# Manifesting the Manifesto: Digital Humanities and the Climate Crisis

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# Introduction

- Environmental footprint concerns professional activities => complex situation (limited “free” individual choices)

- Information Communication Technology: 1.8%–3.9% global GHG emissions
- Transport: ~14% global GHG emissions
- HER at large: travels, conferences, fieldwork, digital activities
- DH: digitization, computation, hosting, preservation

# Starting a conversation on DH and the Climate Crisis

History of the Manifesto

- V1: https://dhc-barnard.github.io/envdh/
- V2: https://dhc-barnard.github.io/dhclimate/ (winner of DH Award 2021 “Best exploration of DH failure”)

→**You are welcome to comment on V2!**

Initiators of the Manifesto

- **Europe:** Anne Baillot/Le Mans, James Baker/Southampton, Torsten Roeder/Würzburg, Walter Scholger/Graz, Jo Lindsay Walton/Sussex
- **US:** Alexander Gil Fuentes/Yale, Kaiama L. Glover/Barnard-NY, Alicia Peaker/Barnard-NY

# The Digital is Material

**Any [digital] activity has environmental impact!**

this concerns:

- Production – rare metal resources, human/child labor
- Use – energy for functioning, for maintenance
- End of life – limited recycling schemes

consider:

- Rebound effects due to digitization of activities
- Wealth of digital tools in DH
- Difficulty to measure precisely environmental impact

# Working with computation-intensive resources

- Concerns: energy-intensive software, large datasets, large language model

  → Issue for AI
- Challenge: right proportion between potential benefit and computation power

  → Larger Models yield better results
- Finding a way to measure and report (carbon) cost of software & digital processes

  → Role of documentation of work steps

# Preserving digital heritage

- Access to digitized heritage => environmental cost
- Availability in high quality: less accessible to low-income countries

→ why / at what cost 24/7 access?

- Balancing environmental weight of cultural heritage digitization and preservation

→ we need to ask ourselves what we are doing:
for what purpose, at what (environmental, social, economic) cost

# Open Science

Ideal of giving maximal access

→ impact of technical choices, formats

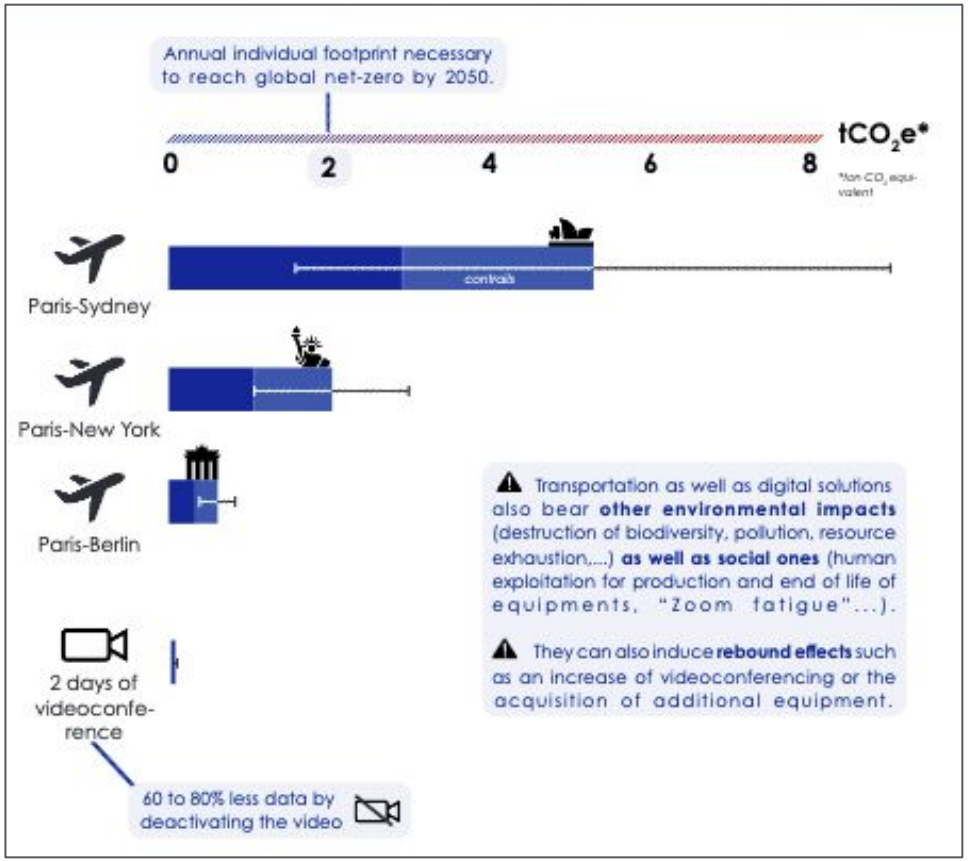
Variety of publication practices

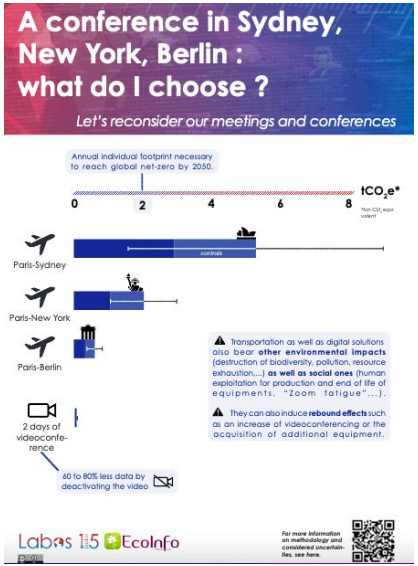
→ Green OA greener than Gold OA

Role of common infrastructures/mutualizations

→ Goal: low-resource access, verification & reuse scenarios

# Academic travels at large

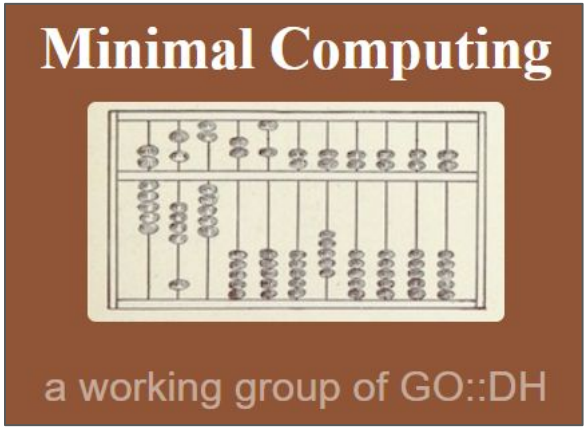


# Inclusivity and low-resource technologies

Ideas and Inspirations:

- Minimal Computing: https://go-dh.github.io/mincomp/about/
- Solar Low Tech Magazine: https://solar.lowtechmagazine.com/




# New initiatives

DHCC: https://www.cdcs.ed.ac.uk/digital-humanities-climate-coalition

German “Greening DH”: https://dhd-greening.github.io/

French “Humanités Numériques et crise environnementale”

→ common projects, publications, events

# Achievements of the DHCC

- A Researcher Guide to Writing a Climate Justice Oriented Data Management Plan. DHCC Information, Measurement and Practice AG (eds.), 2022 https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6451499
- DHCC Toolkit https://sas-dhrh.github.io/dhcc-toolkit/
- DH Benelux workshop https://cradledincaricature.com/2022/06/10/my-dh-climate-actions/

# Awareness-raising needs in the DH community

- Manifesto → starting a discussion
- following initiatives: best practices (mostly individual level)
- gather reliable information
- Institutional leverage: how, with what goal
- Question of the role of DH within the SSH at large: more energy-intensive, more likely (technically+based on the discipline’s interests) to reflect on the use of digital resources and devices (responsibility?)

# What do we want DH to become?

- improving our practices is good
- slowing down our overall activity is better!
- means: relevant academic impact with less energy consumption is possible
- institutions: include this dimension in evaluation, funding and career schemes