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EMAIL CARBON FOOTPRINT
A SOURCE FOR GREENHOUSE GASES EMISSIONS

Creating Happiness
IN WORK AND LIFE IN SOCIETY: A RELIGIOS PERSPECTIVE

Teknik Pengucapan
BARACK OBAMA

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EMAIL CARBON FOOTPRINT:
A Source for Greenhouse Gases Emissions

By:
FAIZATUL AKMAM AMIRRUDIN[1]
NIK NOOR AFIZAH AZLAN[2]
[1]Faculty of Business and Management
Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Selangor
[2]Faculty of Business and Management
Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Terengganu
**Corresponding email: akmamamir671@uitm.edu.my*

Email Carbon Footprint

Have you ever thought that emails we have sent, received, or spammed have their own carbon footprint? I have never realised it until one of my students has submitted his critique paper on it to me. We have frequently heard and read that industries' production of things is what causes carbon footprints, but we have never considered that the emails we sent, received, and saved on our drives and inboxes have also contributed to the overall carbon footprint.

What is the carbon footprint? It has been defined by the WHO as the weight of CO2 emissions created in tonnes, a measurement of the effect your actions have on the volume of carbon dioxide (CO2) produced through the combustion of fossil fuels. A person, an organisation, a product, or an event, among others, may have a carbon footprint that is quantified in equivalent tonnes of CO2 over the course of a year. The production and consumption of fossil fuels, food, manufactured goods, materials, roads, and transportation can all contribute to the greenhouse gases (GHGs) that together make up a person's carbon footprint.

What is email carbon footprint? It refers to the environmental impact of energy and resources used in sending and receiving emails. Every time an email is sent, energy is needed to power a computer or other devices used to create and deliver the message, as well as energy to send the message over the Internet and store it on a server. Typically, the email carbon footprint is determined by counting carbon-dioxide emissions caused by the energy used to send and store emails. In addition to the energy used to run servers and data centres where the emails are stored, this also refers to the energy used in the manufacturing and disposal of the electronic devices used to send and receive the emails.

Emails have a relatively small carbon footprint, but when considering the volume of the emails sent and received globally every day, it can add up to a significant amount of carbon emissions. Therefore, it is crucial for individuals and organisations to exercise caution when using emails and

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develop strategies that reduce their carbon footprint. Utilising energy-efficient devices and servers, cutting back on email volume, and eliminating pointless emails are a few options.

Email as a source of GHG

What are greenhouse gases (GHGs)? They are gases in the earth's atmosphere that trap heat, leading to a warming effect known as the greenhouse effect. The most common greenhouse gases are carbon dioxide (CO2), methane (CH4), nitrous oxide (N2O), and fluorinated gases. They let sunlight pass through the atmosphere; however, they prevent the heat that the sunlight brings from leaving the atmosphere. Email itself does not directly emit greenhouse gases (GHGs) as it is a digital form of communication that does not require physical transportation or the burning of fossil fuels. Nevertheless, the infrastructure supporting email communication, such as data centres and servers, can consume significant amounts of energy and contribute to the GHGs emissions.

Large amounts of energy are needed to power and cool equipment in the data centres that serve email services, which can produce a significant amount of greenhouse-gas emissions, especially if the electricity used to power the data centres comes from fossil-fuel sources. Additionally, the energy used by end-user devices to access the emails and the energy needed to send the emails via networks can both add to the emissions of the greenhouse gases.

Additionally, the production and disposal of electronic devices, such as computers and smartphones, also contribute to GHGs emissions. These emissions come from the manufacturing process and the energy used to power the devices during their lifetime. When the electronic devices are improperly disposed of, they can also release harmful chemicals into the environment.

Even though emails may have a small carbon footprint in comparison to the other GHG emitters, it is still important to be aware of this fact and take action to lessen it. While email itself does not directly emit the GHGs, the infrastructure supporting email communication and the devices used to access it can contribute significantly to the GHG emissions. It is important to be mindful of our energy consumption and electronic waste when using the digital-communication tools. Some of these actions include cutting back on unnecessary emails, using energy-efficient devices, and advocating for the use of renewable-energy sources to power data centres and networks.

Conclusion

In conclusion, email carbon footprint is an important consideration in our digital age as the energy used to send and store emails contributes to greenhouse-gas emissions and climate change as well as creating a sustainable living. While the carbon footprint of an individual email may seem small, the cumulative impact of the billions of emails sent and received every day can be significant. By being mindful of our digital activities and adopting practices that minimise the environmental impact of email, we can contribute to the global effort to mitigate the effects of climate change and create a more sustainable future.

Reducing email volume, deleting unnecessary emails, and using energy-efficient devices and servers are just a few examples of the simple steps we can take to reduce email carbon footprint. By incorporating these practices into our daily lives, we can reduce our carbon footprint, conserve resources, and contribute to a healthier planet for future generations. Ultimately, reducing email carbon footprint is not only good for the environment but also for our overall quality of life and well-being.

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Faculty of Business and Management
Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Terengganu, Kampus Dungun
Sura Hujung, 23000 Dungun, Terengganu, MALAYSIA
Tel: +609-8400400
Fax: +609-8403777
Email: biznewzuitm@gmail.com