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Minimising Carbon Emissions in Online Meetings: Strategies for Sustainable Collaboration

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In today's digital era, online meetings have become an integral part of modern work culture. However, it is crucial to examine their environmental impact, including the often-overlooked aspect of dark data emissions related to data storage.

This article explores the carbon emissions associated with online meetings, considering factors such as device energy consumption, internet infrastructure, data transmission, and the environmental implications of dark data. Additionally, it provides actionable strategies for reducing the environmental impact of online meetings through energy-efficient practices and sustainable data management.

Understanding the Carbon Emissions of Online Meetings:

Online meetings involve various factors that contribute to carbon emissions, such as device energy consumption, internet infrastructure, data transmission, and the lesser-known concept of dark data emissions.

Device Energy Consumption: Participating in online meetings requires powering devices like computers, laptops, or smartphones, which consume electricity. The energy consumed depends on device power usage and meeting duration.

Internet Infrastructure: The environmental impact is influenced by the energy sources used by internet service providers (ISPs) and data centres that handle network traffic. Regions with a high reliance on fossil fuels for energy generation typically have a larger carbon footprint compared to those utilising renewable

energy sources.

Data Transmission: The volume of data transmitted during online meetings contributes to carbon emissions. Processing and transferring significant amounts of data require substantial energy consumption.

Dark Data Emissions: Dark data refers to unutilised or underutilised data stored in organisations' databases. Dark data emissions result from the energy-intensive processes involved in managing and storing unused data, including data centres' infrastructure and continuous server operation.

Mitigating the Environmental Impact:

To reduce the carbon emissions associated with online meetings, a comprehensive approach is necessary. Here are effective strategies for minimising their environmental impact:

Energy-Efficient Devices: Opt for energy-efficient devices with low power consumption. Look for certifications or labels indicating energy efficiency standards, such as Energy Star.

Device Optimisation: Adjust device settings to reduce energy usage. Dimming the screen brightness, activating power-saving modes, and disabling unnecessary features help extend battery life and reduce emissions.

Renewable Energy Sources: Power devices and internet connections with renewable energy whenever possible. Consider switching to renewable energy providers or installing personal solar panels to reduce the carbon footprint associated with online meetings.

Sustainable Platforms: Choose online meeting platforms that prioritise sustainability or offer carbon-neutral options. While specific energy usage data may not be readily available, selecting environmentally conscious platforms aligns with sustainability goals.

Efficient Data Usage: Minimise data consumption during online meetings to reduce emissions. Avoid unnecessary data transfers, limit high-definition video streaming unless necessary, and encourage participants to disable video or opt for audio-only mode when appropriate.

Scheduling and Duration: Streamline meeting schedules and aim for shorter durations whenever feasible. Efficient time management optimises energy usage and reduces the overall carbon emissions of online meetings.

Sustainable Data Management: Implement sustainable practices for data management, including dark data. Regularly review and delete unnecessary data to reduce storage requirements and minimise energy consumption in data centres.

Carbon Offsetting: Participate in ICROA approved carbon offset programmes to compensate for the emissions generated by online meetings and data storage. These initiatives support environmental projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to carbon neutrality.

As online meetings continue to redefine collaboration, it is vital to minimise their carbon emissions while addressing the concept of dark data emissions. By adopting energy-efficient devices, optimising settings, utilising renewable energy sources, promoting efficient data usage, implementing sustainable data

management practices, and participating in carbon offset initiatives, organisations can significantly reduce the environmental impact of online meetings. Embracing eco-friendly practices and sustainable data management

To find out more about how your organisation can become more sustainable contact us at gozero@neutralcarbonzone.com

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