

Alex 0:00

Hi, and welcome to Seeing Climate Change the podcast that explores climate change through visual art, personal reflection, science and conversation. I'm Alex and as always, I'm joined by my co host Hanna.

Hannah 0:26

In this episode inspired by the William Benton Museum of Art Seeing Climate Change exhibition, my co host, Alexander Filippides introduces three different digital humanities projects that let you interact with climate change from the safety of your computer.

Alex (for the rest of the episode) 0:40

I can't wait. Let's get started. Hello, everyone. I'm Alex. And today on the Seeing Climate Change podcast, I will be inviting you to join me as we explore some digital spaces that tackle the issue of climate change. From virtual reality that takes you across the world to Fiji to simulations that you stave off rising temperatures, and an adventure that teaches you about your carbon footprint, this episode will have a little bit of something for all of you.

Often, when we think of an exhibition, we imagine installations like the ones put on at UConn's own Benton Art Museum. However, more and more scholars have begun to explore the idea of the digital humanities, and have subsequently begun to produce projects like the three we're going to look at today. But before we get to that, it is worth discussing what exactly the digital humanities are. While the term is purposefully wide and vague, is actually fairly self explanatory. The digital humanities referred to in part any scholarly project in the humanities that is born digital. This definition is usually used to distinguish projects like the ones we're going to look at today, from things like electronic editions of more traditional academic books. The digital humanities are as equally well researched and academically rigorous as the more common scholarly book. But, they have the added advantage of being more accessible due to their use of multimedia like video, simulation and sound. These projects allow for greater learning opportunities for those who struggle with more dry forms of interpretation. The use of these programs and installations is becoming increasingly common within more traditional cultural institutions like museums and historical societies.

To get our feet wet, we're going to look at the United Nation's Sea of Island project that looks at the effect climate change has already had on some Asian Pacific Island communities. Sea of Island which is completely free, by the way, makes use of a 360 degree camera to allow us to view from the first person perspective the island of Fiji, which has already suffered due to the climate crisis. The experience takes you through a village and surrounding nature to show the impact climate change has had. You can see the great ocean that is slowly creeping up on the small island. Some structures already half sunken in. The narration is informative as it is powerful, discussing the role that these communities play in stewarding these biodiverse regions. The narrator doesn't simply describe what is happening to these societies, but truly brings you in by making full use of its audio visual components. The most notable aspect of the experience is how it provides a perspective that is so difficult to imagine without such a visual aid. Putting you in the position of those most directly affected by climate change is a somber

experience, but one everyone should try. Often it is said that knowing is half the battle. The experience is a brief 15 informative minutes, and is one that comes highly recommended for me.

Our second feature project is a departure from the sensory feast provided by sea of island and roads spelled "e n hyphen r o a d s" is what we would most often call a simulation. The website allows you to experiment with a variety of scales and buttons to see how different energy sources transportation, industry and a plethora of other factors affect greenhouse gas emissions. The program even features the expected temperature change by 2100 Given the parameters that you set, and perhaps and Rhodes is somewhat dreary in this aspect, as you can never get this number to zero, at least in my experimentation. The greatest strength of inroads is how it gets us to think about climate policy at home. The experimentation allowed by the simulation probes you to wonder what policy changes could effectively combat the climate crisis. The simulation is very simple and it doesn't take long to explore most of its options. However, the way it gets you thinking about how so many factors affect our planet makes it well worth your perusal.

The last example of a digital exhibition we're going to look at today is called Meet your carbon footprint another project sponsored by the United Nations. Meet your Carbon Footprint is available both through your browser and through the PlayStation's application called "Dreams." Meet your Carbon Footprint is a digital exhibition aimed at audiences less aware of the effects of climate change. The whole purpose of this exhibition is to show the many ways that we impact our environmental footprint, and even offers ways we can live more sustainably through public transit or sustainable consuming practices. The experience is very brief and can even be viewed on YouTube. It is a great first step for anyone interested in digital exhibitions that tackle climate change. This example replaces the realistic nature of the prior two projects and presents a much more colorful and cartoonish aesthetic. The exhibition takes you through a normal day to see how much carbon we all produce, as well as how much we waste and then goes through another day. This time showing us the ways that we can limit our carbon footprint, the experience which is under 10 minutes, as well worth looking at for yourself just to see all it has to offer.

More information about all three of these projects can be found in the show notes. I hope you enjoyed learning a little bit about the digital humanities today. The field has advanced leaps and bounds in recent years, especially due to the advent of virtual reality. Experimenting with the ways that we learn and experience climate change is a key facet and getting a more nuanced understanding of how the climate crisis affects us all. Thank you so much for listening today.

Hannah 6:25

Thank you for listening! Check out the show notes for more information about the topics covered in this episode and for a link to the William Benton Museum of Art's website.

Alex 6:33

The Benton is the official art museum for the state of Connecticut and admission is always free for all visitors. The museum is located on the University of Connecticut's Storrs campus and is open Tuesday through Friday from 10am to 4pm. And Saturday and Sunday from 1pm to 4pm. But make sure to check the website for updated hours before you arrive. We encourage you to visit!

Hannah 6:54

The scene climate change Podcast is a production of the fall 2023 cohort of the Digital Media and Design and History departments' course, "Collaborating with Cultural Institutions" taught by Professor Clarissa Ceglio. This podcast was produced in collaboration with the William Benton Museum of Art and with the support of WHUS radio. The series theme music was composed and performed by our own Alexander Filippides.

Alex 7:20

Before we sign off, we hope that you will check out the other episodes in this series. Thank you again and see you in the next episode.

Transcribed by <https://otter.ai>