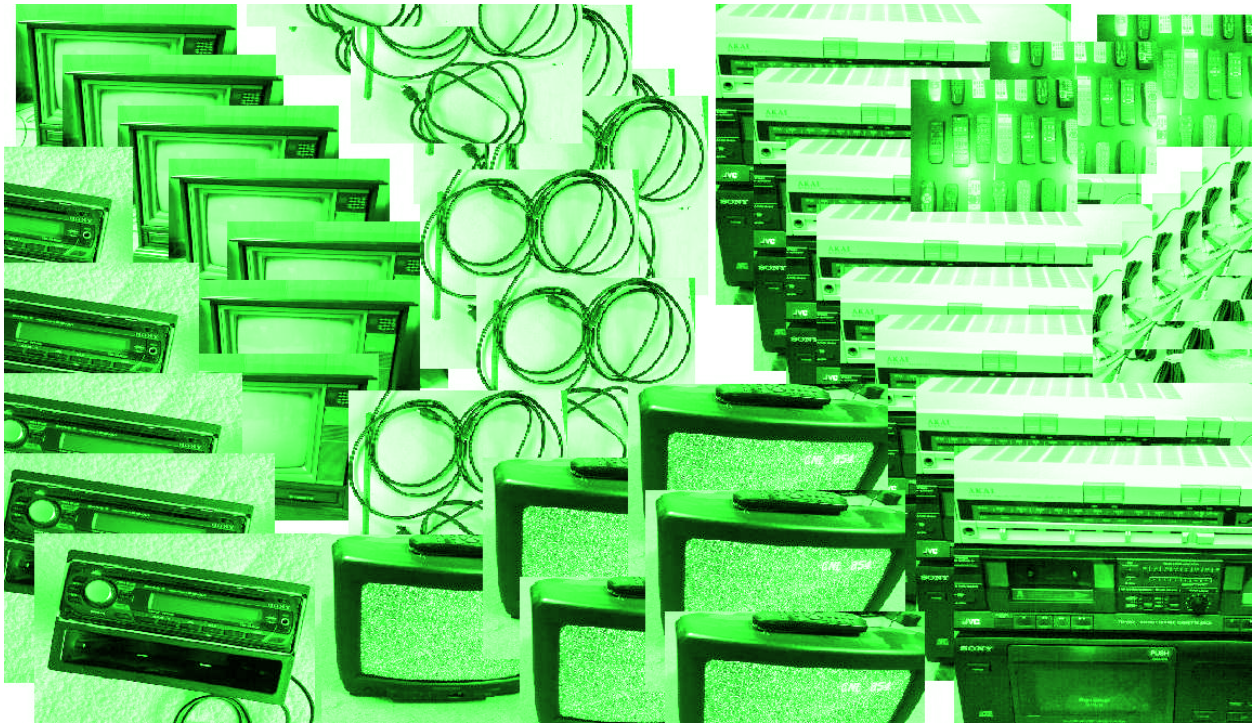

COPY. PASTE. DELETE?

The Consequences of Our Technology Consumption

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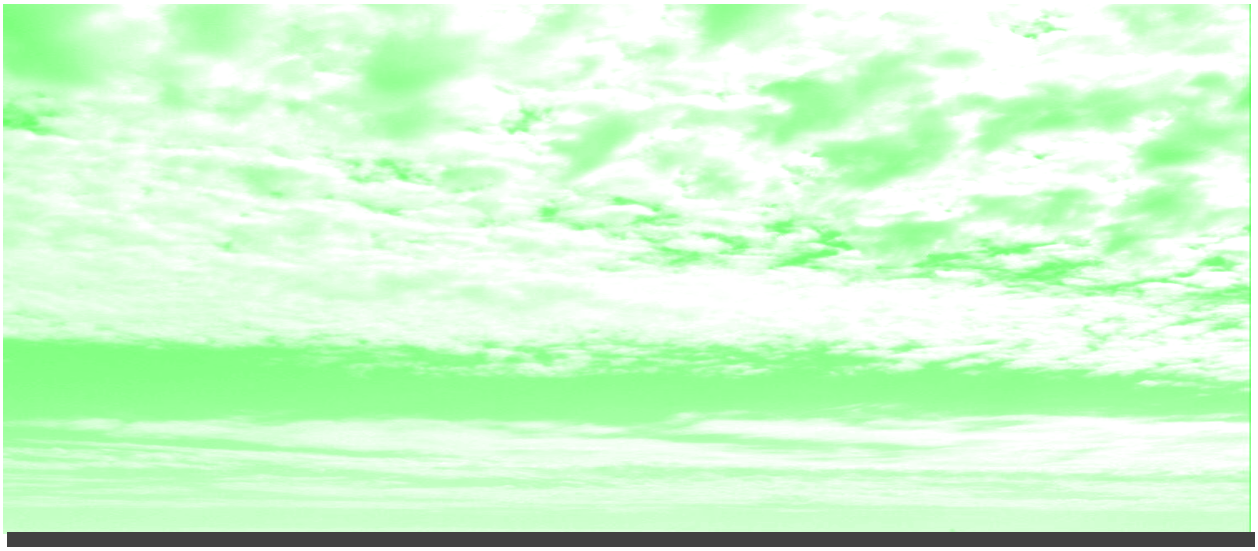
Delete. Filthy Files.

During the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, while the world was experiencing the first set of lockdowns, the media was covering positive environmental stories which were occurring while the world was halted. Wild animals were seen reclaiming space within urban settings. The famous example of dolphins returning to the waters of Venice, Italy often comes to mind for many.[1] These feel good stories were hopeful in the moment, but didn't display the entire truth of where human emissions were being relocated.

Working from home has decreased single vehicle trips for commuters, but has increased the need for data storage in cloud applications. Data, in any electronic form, creates a negative environmental impact throughout the entirety of its life cycle.[2] Files, which are created on devices and to later be stored in a cloud software, consume roughly 200X more energy inputs than using alternative hardware.[2]

Microsoft, which hosts one of the largest cloud computing services in the market, has introduced an online application for companies and businesses to measure their greenhouse gas emissions from their internal digital footprint. Emissions Impact Dashboard allows the user to track, calculate and strategically plan their data storage on the Microsoft Cloud, in order to help increase the level of transparency of how much each business pollutes.[3]



Paste. e-Waste.

As technological advances continue to occur, so does the amount of technological waste from unused electronics, also known as e-waste. This includes electronics and their accessories which have become archived or no longer function. The world is on track to create 52.2 million metric tons of e-waste every year.[2] When e-waste is not disposed of properly, environmental toxins, dangerous to all types of biotic organisms, can leach out of the devices.[2] It is known that developed countries, such as Canada, send their e-waste to emerging countries to handle and dispose of.

In order to mitigate the outsourcing burden to other countries, Canada now has a program to help Canadian citizens dispose of broken and archived devices responsively, called Recycle My Electronics. This program helps recirculate valuable raw materials to re-enter the product life cycle.[4]

Copy. Source.

1. https://globalnews.ca/news/6697281/dolphins-italy-coronavirus/

2. https://cases.open.ubc.ca/w17t2cons200-26/#cite_note-m1-1
https://www.zdnet.com/article/microsoft-releases-tool-to-calculate-cloud-based-carbon-emissions/

3. https://appsource.microsoft.com/en-us/product/power-bi/coi-sustainability.emissions_impact_dashboard

4. https://www.recyclemyelectronics.ca/learning/articles/what-you-need-to-know-about-electronics-recycling/