Green Digital Practices

Description

Green digital practices incorporate knowledge and practices that can lead to more environmentally and ecologically responsible decisions and habits, which can help safeguard the environment and sustain its natural resources for current and future generations. This approach delivers products and services while decreasing the impact of digital activity on the ecosystem. Moreover, promoting sustainable and green practices can help organizations become more competent, competitive and profitable.

Digital technologies impact on the planet

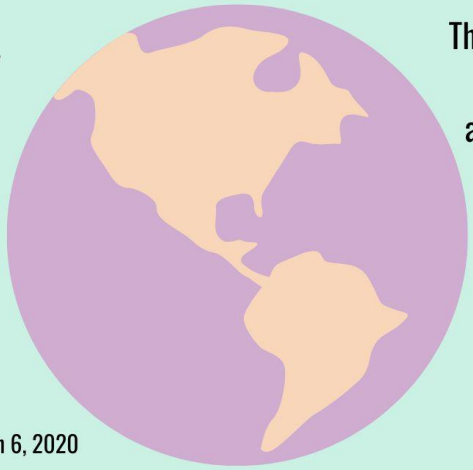
IT HARDWARE

Devices release some carbon during their creation, usage, and when they have ended their life cycle.

VIDEO CALLS & STREAMING

Netflix's total global energy consumption reached 451,000 megawatt hours per year, which is sufficient to power 37,000 homes.

Source: BBC - Smart Guide to Climate Change, March 6, 2020



STORAGE

The carbon footprint of storing a terabyte of data in cloud storage emits approximately 2.7 kg of CO2e per year

Source:
Digital Declutter for business. Wholegrain digital

SOFTWARE

All software, from the applications running on your computer to the testing of VR/AR apps, consumes electricity in its execution.

WEBSITES

Setting up a website - hosting, themes, photo and video galleries, etc. has a significant impact on the carbon footprint.

EMAIL

An unnecessary email - that is an email with up to four words - has approximately 1g CO2e.

Source: OVO Energy, November 26, 2019

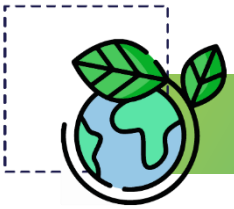
DAILY LIFE

8 hours of work on a mac computer generate 160 g of co2. Working as a VA requires a lot of energy consumption!

Investment or cost of entry

Learning about green digital practices requires the following investment:

- Receive training on sustainability and green digital practices (**€€**).
- Conduct market research to identify industries that benefit from green digital practices **(€€)**.
- Higher costs of cleaner energy providers (**€€)**.



Environmental Impact

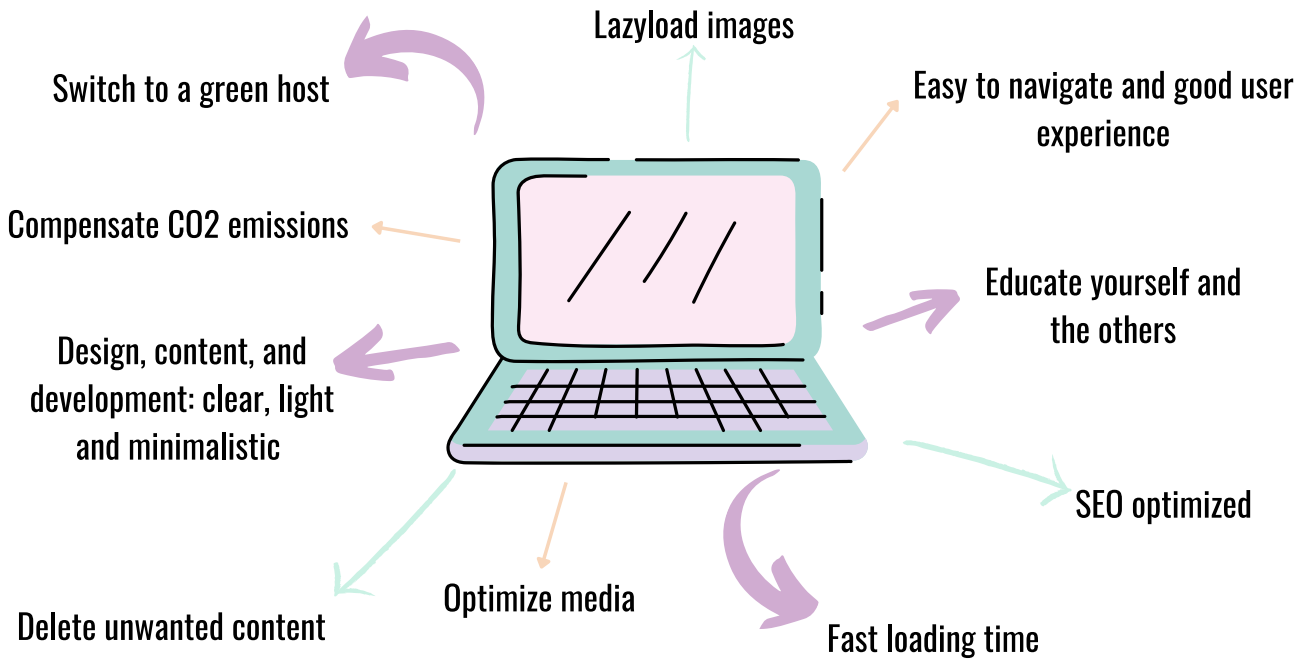
People boosting green digital practices are self-aware of the significant impact of the digital infrastructure on the planet (🍃🍃🍃).

Their main goal is to reduce their impact by incorporating a sustainable lifestyle and promoting the best practices for a better online experience and a more liveable planet. Thus, the way to reduce the digital impact of people and companies might be through:

- Evaluating and reducing the websites' environmental impact
- Improving Google ranking optimization
- Designing low-carbon design choices around imagery, content, colour
- Developing energy-efficient processes
- Considering account hosting and data transfer costs
- Integrating sustainable organizational practices and business operations.

The best way to reduce your environmental impact is related to the sustainable web manifesto (see section “Good practices”).

A guide to create a sustainable website



Good Practice

1. You can sign the Sustainable Web Manifesto and follow the six recommendations they make about the products and services you offer, which should be clean, efficient, open, honest, regenerative and resilient (Sustainable Web Manifesto - Wholegrain Digital).

2. Limit, reduce and use efficiently: Limit your digital devices, reduce your electricity and internet consumption, and decrease the data centers' activity by being more conscious of your interactions, data and e-waste.

3. Promote accessible and inclusive content to enhance user experience, focus on those who might have disabilities.

4. Encourage green policies in your work places and projects. Educate yourself and the others on green digital practices.

Challenges

- Internet provides huge benefits to society but it also has social and environmental side effects.
- Technology has an ever-increasing role to play and the environmental impact should not be ignored.
- Sustainability can be a difficult topic to grasp
- Companies require further analysis to better understand whether the transformation occurring through digital technologies provides real advantages and concrete market opportunities along with social and environmental benefits.

General Advice & Solutions

- There is a need for a more sustainable internet: the internet is both part of the problem and the solution. Embracing sustainability is possible to create a web that benefits the people and the planet.
- The question of how business, design, and web technology can be part of the solution to environmental issues is vital. Including digital sustainability in the operations and strategies is a must.
- There is an existing set of principles to inspire the digital sector to create digital products and services that are compatible with and contribute to a sustainable future.

Who is this tool/ activity for?

The negative impact of the digital environment on the planet is underestimated. However, the internet is the world's largest coal-powered machine, producing approximately 3.8% of global carbon emissions (Source: Sustainable Web Design project). Such a situation creates a need for people who can boost the sustainable environmental transition by introducing companies to green digital practices. Thus, incorporating green digital practices in any field as a VA is fundamental. People who understand the impact that digital technology has on the environment and take steps to reduce it are essential for this digital transformation. Anyone who thinks about how they can use their skills and resources in a way that benefits both the people and the planet might work as a

VA in green digital practices. They might also learn about sustainable practices through self-education and community involvement and/or through their experience in environmental research fields such as public policy, business administration, social science, or biology.

Conclusions

- The need for people who can boost the sustainable environmental transition through the integration of green digital practices is vital to ensure the present and future of the planet.
- Incorporating green digital practices might enhance efficiency, competitiveness and profitability in organizations.
- The investment and costs of maintenance might vary depending on the activity. Nonetheless, the most important resource appears to be the willingness to work for a more sustainable future.
- Sustainable websites and green digital practices intend to create a better future for both the people and the planet, alongside financial stability. They use renewable energy and attempt to minimize their consumption. Moreover, they are ethical, add value to the projects or businesses, and, most importantly, are non-exploitative.
- Digital technology brings many benefits to society and to our lives. We need to guarantee that it does not use more energy than it would save.

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