

# How technology should be used to solve climate change argumentative essay sample

[Sociology](#), [Shopping](#)



The world has been facing extreme weather events due to global warming such as wildfires in Yosemite Park and floods in Colorado. Wildfires are not new to California but the strength of recent fires caused people to evacuate their homes. In Colorado a flood recently required helicopters to evacuate people living in the mountains. Homes are lost, people are displaced and emergency organizations are under stress. Clearly something needs to be done to improve the situation. A goal of countries around the world is to decrease the amount of greenhouse gases that enter the atmosphere causing global warming to become worse. The main features of environmentally friendly activities are reduction, recycling, and reuse (3Rs). These are the three basics actions individuals and organizations can use to slow the rate of greenhouse emissions into the atmosphere. If consumers learn how to use modern technology moderately rather than in excess the environment will undergo less negative impact from waste.

Each time we look newer and better technology for computers, cell phones, tablets, notebooks and pads has been introduced. Gadgets of this type and others are easily available and seem to become more affordable every day. Some people have one of each and extra ones that are older models. If people were to use the available technology more economically then the negative impact on the environment would be decreased. The first step for consumers is to plan their purchases so they don't have different types of technology with overlapping functions. Planning ahead before purchasing is a good way to save money. Having too many technological gadgets and devices is a waste of valuable natural resources that are used in the manufacturing process. The more devices that are sold the more companies

manufacture which makes the cycle of waste an ongoing process. The amount of waste increases, too. At the beginning the raw materials need to be mined and transported to the factories needing them to produce computerized technology. Then at the end of their use if people toss them in the garbage materials that could be recycled are wasted. Also materials toxic to the environment have an easier way to enter the environment if they are tossed into a landfill or left on the ground somewhere which is not a desired impact.

Moderation is one of the best ways to save money and stay on a budget. The Secretary of Energy, Steven Chiu in 2009 called for reducing fossil fuel consumption in order to decrease greenhouse gas emissions and save money in American families' budgets. (Owen, 1) Chiu felt that by encouraging efficiency and emphasizing the savings potential people would be persuaded to buy more fuel efficient vehicles. Many people will not be able to afford more fuel efficient cars and trucks. Commuting to and from work causes pollution emissions that need to be decreased or stopped altogether. The best way to overcome the problem of transportation to work is to live within walking distance of your work. That solution may require moving to a different area so it is not something everyone can do. Other ways are to share a ride with people who are going to the same area where you work, use mass transit as often as possible and work from home.

Internet, Wi-Fi and computers make it possible to stay in contact with your office but not have to always be there in person. Skype makes it possible to attend meetings at the office from your home. If a person can work one or more days at home instead of commuting to work the decrease in air

pollution is important to help slow down climate change.

Shopping for light bulbs seems like an unimportant activity when compared to the overwhelming problem of climate change. Surprisingly changing to low energy use light bulbs can help a great deal to meet the goal of decreasing greenhouse emissions. Switching to LED (Light Emitting Diode) light bulbs in for home lighting brings a decrease for the cost of electricity when calculated over the lifetime of the LED bulb; LEDs can pay for themselves in time. LEDs require less energy and therefore the electricity bill will be less. Often people do not switch to LEDs because the initial cost is higher than using tungsten bulbs. Purchasing LEDs is worth it though because the bulbs use less electricity for the same amount of lighting and the LEDs last longer. Although the upfront payment for each LED seems high at first in the long run money will be saved. LEDs do not need the metal tungsten so the costs of mining and transportation are not spent to produce LEDs. The environment receives less negative impact because of the material used to make the bulbs, they use less electricity per kW hour, and they provide lighting for a very long time.

Fortunately there are many ways to soften our negative impact on the environment. Simply noticing the way we use our appliances and the choices we make can be an important way to think about making positive change in our own homes as well as in our lifestyle. An appliance having a better design for less environmental impact and less energy use is the refrigerator. Refrigerators are larger than ever before but use less energy. A paradox can be found because as refrigerators became larger and needed less energy the demand for refrigerators increased. Not only had that but as refrigerators

became larger people started buying more food to fill their refrigerators. The main problem is that not all the food is used and a lot of what has never been eaten lands in the garbage bin to be carried away by the trash collectors.

Sometimes when we think we have received a better deal with a purchase, in fact we are sabotaging our own efforts to live in moderation. This can happen to us as individuals and then explode in impact when the practice turns out to be common to a lot of families. The greater number of refrigerators being used offset the savings higher energy efficiency provided. The negative impact of refrigerators capable of holding more food for less energy costs can be felt along the whole food production process. An idea of how much food is wasted can be seen in the way many organizations have started collecting the food before it is thrown into the garbage. Food banks have started feed the homeless with the food they see supermarkets and restaurants throwing out. Food banks in many places have negotiated with supermarkets to pick up food that the supermarket would otherwise throw away.

Books and documentaries can be great sources of hints on how to live moderately without giving up any of the advantages of modern living. We can learn a lot about how one person can have a real impact on the world without realizing the importance of their actions. Taking a long view of the waste problem can be enlightening. One documentary film demonstrated that so much good food could be pulled out of trash containers to feed a family well. One of the families taking part in acquiring food in this way even purchased a freezer to hold the excess amount of high quality food that was

found. The food that has been thrown out has been through a process of growing, cleaning and transport that uses the resources of water and fossil fuel. When the food is wasted, then the water and fossil fuel used in the process of taking the food to the consumer's home is wasted. The amount of time the food was refrigerated before it was thrown into the garbage is proportional to the amount of electricity wasted for that time.

So how does one person or one family make a difference while still enjoying modern kitchen appliances? Refrigerators are an appliance that can make a big negative or big positive impact. Advanced technology offers refrigerators (and other appliances and gadgets) in so many varieties that making purchasing decisions can be difficult. The discussion above about refrigerators seems to lead naturally to the thought that people must change their attitudes and their behavior in order to stop this terrible waste of food in their own homes. First of all I suggest deciding on what size refrigerator will best suit the needs of the family before even starting to shop for a refrigerator. This is a good first step so it will be much easier to go to the appliance store looking for the refrigerator that will suit your needs rather than simply choosing the biggest refrigerator the family can afford. Secondly plan the weeks menus before going to a supermarket. Make a list using the weekly menus as a guide so that money will be saved and less food will be purchased.

A counter argument was made to making efficiency a part of the design for technology in 1865 by the economist William Stanley Jevons. He noticed that by making the steam engine more efficient, more coal was used. The reason more coal was used was because as efficiency increased, consumption also

increased. The purpose of making the steam engine more efficient was to use less coal so the coal available would last longer. The hope was the natural resource would not be used up so quickly. Therefore the conclusion can be reached from Jevons' observations that making a process more efficient did not help the environment because consumption increased. Some people have tried to adapt the argument from 1865 to today's world and argue that more efficiency will only lead to excess use of our natural resources.

But the today's world is so much different from 1865 it is a big stretch to apply Jenson's Paradox to the technology being developed today. New attitudes are being formed that are changing the way people live in just about every area of their lives. For example living in a community with mass transportation available is a moderate choice that makes more sense to most families. (Steffen, 2) Neighborhoods are being designed in cities to offer residents everything they need for shopping, health and entertainment within walking distance. A change from the suburbs back to the city is due to the expenses of commuting and other transportation but also on other reasons. A higher quality of life is possible in communities that are designed for people not for cars. There is no value in having more than your next door neighbor or buying more and more stuff that will never be used and will be wasted. Value is in having what is necessary to live comfortably and have everything you need. This does not mean that innovation will be slowed; instead innovation is becoming very exciting especially because of new technologies for daily life. The exciting thing about new technologies that are suitable is that the possibilities are unlimited. Being tied to fossil fuel for

energy did not offer as many opportunities.

The hypothesis presented at the beginning of this essay was ‘ If consumers learn how to use modern technology moderately rather than in excess the environment will undergo less negative impact from waste.’ Arguments on how consumers could change their behaviors so less waste will be produced were offered. People should plan ahead before the make technological products so they buy no more and no less than what they need. The phenomena Jevons’ Paradox cannot be applied today because the world in 2013 is so different from the world of 1865. Consumers can change their values and habits so that the same problems are not repeated.

The climate change phenomenon is very serious. The wildfires and floods that have taken place recently clearly demonstrate that new solutions to solving old problems are needed. The solutions need to be considered very carefully so that they do not harm individuals or the environment.

Considering the total life cycle of a raw material to its purpose in an end product can help avoid the problems of the past while taking advantage of what new technology has to offer.

The use of technology for a green revolution is inclusive. Solving the problem of what to do with excess food from supermarkets has demonstrated that cooperation can lead to acceptable solutions. Businesses, investors, manufacturing and consumers are still needed but the relationship is changing. Innovations in technology allow for a green revolution that sitting home and burning wood in the fireplace could never start. Technology allows opportunities to improve the quality of life without hurting the environment



that are needed. Change is inevitable. The most meaningful choice is whether we chose to use technology wisely and moderately or not.

## **Works cited**

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