.g., it had to have had a positive message, promote peace or healing to the Earth and/or some aspect of human society, and actively encourage the shared participation of a large group of people).

In addition to the 56 events that were previously included in the first update (Williams, 2004), there were 22 events occurring between January 2005 and December 2007 which were listed in Table 2 of “The Primary Results” webpage, and which reasonably met the two conditions above.² This currently extends the global harmony dataset to a total of 78 events. It should be noted that while there are several events contained within the “Exploratory Analyses” webpage of the GCP website (<http://noosphere.global-mind.org/res.informal.html>), including various other global meditations, which could suitably meet the two above conditions, these were not included in the global harmony dataset because their analyses had not been pre-defined in advance, and thus could not be included in the formal GCP database.

The normalized z -scores for the 78 events in the dataset were squared to produce a value with one degree of freedom (df) that is Chi-square (χ^2) distributed. Given that Chi-square values are additive, a cumulative summation of all Chi-square values was taken across all events to represent the overall measure of deviation from standard randomness, with the number of degrees of freedom equal to the number of values cumulatively summed. A one-tailed probability value and an associated z -score³ were obtained based on the total Chi-square and degrees of freedom (i.e., the terminal values of each), and the data were plotted graphically as a cumulative deviation of Chi-square values minus the associated degrees of freedom for visual representation.

Since random data that are generated pseudo-randomly by way of a mathematical algorithm offer a good control comparison to the truly random data of the hardware REG/RNG “EGG” devices (e.g., Walker, 2001), an equal series of pseudo-random data were generated to act as a control global harmony dataset using the pseudo-random number generator function contained within a custom-made software package.⁴ The 78 individual samples in the control series, collected at the rate of one per second and each consisting of the sum of 200 bits, were

² As mentioned in the first update (Williams, 2004), there is a great deal of subjectivity in deciding whether or not a given event meets the selection criteria. However, it should be recognized that there is a subjective aspect to most GCP analyses that inevitably cannot be avoided when attempting to gauge the effect of certain events, or even to make predictions about event duration or formal inclusion in the GCP database. Thus, it was assumed for the sake of an exploratory analysis that the subjective decision to include or exclude a given event will not have a considerable influence on the overall result.

³ Based on the equation relating z -scores to Chi-square and df values (Guilford & Fruchter, 1973, p. 517).

⁴ This was the “FieldREg Detection” (“FRED”) software package (Petaluma, CA: Institute of Noetic Sciences, 2004). My thanks to Dean Radin of the Institute of Noetic Sciences for kindly making this software available.

normalized as z -scores using the empirical mean and standard deviation of the entire series, then analyzed and plotted in the same manner as the EGG data.

To provide a basic exploration of the effect size as a function of event category, each of the 78 events in the global harmony dataset were assigned to one of seven general event categories based on their event descriptions and titles: “Meditation,” “Prayer,” “Earth Healing” (referring to events that were focused on improving Earth’s current environmental conditions stemming from global warming, and/or Earth society as a whole), “Demonstration” (large active group engagements), “Pilgrimage” (events in which people made a journey to a specific location with the intent of spiritual enrichment or spreading a message of peace), “Summit” (meetings of leaders in efforts to work toward peace), and “Other” (events which, for one reason or another, did not seem to fit into any of the previous six categories). In many cases, a given event could have been reasonably assigned to more than one category. Whenever this occurred, the event was only assigned to the one category in which it seemed most fitting, and thus no “cross-categorization” was done. The mean z -score was then calculated from the z -scores of the events in each category to give a rough measure of its effect size, along with an associated 95% confidence interval (Shaughnessy & Zechmeister, 1994, pp. 370 – 372).

Results

The 78 events that met the criteria for inclusion in the current global harmony dataset, along with their individual and full quantitative results, are listed in Appendix Table 1. The first 17 events listed in the table constitute Nelson’s (2001b) original global harmony dataset, and events 17 – 56 constitute those added in the first dataset update (Williams, 2004). The graphical result of the current global harmony dataset is shown in Figure 1.

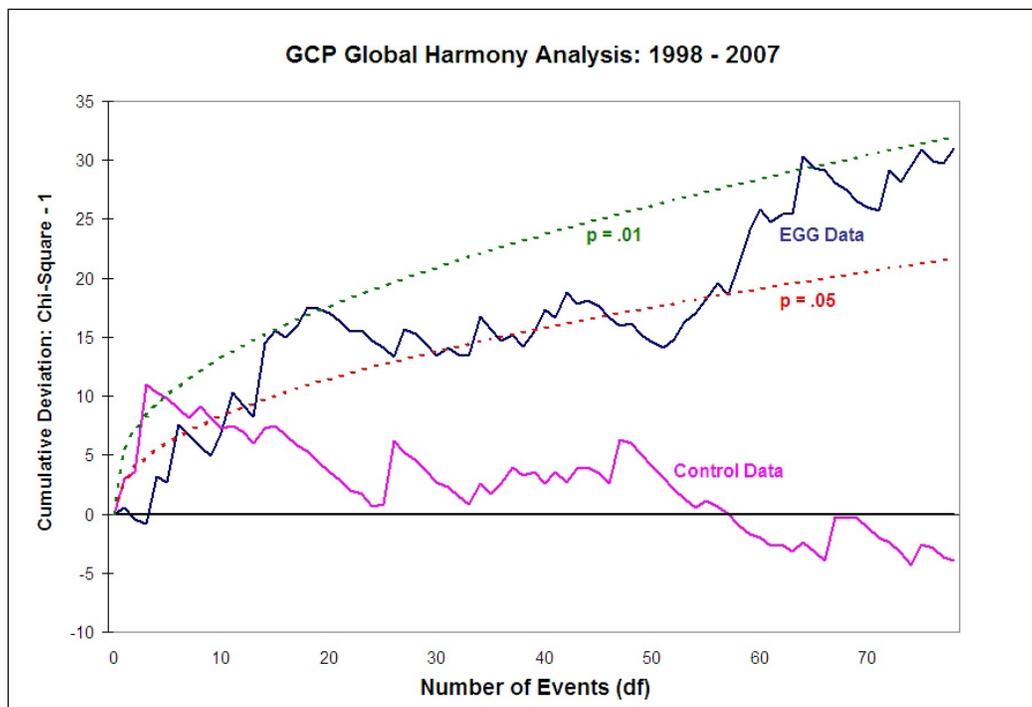


Figure 1. Cumulative deviation of Chi-square minus the degrees of freedom for the EGG data in the current GCP global harmony dataset of 78 events (blue trace). The matching series of pseudo-random control data (pink trace) are

plotted for comparison. The smooth dashed red and green arcs represent the significance levels at $p = .05$ and $p = .01$, respectively, as the degrees of freedom accumulate.

The dark blue trace of the actual EGG data in Figure 1 indicates that, following the first dataset update in 2004, the deviation from expected randomness continues to increase in a fairly steady positive trend. The overall trend of the EGG data is notably distinct from the pseudo-random data of the control dataset, which, aside from a sharp increase at the beginning, mostly level off into a purely random walk as would be expected of a nominally random, unperturbed system. Overall, the actual EGG data terminate with a cumulative result that remains to be significantly different from chance ($\chi^2 = 109.11$, 78 *df*, $p = .012$, associated $z = 2.322$), with odds of about 82 to 1. The Stouffer's Z for the entire dataset based on the z -scores in Appendix Table 1 is 2.480. In contrast, the pseudo-random control data have an overall cumulative result that is nonsignificantly negative ($\chi^2 = 74.05$, 78 *df*, $p = .606$, associated $z = -0.280$).

Figure 2 shows the graphical result for the exploration of effect size as a function of event category. One category ("Other") is not shown in Figure 2 because it only contained a single event (Event 25 in Appendix Table 1) with a z -score of 0.616. A detailed listing of the quantitative results can be found in Appendix Table 2.

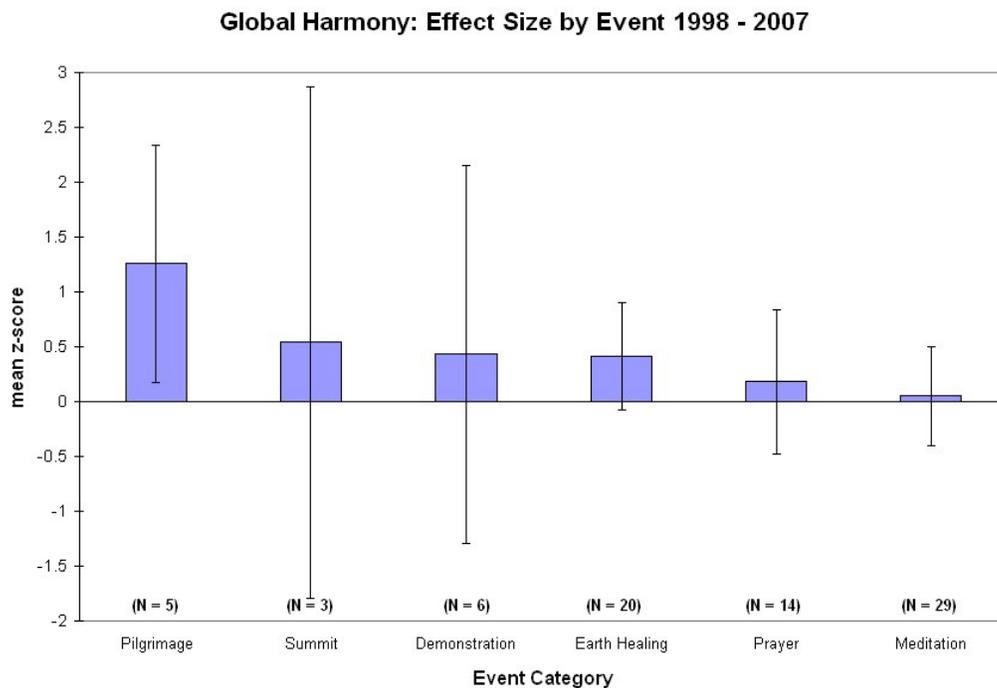


Figure 2. Exploratory results for effect size as a function of event category for the 78 events contained in the current global harmony dataset, with 95% confidence intervals shown as error bars. The number of events contained within each category is given in bold above each category label. One category ("Other") is not shown here, as it only contained a single event (see text).

The results shown in Figure 2 indicate that the events in the "Pilgrimage" category had shown the highest mean z -score, although the accuracy of this estimate is certainly confounded by the large width of the confidence interval, owing to the small sample size. It is also clear from Figure 2 that it is not the only category confounded in this manner. Aside from this, a casual

glance seems to suggest that the effect sizes for the events are comparable to those seen for other kinds of events in the formal GCP database, in that they tend to be quite small.

Discussion

Following its second update at the end of December 2007, the current GCP global harmony dataset of 78 events continues to show a significant positive trend that is still statistically consistent with the results of the previous two dataset analyses (Nelson, 2001b; Williams, 2004). In contrast, a matching global harmony dataset that was pseudo-randomly generated for control comparison had shown a mostly random walk as expected, and had produced a nonsignificant overall result. The current findings, along with those of the previous analyses, continue to lend supplemental support to the hypothesis that coordinated and focused human social activity on a global scale may correlate with statistical changes in random data.

The exploratory look at effect size as a function of event category within the global harmony dataset hints at a finding consistent with other GCP effect size explorations: the effects tend to be very small. It is also clear from Figure 2 that the confidence we may have that we are accurately estimating the effect sizes for some of the categories is not very high, given the large width of their confidence intervals. As noted, this examination was meant to be purely exploratory, and was not expected to produce reliable estimates due to the small sample sizes of the categories. However, a further look at the category effect sizes with additional event data at a later time might be useful.

One thing that has been noticed from time to time in the individual analysis of GCP global harmony events is that certain events – most notably meditations – often produce results opposite to the general GCP prediction of a positive directional trend. It was found that just over half (15 of 29, or 52%) of the events which were categorized as meditations based on their event descriptions did indeed produce results in the negative direction based on their z -scores, with three (Events 11, 64, & 72 in Appendix Table 1) being independently significant at $p < .05$. This begins to hint at the possibility that this tendency towards the negative for meditations may have some kind of meaning, although if that is so, it is unclear just how it should be interpreted. Further data may be helpful in better determining whether it could be meaningful, or is merely an artifact.

From a purely aesthetic perspective, a tentative interpretation of the significance of the global harmony dataset is that events such as meditations and shared active engagements which tend to bring people in many different countries together to encourage the establishment of world peace, social interconnection, and global harmony also help to facilitate the formation of a shared global consciousness that is able to somehow subtly influence the random data output of the GCP's REG/RNG "EGG" network. If this view has any merit, then the message it conveys is indeed positive, for it suggests that at some fundamental level, some type of interconnection may exist between human minds and physical matter that ties them as one. If that interconnection can be realized in the minds of people around the world, then perhaps relations between humans, as well as their ties to the Earth, may be seen in a different light, and how terrible it would be to continue on paths that may eventually destroy them.

The late rock musician Robert Palmer once sang that "...it takes every kinda people to make what life's about...it takes every kinda people to make the world go 'round.'" If such a thing as a global consciousness exists, then, on a subtle level, he may have been more right than he knew. And if further data continues to support the findings presented here, then the implications of this line of thinking may perhaps be quite revealing.

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Appendix

Appendix Table 1: Global Harmony Dataset, 1998 – 2007

<i>Event</i>	<i>z-score</i>	<i>Chi-Square</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p-value</i>
1 Global Peace Vigil, Twyman - 981113	1.223	1.50	1	0.22
2 World Peace Prayer - 981210	-0.135	0.02	1	0.887
3 Praying for Peace, 31 days - 990403 to 990503	0.819	0.67	1	0.413
4 Billion Person Meditation - 991025	2.242	5.03	1	0.024
5 Just a Minute, 1-Min Epoch - 20000101	0.697	0.49	1	0.483
6 Papal Visit, Israel - 20000321 to 20000326	2.428	5.90	1	0.015
7 Great Experiment II - 20000423	-0.23	0.05	1	0.823
8 World Earth Healing Day 2000 - 20000504	-0.413	0.17	1	0.679
9 Peace Summit Religious Spirit - 20000828 to 20000831	-0.446	0.20	1	0.654
10 Group Mind Meditation - 20000924	1.72	2.96	1	0.085
11 Group Mind Meditation 2 - 20001022	-2.085	4.35	1	0.037
12 Group Mind Meditation 3 - 20001112	0.027	0.0007	1	0.978
13 Group Mind Meditation 4 - 20001126	-0.028	0.0007	1	0.978
14 Lovewave 010101 - 20010101	2.688	7.23	1	0.007
15 Kumbh Mela, India - 20010124	1.457	2.12	1	0.145
16 WorldPuja Webcast - 20010331	0.591	0.35	1	0.554
17 Johrei Ceremonies - 20010401	1.419	2.01	1	0.156
18 Earth Day 2001 - 20010422	1.595	2.54	1	0.11
19 Full Moon in Taurus - 20010507	0.948	0.90	1	0.342
20 World Peace Meditation - 20010520	0.773	0.60	1	0.438
21 World Earth Healing Day 2001 - 20010621	0.609	0.37	1	0.543
22 Buddhist Stupa Ceremony - 20010809 - 20010817	-0.213	0.05	1	0.823
23 Silent Prayer, Sept 14 - 20010914	1.087	1.18	1	0.277
24 MUM Peace Meditation - 20010923 - 20010927	0.345	0.12	1	0.729
25 Binding Spell on Bin Laden - 20011015	0.616	0.38	1	0.537
26 World-Wide Meditation - 20011111	-0.447	0.20	1	0.654
27 Ramadan Muslim Prayer - 20011116	1.836	3.37	1	0.066
28 WorldPuja Meditation - 20011116	-0.802	0.64	1	0.423
29 George Harrison Tribute - 20011203	0.222	0.05	1	0.823
30 Sri Lanka Peace Meditation - 20020315	-0.085	0.01	1	0.92
31 Indigo Peace Meditation - 20020420	-1.303	1.70	1	0.192
32 Summer Solstice 2002 (Meditation) - 20020621	-0.636	0.40	1	0.527
33 World Healing Day 2002 - 20020822	0.993	0.99	1	0.319
34 Korea's Birthday (World Earth-Human Festival) - 20021003	-2.06	4.24	1	0.039
35 Twyman in Baghdad - 20021012	0.032	0.001	1	0.974
36 Earthdance 2002 - 20021012	-0.056	0.003	1	0.956
37 Antiwar Protests, Jan 18 2003 - 20030118	1.207	1.46	1	0.226
38 Peace Meditations - 20030209	-0.244	0.06	1	0.806
39 Global Peace Demonstrations - 20030215	1.483	2.20	1	0.138
40 Lysistrata, Prayer, & Women - 20030303	-1.707	2.91	1	0.088

41	Gather the Women - 20030308	-0.532	0.28	1	0.596
42	Candlelight Vigil - 20030316	1.783	3.18	1	0.074
43	GE Prayer for Bush - 20030401	-0.155	0.02	1	0.887
44	Aqaba Peace Summit, Middle East - 20030604	1.136	1.29	1	0.256
45	Rainbow Gathering, 4th of July - 20030704	-0.693	0.48	1	0.488
46	Love & Peace to Water Day - 20030725	0.154	0.02	1	0.887
47	Mars Close Approach/Yang Spiral - 20030827	0.623	0.39	1	0.532
48	World Healing Day 2003 - 20030910	-1.082	1.17	1	0.279
49	Dalai Lama in NYC - 20030921	0.145	0.02	1	0.887
50	Harmonic Concordance - 20031109	0.612	0.37	1	0.543
51	Oprah Winfrey in Africa - 20031218	0.711	0.51	1	0.475
52	60 Seconds for Peace - 20031227	1.303	1.70	1	0.192
53	Anti-Terror Demonstrations in Spain - 20040312	1.582	2.50	1	0.113
54	Global Day of Peace - 20040320	-1.324	1.75	1	0.185
55	Earthdance 2004 - 20040919	-1.49	2.22	1	0.136
56	International Peace Vigil (& Hurricane Jeanne) - 20040921	-1.533	2.35	1	0.125
57	Siyum Daf Yomi - 20050301	-0.091	0.01	1	0.920
58	Oraworld Resonance - 20050423	1.866	3.48	1	0.062
59	Live 8 Concert - 20050702	-2.003	4.01	1	0.045
60	End the War Rally - 20050924	1.638	2.68	1	0.102
61	Planetary Play Day - 20060401	0.07	0.0049	1	0.944
62	Earth Day 2006 - 20060422	1.227	1.61	1	0.204
63	Avebury Global Meditations, July 22 2006 - 20060722	1.033	1.06	1	0.303
64	TM Resonance Aggregation - 20060729 - 20060909	-2.416	5.84	1	0.016
65	Oraworld Reconciliation - 20061002	-0.194	0.04	1	0.841
66	Native American Ceremony to Honor Earth - 20061006	0.883	0.78	1	0.377
67	Global Deeksha - 20061123	0.006	0.000036	1	0.995
68	Global Orgasm for Peace - 20061222	0.604	0.36	1	0.548
69	World Sound Healing Day - 20070214	0.019	0.00036	1	0.984
70	Earth Hour, Sydney - 20070331	-0.729	0.53	1	0.466
71	World Tai Chi & Chigong Day - 20070428	0.855	0.73	1	0.392
72	Global Peace Day - 20070520	-2.113	4.46	1	0.035
73	Live Earth - 20070707	-0.095	0.009	1	0.924
74	Fire the Grid - 20070717	1.528	2.33	1	0.127
75	Burning Man 2007 - 20070902	1.541	2.37	1	0.124
76	Global OM - 20070915	0.265	0.07	1	0.791
77	International Day of Peace - 20070921	-0.897	0.80	1	0.371
78	Gore Wins Nobel Peace Prize - 20071012	1.501	2.25	1	0.134
	Total	2.480	109.11	78	0.012

Appendix Table 2: Global Harmony Effect Size by Event Category

Event Category	N	Mean z-score	95% Confidence Interval	
			Upper Limit	Lower Limit
Pilgrimage	5	1.256	2.337	0.174
Summit	3	0.542	2.873	-1.789
Demonstration	6	0.430	2.153	-1.292
Earth Healing	20	0.412	0.899	-0.074
Prayer	14	0.182	0.841	-0.475
Meditation	29	0.050	0.504	-0.404
Other	1	0.616	-	-

