

Branch Magazine

Issue 4 | Autumn 2022

About

Branch is an online magazine written by and for people who dream of a sustainable and just internet for all.

The internet is the world's largest coal-powered machine. If we continue business-as-usual, the IT sector will be responsible for 14% of the world's carbon emissions by 2040. We believe that the internet must instead serve our collective liberation and ecological sustainability. That's why we created *Branch* magazine.

The magazine is a space for personal reflection, critical engagement with technology and experimentation. This is our small attempt to uplift fresh thinking for **how to green the web technically, aesthetically and politically.**

The articles in *Branch* strive to **connect sustainability to root causes** and to inequalities experienced at different intersections—gender, race, class, ability, and so on. Creating change requires all kinds of practices, so contributors include climate activists, open source technologists, indigenous leaders, artists, energy scientists and degrowth experts.

<https://branch.climateaction.tech>

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The fourth issue of Branch Magazine is dedicated to the theme Open Climate.

In this issue you will find explorations of hi-craft rather than hi-tech. You will read about the hope of seed libraries and repair shops. You will learn about the leading open projects on measuring the internet's carbon emissions and mitigating environmental damage from manufacturing hardware. You will be invited to walk along the rivers of India and to consider a handmade computer.

Open Climate is a living, breathing practice that is necessary for sustainable change. You will find some of its shapes and practitioners in this issue.



TECHNICAL VISION

We hope to not only articulate what these desirable futures are but also to embody them with specific tools and art. That's why we made *Branch* as a **carbon-aware website**.

The site adapts to and reflects the physical infrastructure of the internet and the energy behind it. Utilising data from a grid intensity API and the user's location, Branch has four different interface designs shown depending on the current energy demand and fossil fuels on the grid where the user is:

1. Lower grid demand, more renewables
2. Medium grid demand, fewer renewables
3. Higher grid demand, less renewables
4. Grid data unavailable

We collaborated with leading Wordpress developers to produce the demand-responsive code and openly licensed it so others can make carbon-aware websites without needing to be a specialist developer. We intentionally worked in Wordpress, the biggest open source blogging platform on the internet, so that more people could experiment with these kinds of carbon-aware digital tools on their own sites.

Furthermore, the Branch site has been designed to be as low energy as possible. This includes using a limited number of fonts and utilizing system fonts, reducing image weight, and designing without a lot of Javascript.

TEAM

- Managing Editors: Michelle Thorne, Shannon Dosemagen and Babitha George
- Assistant Editor: Carrie Hou
- Design: Tom Jarrett
- Communications: Katrin Fritsch
- Development: Jack Lenox, Hannah Smith and Chris Adams
- Cover Illustrations: Aravani Art Project