DIGITAL CLEAN UP:
lighten your invisible footprint!

EUROPEAN WEEK FOR WASTE REDUCTION

What is Internet pollution ?

Internet pollution, or the impact of the Internet on ecology is simply pollution caused by its operation. For many, the Internet is synonymous with dematerialisation. Yet, far from being dematerialized, the Internet is based on a physical infrastructure. Indeed, a whole network of cables, data centers and servers underpin the functioning of the Internet. Internet energy and carbon footprint are estimated to exceed those of travel.

> The total amount of greenhouse gases produced to directly and indirectly support human activities, usually expressed in equivalent tons of carbon dioxide (CO2)

Did you know ?

It is possible to reduce our carbon footprint.
Daily actions as simple as sending emails, surfing the Internet, using search engines or storing data are therefore a real cost for the environment.

Where does the invisible "waste" of the Internet come from ?

⚙️ 🚚 MANUFACTURING AND SHIPPING of Internet's hardware
+
⚡ 🌬️ POWERING AND COOLING of servers, computes, and smartphones

1 MB email = 60 W lamp lit for 25 min

A one-megabyte email during its total life cycle emits 20 g of CO2, i.e. the equivalent of a lamp lit for 25 minutes.

One of the main forms of digital pollution is called "dormant pollution". It's due to the storage of emails. All emails stored in a mailbox make many servers run uninterruptedly in data centers. However, data centers are very energy intensive and need to be permanently air conditioned to be cooled. Thus, data storage makes turn the equivalent of five nuclear power plants in the world! And this is just the beginning... Indeed, the volume of stored data doubles every two years.

How can I reduce my digital footprint?

20 emails a day over one year = 1000 km

20 emails a day per user over one year, create the same CO2 emissions as a car traveling 1000 km. In one hour, more than twelve billion emails are sent, representing more than 4,000 tonnes of oil.

- ✅ Compress the size of the documents you send by email to decrease the weight of the message;
- ✅ Use hyperlinks rather than attachments;
- ✅ Avoid email signatures, especially images that weigh down mailings;
- ✅ Don't spread chain mail, petitions, humorous images, fakes, etc.;
- ✅ Regularly delete emails that have been dealt with, and don't forget to empty the trash bin;
- ✅ Unsubscribe from newsletters you don't read;
- ✅ Limit "reply ALL", send fewer emails and limit the number of recipients;
- ✅ Talk in person rather than over email
- ✅ Enter the url of a website if you know it rather than going through a search engine;
- ✅ Cut down on the number of pages you view by using specific keywords;
- ✅ Make your regularly viewed websites favourites;
- ✅ Make regular use of your smartphone's optimisation feature that stops apps running in the background.

Google

Google Search   I'm Feeling Lucky

One search on Google = 0,2 to 7 grams of CO2

Every online search comes at a cost to the planet. In processing 3.5 billion searches a day, Google accounts for about 40% of the Internet's carbon footprint.

Sending dozens of emails a day, making a quick call on WhatsApp, uploading some photos to the cloud, watching a short viral clip on YouTube or your favourite series in streaming: It's all part of the digital daily life around the world. For the individual, it may be "just one photo" or "just a few minutes of video," but, taken together, our collective internet traffic contributes enormously to climate change.
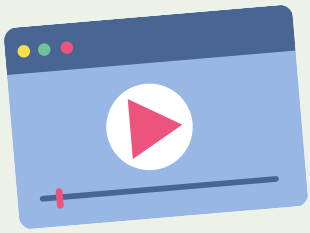
> 10 hours HD video > all the English-language articles

The largest share of that growth is now video traffic: 80% of all data transferred online is video data, with nearly 60% of that being online video, meaning streaming videos stored on a server and viewed remotely, via streaming platforms. Every day, people watch more than a billion hours of video on YouTube.

Ten hours of high-definitions film consume more bits and bytes than all the English-language articles in Wikipedia put together. In 2018, online video traffic was responsible for more than 300 million tonnes of CO2, equivalent to what a country the size of Spain releases in a year.

How can I reduce my digital footprint?

Is there a particular song you love? A video receipe that you follow often or your favourite workout video?
✓ Downloading the file is the best option. You only use the data once, and you can replay the song or the video indefinitely!
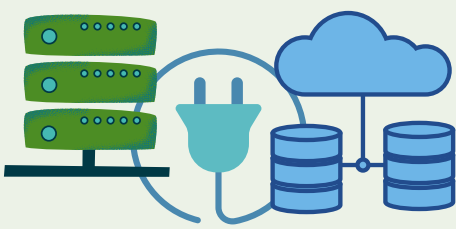✓ Avoid over-consuming video streaming.
Furthermore, you can:

The information communications and technology industry - which delivers Internet, video, voice, and other cloud services - produces more than 830 millions tons of carbon dioxide annually. That's about 2% of global CO2 emissions.

✓ Store your files on your hard-disk, be reasonable with the "Cloud" and online storage;
✓ Some providers are run completely on renewable energy sources. Consider storing your data on a green cloud provider;
✓ Always shut down your computer and unplug chargers;
✓ Set sleep mode on your device after a certain number of minutes;
✓ Keep your laptop and other digital equipment for longer periods.

What can I do during the EWWR?

ORGANIZE A DIGITAL CLEAN-UP AT YOUR WORKPLACE!

Now that you are aware of your digital footprint, what can you do to take action?
Can you imagine the global impact of millions of organisatons sending hundreds of billions of of emails and storing billions gigabytes of data every second?
No matter if you are a huge company, a school, administration or a non-profit organisation, if you work using the Internet everyday,
you can definitely do your part to reduce your CO2 emissions!
Follow these 4 steps to lighten your invisible footprint:

1 PROPOSE THE INITIATIVE TO YOUR COLLEGUES AND SET A DAY
2 REGISTER YOUR ACTION ON www.ewwr.eu
3 SHARE THE INFORMATION ABOUT THE CARBON FOOTPRINT OF INTERNET AND DISCUSS ABOUT IT WITH YOUR TEAM
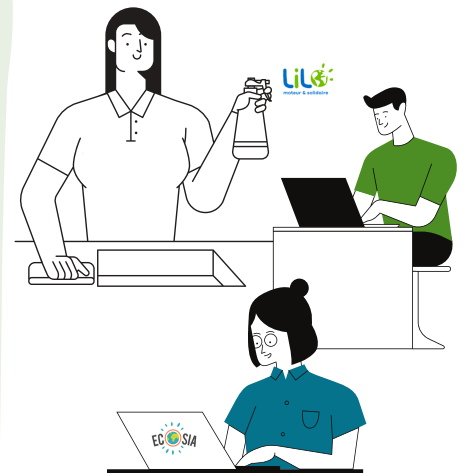4 START THE CLEAN-UP your personal and professional mailbox!

Some tips

☞ Download a browser that offsets the environmental impact
(e.g. Ecosia - the search engine that plants trees
Lilo - which finances the environmental projects of your choice - e.g. protecting marine life)
☞ Turn off video autoplay on social networks and websites
☞ Clean your Cloud: delete the files you don't use anymore

DON'T YOU FEEL LIGHTER ALREADY?

Join us for the EWWR!

🌐 www.ewwr.eu
🐦 @2EWWR
f @ewwr.eu
📷 2EWWR

Sources:
https://www.custommade.com/blog/carbon-footprint-of-internet/
https://https://www.dw.com/en/is-netflix-bad-for-the-environment-how-streaming-video-contributes-to-climate-change/a-49556716
https://www.energuide.be/en/questions-answers/do-i-emit-co2-when-i-surf-the-internet/69/
https://youmatter.world/en/reduce-environmental-impact-internet/