Faces in The Cloud

Henry Cooke, 2013 - 2015.

Faces in The Cloud was an automated experiment in machine paredolia.

Random images were pulled from the internet and run through face detection. Only those which just grazed the detector were used; images which the algorithm judged as just possibly containing a face.

Pareidolia in humans is a perceptual tic peculiar to the way our nervous systems evolved: it's better to assume an unidentified shape in the bushes is a hungry tiger rather than a funny-shaped bush. Machines don't have that genetic baggage: what do these images reveal about the unevennesses in their perceptual model of the world? How does pareidolia work when it's a mode of pareidolia arising from machine perception?

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