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ARP 2024-5
Ethical Action Plan
FINAL 02 —— 01 DEC 2024

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1. **What is your project focus?**

What is the estimated environmental impact (in terms of GHG emissions / kilograms of CO2e)
does my everyday use of the UAL digital tools and services have,
as an academic staff member at UAL (LCF/LCC)?

As an academic member of staff, I receive and send a lot emails, files, store large files on the 'cloud', and rarely, if ever, do I delete any of these, and I definitely do not read all the emails I receive. For context, I have a 0.4 contract at LCF, and I am an AL at LCC and LCF, so my contribution will, I assume not be representative in anyway of any other staff or student member.
Methodology: over a period of 10 days (1/3 of an average month (mean month=10.43 days)) I will gather quantitative data on myself, using a direct measurement method — looking at the amount of data stored (on cloud servers), volume of sent and received data (emails, files), including received myself and emails I participated in through receipt. The gathering data will form a sort of diary method, documenting the data after its sent or received.

The data gathered will, I envision not be of any actual use to generate an extrapolation or generalisations of other staff members beyond myself, but it will serve as a way of interrogating the often incessant flow of information and data we all receive by being a member of the contemporary UAL community.

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2. **What are you going to read about?**

- The direct/indirect impact to nonhuman ecologies/environments caused by greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) by information communication technologies (ICT), data centres, cloud storage, digital services, and 'the internet' (Berners-Lee, 2020; Jackson and Hodgkinson, 2024; Dourish, 2022)
- What part are institutions complicit in this contribution to CO2e emissions, either knowingly or unknowingly? (Malmodin, 2024; The National Archives, 2023)
    o   And then, what part do I, as a lecturer, teacher, practitioner contribute to this?
- The overt but often overlooked physical nature of 'cloud' based digital infrastructure (Blum, 2012; Tomlinson, 2014)
- The ongoing intersectional and disproportionate impact that climate change has on the global majority. The impact the production of new digital tools and has — the extractivist and colonial notions which result from raw material extraction impacts disproportionately the global majority and the landscapes in which they live. (Davis and Todd, 2017; Davis, 2023; Nayar, 2021; Whyte, 2016; Swift, 2022)
- UAL's self-imposed environmental policy and 'Carbon Management Plan', and resulting emphasis for staff to undertake social and climate justice actions (UAL, 2023a, UAL, 2023b)

- How to do ethical quantitative direct measurement auto-quantitative research and be aware of participant bias influencing the data collection and/or analysis, whilst being reflexive and aware of my positionality (Jamieson, et al. 2023; Poerwandari, 2021; INTRAC, 2017; D'Ignazio, and Klein, 2020; Kara, 2015).

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Swift, J. (2022) *Climate activism without intersectionality isn't enough: Why we need intersectional environmentalism*, *Black Women Radicals*. Available at: https://www.blackwomenradicals.com/blog-feed/leahthomas

Tomlinson, B. (2014) *Greening Through it: Information Technology for Environmental Sustainability*. London, England: MIT Press. Available at: https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/8261.001.0001.

The National Archives (2023) *'Digital Services and carbon emissions in the heritage sector: some preliminary findings - Archives sector'*. Available at: https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/digital-services-and-carbon-emissions-in-the-heritage-sector-some-preliminary-findings/

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UAL (2023b) *Environmental policy and management*, *UAL*. Available at: https://www.arts.ac.uk/about-ual/climate-action-plan/change-the-way-we-operate/environmental-policy-and-management

Whyte, K.P. (2016) Is it colonial déjà vu? Indigenous peoples and climate injustice. In *Humanities for the Environment* (pp. 102-119). Routledge.

3. What action are you going to take in your (teaching) practice?

Although in an ideal setting, this projects quantitative data collection would be representative, be able to be repeated across many situations and contexts in the university to validate its findings, and ultimately use it as a sample to extrapolate from and suggest an appropriate conclusion. This is of course, wildly out of scope for this project.

The intended action will be to devise some way of disseminating or showcasing the assumed vast volume of data and information that we receive through being an active member of UAL's institutional ecosystem, and what small (or big) iterative actions we can do to reduce climate impact through our use of digital tools and services.

Actions could be:
- Through the project I will understand more of my impact, this epistemological growth would already influence my thinking and working. I personally intend to reduce my impact through small, but empirically measureable actions such as:
    - Delete unused files stored on the 'cloud' / OneDrive / sharepoint / moodle / padlet etc
    - Delete unread UAL emails
- Production of an advisory/advocacy document for understanding potential collective actions for digital storage, through UAL's Climate Action Group
- Engage in further research on questioning pedagogical dependency on permanent digital storage
- Consider how to influence my most contacted colleague, my line manager the Creative Director of the School of Design and Technology at LCF, as his reach is significant and data usage much higher.

4. Who will be involved and how?

- Myself, as the primary auto-quantitative researcher, participant, and source of data gathering.
- I will gather quantitative data in an auto-quantitative way: historically (*not actively*) monitor myself over 10 days in all incoming/outgoing internet and data usage to do with UAL, and effectively doing an audit on my current usage of digital storage services (OneDrive, etc)

5. What are the health & safety concerns, and how will you prepare for them?

Concerns
- The potential for feelings of guilt for my personal, autoethnographic contribution to the impact of GHG emissions, and resulting climate breakdown.
- The acute mental feelings of impending overwhelming doom associated with climate-breakdown awareness
- A risk of increased desire to 'change things', but feelings of hopelessness/futility of singular past, current, or future actions

Preparations
- Encouraging a recognition in the participants/researcher that this is an *ACTION* project, and therefore upon its onset it forces the researcher to not be passive, but indeed engage directly with specific action(s), and evaluate and reflect on its effectiveness. Therefore contributing positively in an advocacy or advisable way could help combat the risk potential of feelings of hopelessness
- Ensure that a certain degree of self-awareness to the possible action/contributions undertaken and that they're within scope

6. How will you protect the data of those involved?

- I will give full consent for my data to be used within my own research study
- As I envision this to be predominantly an auto-quantitative study, and so as the researcher and participant, I will protect all (if any) sensitive information I am collecting, and anonymise any identifying features of any of the data I submit.
- Once the analysis has been done, and the synopsis has been drawn the raw data will be destroyed, but no sooner than 1 week after the presentation of the project (~Jan 27 2025) and no later than 6 weeks after the presentation is taken (~March 10 2025).

7. How will you work with your participants in an ethical way?

- Following the protocol of ethical (harvest) giving and taking, as suggested by Robin Wall Kimmerer (2013), I will ensure that if I work with participants ethical practices will be followed.
- The bias of being both participant and researcher suggests the cause and need for the awareness of the potential problems which may arise through drawing quantitative data from my own sources.
- I will also be aware of the researcher-bias and participant-bias that can sometimes occur when doing research, from either side of the researcher/participant spectrum. This is of course particularly pertinent when doing ethical auto-quantitative research because myself, as both the researcher *and* the participant I embody both parts of the dynamic (Jamieson, et al. 2023; Poerwandari, 2021; Kara, 2015)
- Acknowledging my researcher positionality as a white, male, cis gendered, masters educated person, and all of the historic and current privileges this affords me. This will be expanded on in my positionality statement.

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