

# SJN Module: Integrating Humor Through a Solutions Lens

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June 21, 2023

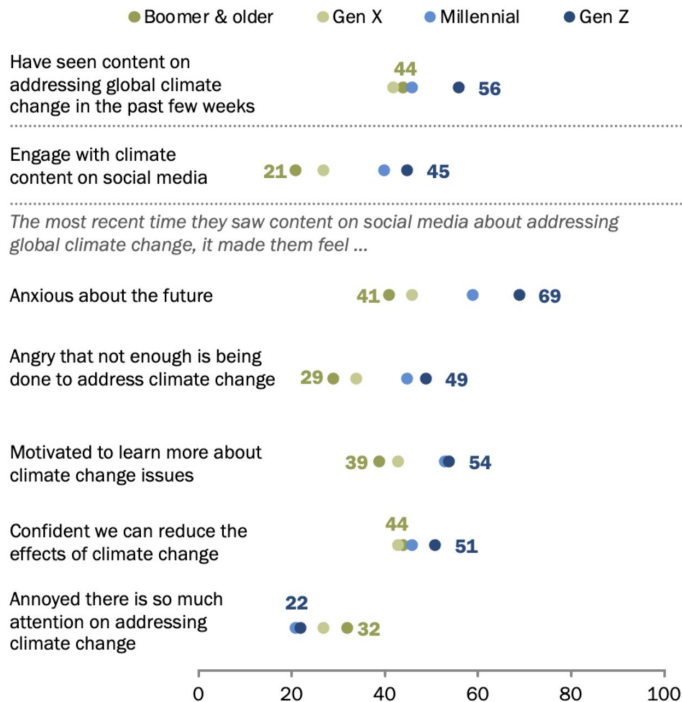


69%  
of Gen Z say social  
media content  
about climate  
made them anxious  
about the future.

Pew Research Center  
2021

## Gen Z and Millennial social media users engage more with climate change content, react more strongly to it

% of U.S. adult social media users who say they ...

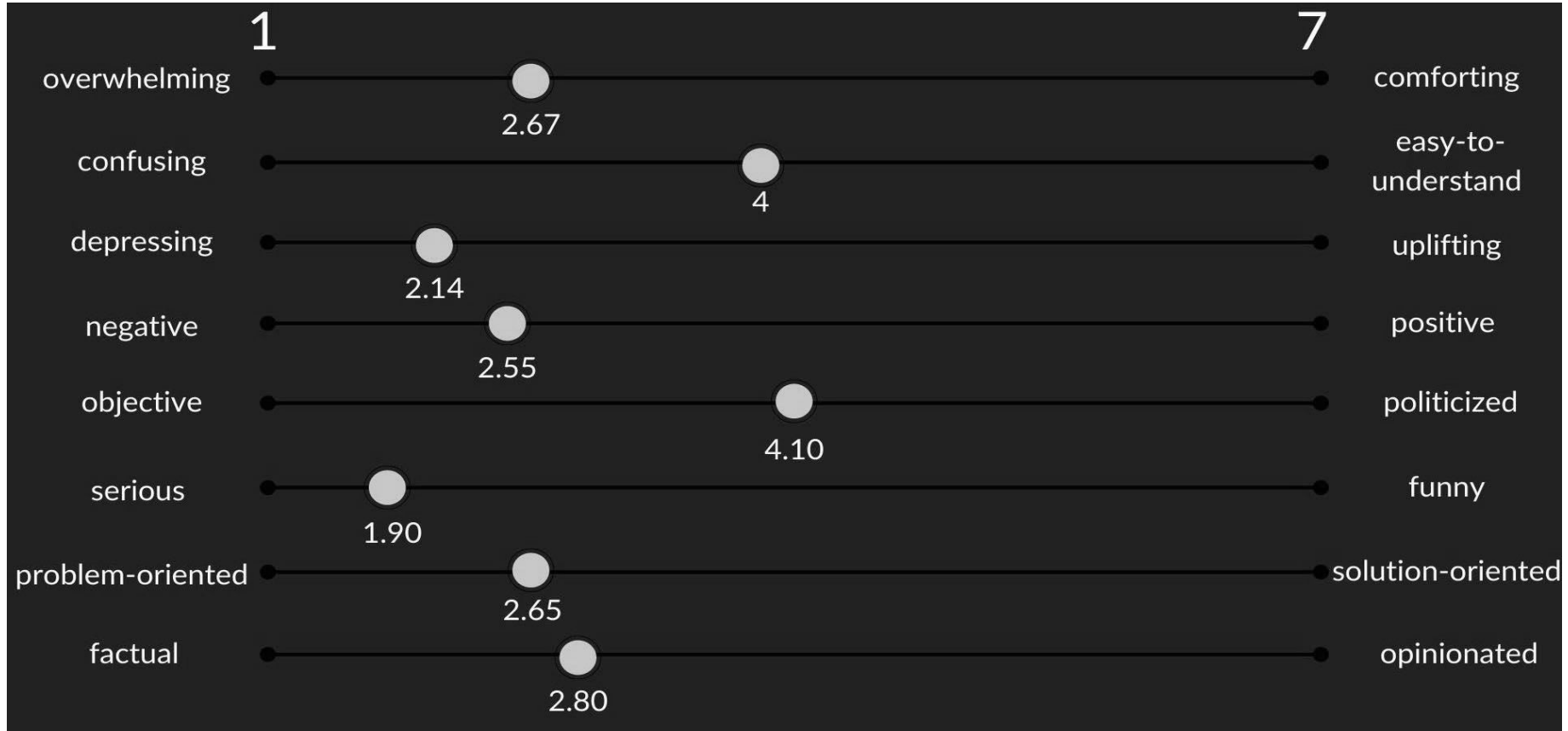


Note: Based on social media users. Respondents who gave other responses or did not give an answer are not shown. "Engage with climate content on social media" defined as those who follow an account, interact with posts, or post or share content on social media related to addressing global climate change.

Source: Survey conducted April 20-29, 2021.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

# Perceptions of Environmental News



**38%**  
of people  
globally report  
avoiding the  
news because it's  
too negative

Reuters Institute  
Digital News Report  
2022

**MOST COMMON REASONS FOR NEWS AVOIDANCE –  
ALL MARKETS**



**43%**

say there is too  
much politics  
and COVID-19



**36%**

say news has  
negative effect  
on mood



**29%**

say they are worn  
out by amount  
of news



**29%**

say the news is  
untrustworthy  
or biased



**17%**

say it leads to  
arguments I'd  
rather avoid



**16%**

say there is nothing  
I can do with the  
information

N

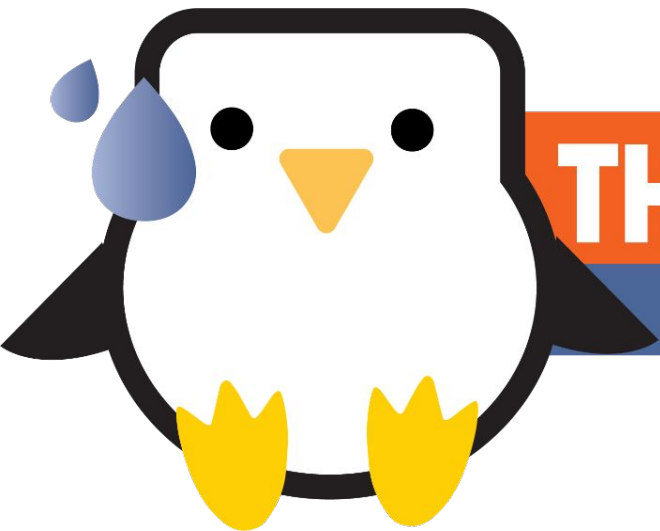
# Don't Look UP











# THE SWEATY PENGUIN

Antarctica's Hottest Podcast



# SUPERIORITY THEORY OF HUMOUR



**SUPERIOR**

**INFERIOR**



# INCONGRUITY THEORY OF HUMOUR

## STAGE 1

DETECTION OF  
THE HUMOROUS  
INCONGRUITY

## STAGE 2

RESOLUTION OF  
THE HUMOROUS  
INCONGRUITY

## STAGE 3

APPRECIATION OF  
THE HUMOROUS  
INCONGRUITY



# MAKING IT FUNNY

Many comedians who talk climate present everything as doom and gloom. But we don't have to.



# MAKING IT FUNNY

## Instead of acting like humans are terrible

“When you do these environmentally things, we can all continue to live, their response is ‘what’s in it for me?’”

Show their concerns as reasonable, and try answering “what’s in it for me” through the jokes!

They also allow consumers to see exactly how they’re consuming, which for us, means we can find ways to save money with smart meters. And on top of that, let’s say your power went out right now. Don’t freak out, it didn’t actually go out. I know you have a million zoom meetings and spreadsheets and episodes of Drag Race to catch up on, it’s all fine. Now, if you and your neighbors have regular meters installed in your houses, the electrical service provider has limited information about where the outage is hitting and what the cause was. With smart meters installed, if there is an individual problem at the location of the consumer, the provider will know.

*From The Sweaty Penguin Episode 70 - Smart Grids*

# MAKING IT FUNNY

Instead of acting like positive environmental actions are impossible

“...or imagining a human can really drink this through a paper straw.”

Present the nuance of the issue, but make sure the jokes still acknowledge that there is an issue and that it's solvable

I can't begin to imagine how frustrating it must be for people who literally need straws to survive see that as the first plastic product getting picked on with the rationale being that no one needs it. Environmentalists, if you wanted to pick a plastic product we don't need and make it the face of plastic reduction, why would you pick straws when you just as easily could have picked LEGOs? Seriously, who thought it would be a good idea to make building blocks for kids that can (1) only be assembled in one specific way eliminating any possibility for creativity, (2) become completely useless if the kid so much as loses one piece, (3) are a massive choking hazard, and (4) mysteriously turn up on the floor in the middle of the night every time you have to sneak to the bathroom but don't want to turn the light on. Don't get me wrong, I believe us guys should have to endure some pain if we're going to delude ourselves into thinking our aim is good enough to hit the toilet seat in the dark in the middle of the night, but only a psychopath would wish someone got a LEGO to the foot! If the environmental movement wants a plastic everyone can gang up on, why not ban LEGOs from the floors of our homes and replace them with something more pleasant to step on in the dark, like marbles or thumbtacks?

*From The Sweaty Penguin Episode 33 - Plastic Straws*



# MAKING IT FUNNY

Many comedians who talk climate present everything as doom and gloom. But we don't have to.



# MAKING IT FUNNY

Instead of joking that a mass die-off beats electric vehicles.

“If everybody drove an electric car... if everybody walked with snowshoes on...”

Incorporate limitations and insights of solutions!

All of this begs the question: are we ready to barrel toward an electric vehicle utopia? Are we speed? No, only Lightning McQueen can be speed. And your friend that still Naruto runs through hotel hallways. But it's an important question. Electric vehicles are cool, but they have a number of challenges, from the manufacturing process to the electricity they'll require to the fact that every single EV skeptic seems to have plans to take a 500-mile road trip through rural North Dakota next week and might not have access to a charger.

*From The Sweaty Penguin Episode 121 - Electric Vehicles*

# MAKING IT FUNNY

## Instead of making blanket jokes about population growth

“They won’t just come out and say it. Nobody has the balls to come out and say it, and say look, 85 percent of you have to go.”

## Get into the weeds, and find quirky things about the topic

Obviously the census is meant to be accurate, but at the same time, it is near impossible for data collectors to count EVERY person. I mean come on, each census worker only has ten fingers, what do you want from them? There are many reasons for these inaccuracies: One, the census is based on self-reports, so people who don’t self-report will not be accounted for. For example, in the 2010 U.S. census, young adults, renters, minority communities, and those living on tribal reservations were likely undercounted because of language barriers and a lack of internet access. It’s like college. If you don’t speak up during attendance, you will be left in the back of class nameless and friendless for the rest of the year. On the other side of that, homeowners, people ages 50-84, and college students were overcounted in the same census, which happens usually when people have two homes, or, in the case of the college students, their parents count them at home while they were already counted at school. Like god mom, I can do my own census, I’m 18, jeez. No, I threw out the furry nectarine! The backpack too

*From The Sweaty Penguin Episode 87 - Population Growth*

# TIKTOK

Example: during California's Hurricane Hilary, many users posted videos that, while funny, depict a the situation as hopeless. This humor will not serve to calm down the 80% of California youth who experience climate anxiety.

<https://www.tiktok.com/@belindacastor/video/7269494079312907563>

<https://www.tiktok.com/@disneytotallyrox/video/7269427441515367722?q=disneyland%20hilary&t=1693157669147>

<https://www.tiktok.com/@edencaliz4/video/7269593992113786155?q=in%20n%20out%20hilary&t=1693157775506>

[https://www.tiktok.com/@\\_paunchy\\_/video/7269144810194308394?q=we%20needed%20the%20rain%20hilary&t=1693157914553](https://www.tiktok.com/@_paunchy_/video/7269144810194308394?q=we%20needed%20the%20rain%20hilary&t=1693157914553)

<https://www.tiktok.com/@samtik0/video/7268786278563532078>

Instead, we do hop on trending sounds/images, but try to blend in content that talks about solutions or provides hope. We also do “weekend update” style jokes.

<https://www.tiktok.com/@sweatypenguinpod/video/7118919643816807723>

<https://www.tiktok.com/@ethanbrown5151/video/7286657463640722731?lang=en>

<https://www.tiktok.com/@ethanbrown5151/video/7291869087154720042?lang=en>

# MEMES



gogreensavegreen

Following

Message



3,910 posts

75.3K followers

1,294 following

GoGreenSaveGreen

Education

Teaching people about env/climate

We can be serious+fun here

Individuals collectively make change

This page is a one woman show-not a team

[linktr.ee/gogreen\\_savegreen\\_](https://linktr.ee/gogreen_savegreen_)

Followed by generation.180, hollywoodclimatesummit, earth.to.earthlings + 4 more

A LOT OF PEOPLE DONT KNOW THIS, BUT WHALES ARE ACTUALLY HUGE CO2 SINKS. WHEN THEY DIE THEY SINK TO THE BOTTOM OF THE OCEAN AND TAKE HUGE AMOUNTS OF CO2 WITH THEM. SEQUESTERING IT AND KEEPING IT OUT OF THE ATMOSPHERE. ITS BEEN SCIENTIFICALLY PROVEN THAT BRINGING BACK WHALE POPULATIONS WOULD BE AN EFFECTIVE CO2 SEQUESTERING METHOD



Me when I start talking about how bad fireworks are for the environment and I offer other alternatives that aren't as destructive



No you're wrong, I am fun, it's been scientifically proven



Billie Eilish using solar panels to partially power her Lollapalooza set and proving once again she really trying to be more sustainable in her career

Me



# BUT WE'RE NOT A COMEDY NEWSROOM

It can still be a tool in your toolbox! Just like solutions journalism, comedy done right can engage new readers and lower their anxiety. It is especially effective with young readers. Social media offers ample ways for newsrooms to try humor, and it doesn't even require memes or jokes.

Example: on Halloween, Pattn shared a video on how climate change influenced witch trials.

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/CzFCblJPzP4/>

It's not a comedy video, but the incongruity of climate change and witch trials in the same video is, in itself, funny. That alone can keep a young viewer hooked through a video, making them more likely to engage with your content and follow for more.