climate*prediction*.net

Public to help scientists predict the real climate of The Day After Tomorrow

For Tuesday June 22nd 00.01 hrs BST

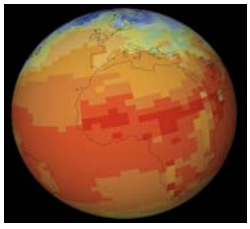
Climate*prediction*.net, with 49,000 participants in 130 countries, is the world's largest climate modelling experiment to try and find out what the climate is actually likely to do in the 21st century.

On June 22nd, 2004, while *The Day After Tomorrow* is still in the cinemas, the project is launching a new experiment exploring some of the science behind the film. "So far, we have been asking people to simulate how the climate could respond to rising carbon dioxide levels" said Dr. David Frame, the project coordinator. "Now we are extending the project to investigate how predictions might change if the thermo-haline circulation in the oceans were to slow down, altering the flow of the Gulf Stream."

"Extreme scenarios make great films, but for practical planning we need to know how likely it is that such events will actually happen" said Dr. Mat Collins from the Met Office. Nick Faull, the University of Oxford scientist leading this new experiment added "we are not trying to predict the odds on a shut-down of the ocean thermo-haline circulation, but we are asking: if it did happen, what are the chances it would offset the warming due to rising greenhouse gases, and cause a cooling? What consequences would it have for the atmosphere and oceans?"

Anyone can download a secure software package, including a version of the Met Office's state-of-the-art climate model, from www.climate*prediction*.net. Each model is a slightly different, but physically plausible, representation of processes going on in the atmosphere, land and near-surface ocean. The model runs for a few weeks as a background process on an ordinary desktop computer without affecting other computing tasks. Results are sent back to the project scientists via the Internet.

"There is no way we could complete an experiment this size even using the world's biggest supercomputer" said Carl Christensen, the project's chief computer scientist. "The project has really captured the world's imagination; anyone can join in."



Interactive graphics allow participants to watch as their personal computer calculates how the weather in their model responds, first to a rise in carbon dioxide, then to a shutdown of the thermo-haline circulation.

For further information please contact Dr. Dave Frame on 07788 954 564, Carl Christensen on carl.christensen@comlab.ox.ac.uk, Nick Faull on nfaull@atm.ox.ac.uk or Dr. Mat Collins on matthew.collins@metoffice.com.

Notes to editors:

- Anyone wishing to take part can download the necessary software from www.climate*prediction*.net, where further information about the project is available.

- Further information for the Press, including high resolution colour images are available at www.climateprediction.net/press/index.php .

- Climate*prediction*.net is a collaboration between several UK Universities and The Met Office, led by the University of Oxford and funded by the Natural Environment Research Council and by the Department of Trade and Industry's e-Science programme.

- More information about the science behind *The Day After Tomorrow* can be found at the Met Office web site http://www.metoffice.com/corporate/pressoffice/2004/pr20040430.html

- Information regarding the participating institutions can be found on the Internet at:

University of Oxford, Atmospheric, Oceanic and Planetary Physics: www.atm.ox.ac.uk
University of Oxford, Computing Laboratory: www.comlab.ox.ac.uk
Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, British Atmospheric Data Centre: www.badc.rl.ac.uk
The Open University, Knowledge Media Institute: kmi.open.ac.uk
The Open University, Earth Sciences Department: www.open.ac.uk/Earth-Sciences
The Met Office: www.metoffice.com
The University of Reading, Department of Meteorology: www.met.rdg.ac.uk
Tessella Support Services plc: www.tessella.com