Tech 'might' save us:
A low-carbon approach to your work online

May 2025

Art Fund_ THE HERDS manifesto

THE HERDS Art Fund Grants

A low-carbon approach to your work online

THE HERDS is public art and climate action on an unprecedented scale, with herds of life-size puppet animals created in renewable and recyclable materials, journeying 12,000 miles through Africa and Europe, gaining new species as they go, crashing into civilisation in major cities, warning of environmental disaster. THE HERDS is a project by The Walk Productions.

Museums, galleries and cultural organisations across the UK have joined this international conversation, inviting their local communities to engage in dialogue informed by their collections, public programmes and place-based activities.

This resource has been created by Manifesto to support museums, galleries and cultural organisation in reducing the environmental impact of their digital and social media engagement.

THE HERDS

THE WALK

It's the little things

Small steps for a happier planet

Re-use social assets across platforms (e.g. 1:1 images)

Create only what you need

Use modern image formats like .webp

Be intentional with use of AI

Compress your images

Limit autoplaying videos

Archive or delete expired digital ads, assets and campaign pages

Approve lower-res versions

Process videos in bulk

Regularly clean inactive subscribers

Use cloud storage links over email attachments

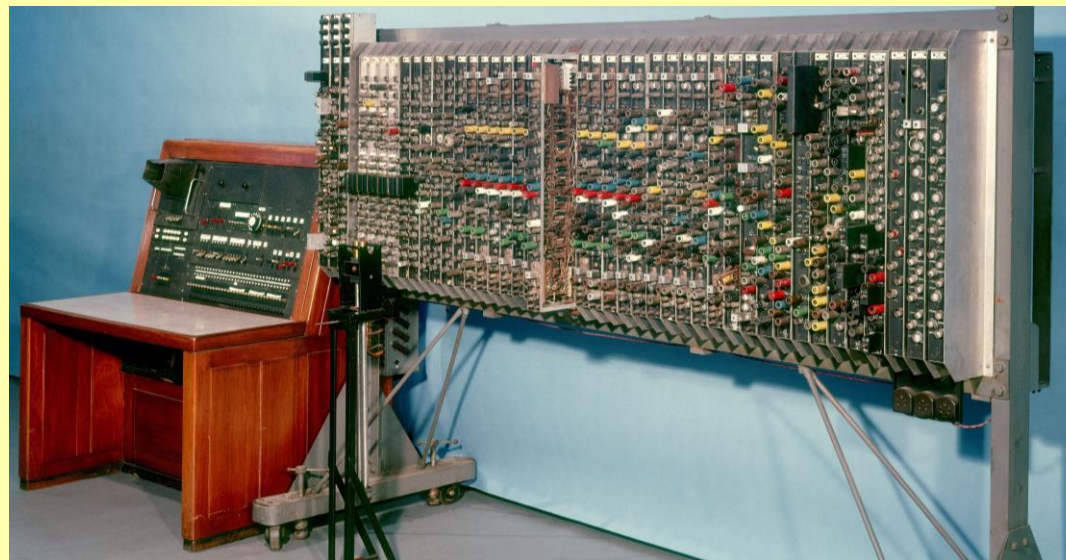Be intentional about social platforms you're on

The big picture

The digital industry is responsible for almost 4% of global emissions; which is more than the aviation industry

Pangolin puppet
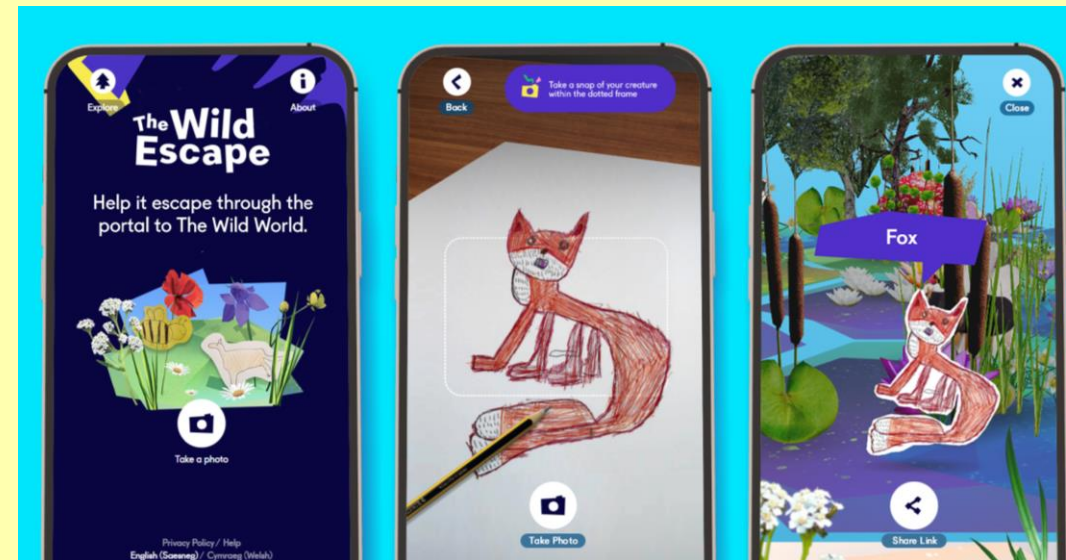Puppet Designer: Tyson Howard

The culprits

Website traffic and hosting

400 million terabytes of data are produced everyday as more people consume richer content across social media and the web.

Low carbon designed websites, green hosting and environmentally conscious social campaigns can help reduce an organisations carbon emissions.

Data and digital asset management

Data centre workloads have risen by over 340% since the Paris agreement in 2015, driven by online videos, AI, social media and websites.

How organisations manage and store data is key to cutting data centre workloads. Consolidation, deletion and archiving help lower carbon emissions.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

A 'typical' conversation with ChatGPT uses 500ml of water to cool its servers and generate electricity.

Organisations should consider ethical implications of how they utilise AI tools, balancing the benefits with the environmental costs.

Decarbonising a campaign

When considering the lifecycle of your
digital marketing campaign, small actions
at each step can deliver significant impact
to the overall carbon emissions.

Planning & Creation	→	Production & Distribution	→	Management & Closedown

Decarbonising a campaign

Planning & Creation

- **Create only what you need**
  Focus on essential assets to avoid unnecessary digital clutter

- **Be intentional with AI use**
  Use AI tools sparingly to optimise workflows without excessive processing power

- **Approve lower-res versions**
  Choose appropriate resolutions for images and videos to reduce data weight

- **Be intentional about social platforms**
  Concentrate on platforms that align with your audience engagement, so you're not creating content no one is seeing

Experience Barnsley, Museum of the Year finalist, 2021 © Marc Atkins/ Art Fund

Decarbonising a campaign

Production & Distribution

- **Use modern image formats like .webp**
  Optimised formats reduce file sizes while maintaining quality

- **Compress images**
  Ensure efficient loading speeds with minimal emissions

- **Limit auto playing videos**
  Encourage users to engage by clicking rather than forcing video playback - this also makes your videos more accessible!

- **Re-use social assets across platforms (like 1:1 images)**
  Reduce duplication, storage, and extend asset longevity

- **Process videos in bulk**
  Optimise editing and exporting to avoid repeated high-energy sessions

Photography by David Levene, Ant Strack and Hugo Glendinning
Photography features designers Ukwanda Puppets and Designs Art Collective and students of Wimbledon College of Arts, UAL
© The Walk Productions 2024

Decarbonising a campaign
Management & Closedown

- **Regularly clean inactive subscribers**
  Reduce unnecessary email processing and storage

- **Use cloud storage links over email attachments**
  Lower energy consumption compared to sending large files

- **Archive or delete expired digital ads, assets, campaign pages and working / draft files**
  Prevent unnecessary hosting and data storage

Broughton House. Gardens.
Courtesy Broughton House.

Pangolin puppet
Puppet Designer: Tyson Howard

More information can be found at Manifesto

Or feel free to get in touch hello@manifesto.co.uk

Further reading:

The London School or Economics and Political Science:
We need to include digital sustainability in climate action

UK Parliament: Energy Consumption of ICT

Image credits:
p.5 Science Museum, Pilot ACE (Automatic Computing Engine) computer, 1950, © Science Museum London
Images of The Wild Escape on a mobile device © Preloaded
Jupiter Artland, Museum of the Year finalist, 2016. Firmament by Antony Gormley. © Polly Braden 2016