

Nearly Carbon Neutral (NCN) Symposium FAQs

By: Ecomedia SIG, Bridgitte Barclay and Christy Tidwell

In 2018, the Ecomedia Special Interest Group held a Nearly Carbon Neutral (NCN) digital off-year symposium sponsored by ASLE. UC Santa Barbara hosted [A Clockwork Green: Ecomedia in the Anthropocene](#) as part of Ken Hiltner's ongoing work with NCN conferences as Director of UCSB's Environmental Humanities Initiative. Ken and his staff make the NCN conference model accessible to folks with any level of digital skills, and they create the website and do all of the digital work. Organizers and participants do not need to know more than how to video and upload.

There are numerous advantages to the format -- it's nearly carbon neutral, it's accessible for people with disabilities, it's accessible to international scholars and graduate students with a variety of pay options, it enables more in-depth Q&A sessions, participants can attend all talks, and the talks remain online for research and/or use in the classroom. Even with a free option for registration and participation, the Ecomedia SIG made enough to pay back ASLE's seed money and to sponsor film screenings at ASLE 2019. Please take a look at the conference website, noting plenary speakers, panel organization, and comment sections.

Q: How do I begin the process?

A: Talk with Ken as you put together your off-year symposium proposal for ASLE. When you think of budget, consider that because plenary speakers are not traveling, they are generally willing to give a talk for less than if they had to travel over more time. Also, consider how you want to charge. For the Ecomedia SIG, we wanted open access with a sort of donation. We had a registration amount (very small compared to other conferences), but we also had a free option, and the format is open access.

Q: How much digital knowledge do organizers need and how tech savvy do presenters need to be?

A: See above. If you use social media, you have the skills you need. Ken provides clear instructions for presentation options and video options, but using an iPhone video with Google Slides works perfectly. Many presenters did just that, despite other options.

Q: How do presenters handle copyright issues?

A: This can be a bit tricky. Because the symposium is open access, it does not follow academic fair use as we are all used to. Movie clips, excerpts, and images may need copyright clearance, but that was not a difficult issue at the Ecomedia Symposium. Ken can help you navigate this.

Q: How does the time commitment vary from a traditional conference?

A: The conference runs longer (two weeks for ours), but there is not a huge time commitment daily. We asked participants to sign up for emails when they received comments on their presentations and respond daily during those two weeks. This was one of participants' favorite features of this conference because the conversations took on a depth and connection with other panels that was engaging and insightful. And because of how long it lasted, participants could watch and comment on all panels if they wanted. They could also use the videos and comments in classes or for research later.

Some synchronous live events may be scheduled at certain times and require attention from hosts, panelists, or keynotes.

Bridgitte Barclay (bbarclay@aurora.edu) and Christy Tidwell (christy.tidwell@gmail.com) are happy to answer any questions. A first step would be to peruse the conference and to read Ken Hiltner's white paper on NCN conferences at this address: <http://hiltner.english.ucsb.edu/index.php/ncnc-guide/>.