

**Presenters of *An Inconvenient Truth*
as Intermediaries of
Environmental Communication**

by

Andrew Frank

B.A. (Hons., Radio & Television Arts), Ryerson University, 2004

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Approval

Name: Andrew Frank
Degree: Master of Arts
Title of Thesis: *Presenters of An Inconvenient Truth as Intermediaries of Environmental Communication*

Examining Committee:

Chair: Dr. Katherine Reilly, Assistant Professor

Dr. Shane Gunster
Senior Supervisor
Associate Professor

Dr. Martin Laba
Supervisor
Associate Professor

Dr. Meg Holden
External Examiner
Associate Professor, Urban Studies and Geography
Simon Fraser University

Date Defended/Approved: December 9, 2011



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Abstract

This case study investigates the role of the intermediary in public engagement on climate change, through interviews with twenty Canadian presenters of Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*. The study explores the relationship between presenters, audiences and The Climate Project Canada (recently renamed the Climate Reality Project Canada), the organization tasked with training and coordinating presenters. Investigating the development and delivery of climate change presentations, the study looks at each unique phase of presenting, including preparation, personal edits and affective engagement with the public. Areas of emphasis include communication of climate change science, spokesperson credibility, localization, rhetorical strategies, humour, narrative and presentation of solutions. The study concludes with recommendations for how to develop more effective forms of public engagement on climate change.

Keywords: environmental communication; climate change; public engagement; An Inconvenient Truth; sustainability; social change

Dedication

To Linnet, who has been an unshakeable partner in the production of this thesis. You are my co-author in life.

To my parents, Jack and Heather, whose unconditional love has made all the difference, and whose humour and laughter, love of life, as well as strong sense of character and morality play leading roles in these pages.

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Introduction

In the summer of 2002, as an undergraduate student, home for the summer, I attended a public information meeting in my hometown of Oliver, B.C., for a proposed power substation, slated for construction in one of the last valley bottom patches of the Antelope-Brush Grasslands (or “Pocket Desert”), one of Canada’s most endangered ecosystems. At the time, my summer job was working as an interpretative tour guide at the Osoyoos Desert Centre, teaching thousands of tourists about the natural wonders of the desert. Naturally, I was concerned about the project and wanted to learn more.

Ultimately, I left that public meeting galvanized in opposition to the project, and I subsequently formed a local environmental group called the “Pocket Desert Preservation Alliance.” For the next six months, a handful of local citizens and I, would fight tooth and nail to stop the project using public meetings, media interviews and a lobbying campaign that targeted local and federal politicians. In the end, the project went ahead, but just barely (significantly delayed by our efforts, and approved by the local regional district by one abstaining vote). To save face in the public sphere (we had created a great deal of bad media for the project proponent), the company made a substantial donation to purchase and protect adjacent habitat of “greater value” than had been destroyed. It was a mixed result that was tough to swallow for an idealistic 21-year-old, but one that sharply focused my thinking about social change and environmental issues.

In reflecting on the effort and eventual grief I put into opposing the project, and even now looking back at my career path from aspiring broadcasting student, to environmental communication specialist, I often come back to that first public information meeting, and the feelings of resentment and being wronged, that played a role in my opposition. I resented being educated and even “spun,” about the local environmental values of an area I felt I knew better than the non-local company representatives. I felt wronged because I valued the area in question, having hiked in it, and having heard stories from my granddad about fishing in a nearby canyon, and having a near-death

experience clinging to one of the canyon walls, where he “made a pact with god” to do good in the world. These were the kind of values, identities and forms of local knowledge that played strongly in our campaign against the project.

Our defeat also taught me that sustainability required more than a short-term public intervention to oppose an unsustainable project. This project was just one small leak on a garden hose riddled with holes, and with high pressure behind it. Instead of plugging the leaks, it would be better to turn off the tap, and doing that would require winning in the public sphere and bringing about long-term social change.

After returning home from that first meeting, and voicing my opposition to the project to my mom, she told me that my granddad had opposed a similar project in the same area 14 years earlier. In a speech to a utilities commission in 1988 (my mom gave me a hand-written copy of the speech), at the age of 78, here is what my granddad said:

Mr. Chairman and commissioners, I am Carleton MacNaughton, a retired naturalist, and I am speaking for myself although I could have a large backing. My qualifications are numerous and varied. I came to Oliver in 1922, the youngest member of a pioneer family from the city of Winnipeg at the age of 12. I was fascinated by this fantastic valley and I had the free run of the valley. Because I loved the outdoors, I learned all I could about the flora and fauna of this end of the valley and by the time I was 18, I had made the area between Osoyoos and Okanagan Falls and between the Fairview summit and Baldy summit my backyard. I know it well.

He then went on to recount his adult life in the valley, earning a livelihood as an orchardist, wildlife park operator (the Grey Sage Museum) and government naturalist. He recounted the waves of species loss he had witnessed in his lifetime, including the collapse of salmon runs because of dam building, and the disappearance of Osprey because of DDT. He then established 1922 as a baseline from which to compare proceeding unsustainable development: “In 1922 the balance of nature was good, but year after year the back bone of that balance has been bending, and every time we institute some new modern demand it sags a little more.” Working with this metaphor of a backbone under pressure, he recounted local cases of the introduction of invasive species and the resulting damage they inflicted each time they were introduced. He concluded by invoking the contemporary global threat of ozone depletion, and the danger of inaction, “We are repeatedly told that our ozone cover is being eroded. So

what, we're still O.K. So we ignore it. It can only go so far and then it will explode and us with it. The same in the balance of nature. It can only bend so far and then it will break and we will lose so much that was once so good and beautiful.”

I share this story because it brings to life many of the central concepts with which this thesis is concerned, namely environmental communication and effective public engagement in the face of mounting ecological collapse, specifically climate change. In his speech to the utility commission, and in my presentations to local government representatives 14 years later, my granddad and I were addressing the age-old challenge of human indifference in the face of environmental deterioration. Today we are closer to the breaking point than ever before. An answer to the challenge of public engagement on climate change must be found, and without delay.

Since graduating from university, I have involved myself progressively further with environmental communication, working as a communications and media relations specialist with more than twenty environmental organizations, First Nations, political parties and green businesses, helping them to tell their stories to diverse audiences. While the stories vary, the challenge is always the same: How best to engage an audience, whether that audience is the media, decision-makers or the general public? Often I have felt that the focus has been directed too narrowly on the former two, with the latter, public engagement, included as a “nice-to-have.” This narrow approach is a product of the urgency of many environmental issues and limited resources (strategies must be targeted to those in a position to intervene quickly), but it also creates an ideological blind spot and a weak capacity to engage the public meaningfully in the long term. The hose is left running, and society is not yet poised to turn off the tap.

Through first-hand experience, I have come to see environmental communication as a crisis discipline, and I find Cox's definition useful: “Environmental communication seeks to enhance the ability of society to respond appropriately to environmental signals relevant to the well-being of both human civilization and natural biological systems.” (2010, p. 13). Environmental communication, like conservation biology, is a “discipline with a deadline,” that is to say, the clock is ticking as our environment rapidly deteriorates and the spectre of irreversible climate change rears its head. Like many other instances of social change communication (e.g. HIV/AIDS prevention and harm

reduction), we seek a societal response that is commensurate with the threat or moral wrong.

As a crisis discipline, environmental communication demands moral responsibilities outside of traditional academic practice, and those responsibilities inform the approach of this thesis:

- **An Ethical Duty** – Environmental communication scholars have a duty to speak out against harmful communication practices and to develop new approaches and tools for society to achieve sustainability. We must encourage open transparent exchanges of environmental representations in an ever-expanding participatory democracy.
- **Not Just Knowledge for Knowledge's Sake** – As a “discipline with a deadline,” we want to advance scholarship, but we are also making decisions and recommendations with imperfect knowledge. We justify work with “provisional validity.” Conservation biologist Michael Soulé states that we act because, “the risks of non-action may be greater than the risks of inappropriate action.” (1986, p 4). We must select the best working hypothesis, for society's sake, ideally in an interdisciplinary fashion.

With these responsibilities in mind, this thesis takes a deep, interdisciplinary look at climate change communication and public engagement, by focusing sharply on the most famous climate change communication effort in recent memory, Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* (hereafter referred to as AIT). More specifically, it looks at intimate processes of communication, at the level of the community public meeting, the same forum that was so formative in my own environmental activism.

Before beginning this research, I attended a public AIT presentation, and I was fascinated by the process of personal communication presenters undertook in attempting to connect with their audiences. The presentation was rich not only with climate science, but also with personal narrative, stories, metaphors and analogies, humour and other forms of rhetorical persuasion. I wanted to know what was and was not working with audiences. The presenters, who are required to give at least ten public presentations (they sign a pledge at the AIT training), were clearly on the front lines of climate change communication. They were interacting with audiences directly, and I could think of no better place to get a first hand account of public engagement on climate change.

In undertaking this research, I am not interested in knowledge for knowledge's

sake (though this thesis features many interesting findings), but rather a distillation of the learnings of presenters, communicating climate change directly to audiences. My purpose, as the practitioner of a crisis discipline, is to find new ways of engaging the public more effectively, and to share those findings as broadly as I can. I approach it as an ethical duty, and as such I also speak out against harmful public engagement practices as I encounter them.

It is also important to impress upon the reader that while this thesis sharply critiques contemporary expert efforts to engage the public on climate change (efforts that have often failed miserably), it does not constitute a broader attack on knowledge or expertise in themselves. While the risk of climate change does impose certain moral and ethical constraints on the value of knowledge for knowledge's sake, the time and effort taken to study and develop knowledge and expertise, particularly in crisis disciplines like environmental communication, is an important effort for informing and speeding appropriate societal responses to climate change and environmental collapse.

The thesis that follows is simple and practical, consisting of six chapters, all building towards a prescription for more effective public engagement on climate change.

Chapter One is a literature review surveying the fields of environmental communication, climate change communication, environmental deliberation and public choice theory. I use the review to establish a working definition of public engagement, and I introduce the nature of the challenge of public engagement on climate change. I survey the beginnings of hypotheses and possible solutions to the engagement challenge emerging in the literature. To test these hypotheses and solutions against real world experience, I devise and rationalize a case study focused on the lay environmental communicator, or *intermediary*.

In Chapter Two, I introduce my case study's cast of characters, their motivations and the wider context of *An Inconvenient Truth* as a public engagement effort. This section prefaces some of the contradictions and inherent tensions in the AIT public engagement process.

In Chapter Three, I focus on the various modes of preparation intermediaries undertake in preparing to engage audiences for the first time. This chapter gives us a clear picture of the importance of credibility in public engagement, and the elaborate lengths to which presenters will go to create and maintain it.

Chapter Four identifies the most common forms of personalizing the presentation, revealing the pedagogical preferences of both intermediaries and audiences in the process of climate change communication. By examining the nuts and bolts of presenter modifications to the original AIT slideshow, this section offers a rare “control” against which to compare differences between the “official” institutional risk message of AIT, and the innovation and creativity of presenters in attempting new tactics of public engagement.

Chapter Five is devoted to affective engagement and the tactics and strategies presenters use to engage their audiences on an emotional level. These include the use of, and relationships between, narrative, emotion, humour, rhetorical strategies, analogies and metaphors, and how presenters deal with skepticism. Each subject area suggests implications and new departures in approach for those engaging the public.

As a researcher and writer, this case study put me back in that first public meeting for the power substation, paying attention to the language, reaction, and the process of community building (or demolition) among various intermediaries and audiences. As readers, you become flies on the wall of public engagement, privy to the innermost fears, goals and aspirations of intermediaries.

This case study is unique in its real world application. While grounded in theory, it seeks original findings rather than corroborations of existing theory (though some existing theory is corroborated). Listening to and transcribing upwards of 40 hours worth of presenter interviews, the world of public engagement was painstakingly brought to life for me - only a slim fraction of the original material recorded makes its way into the pages of this thesis.

Part sociological study, part public engagement communications guide, this thesis offers a rare glimpse into the world of the environmental communication intermediary and their first hand experience interacting with audiences. It is a mirror that environmental communicators and social change communicators more generally, would do well to look into. While they might not like what they see at first glance, a longer, honest look will reveal the potential for truer, more effective, more resilient public engagement efforts on climate change, and social change more generally. A crisis discipline requires nothing less. Our issues require so much more.

Chapter One: Literature Review

Blowing-up the bottleneck

“We have set ourselves up. The environmental movement, with its 'experts' is a bottleneck to making the type of changes we need to make.” (Personal communication with Andrea Reimer, 2008). This statement came up during a personal conversation with Andrea Reimer, the former Executive Director of the Wilderness Committee, the largest membership-based environmental group in Western Canada, and an elected Vancouver city councillor. She is also a trained presenter of Al Gore’s *An Inconvenient Truth* (referred to hereafter as AIT). I list Reimer’s accomplishments because they give a sense of the diverse worlds she brings together. She is a person with a finger on the pulse of the enviro-civic zeitgeist, a consummate politician and environmental communicator. The context of our conversation was a discussion about climate change communication, and Andrea was expressing the need for environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOS) to get out of the way of lay-driven efforts to conceptualize and communicate climate change at the local level. She went on to explain that the expert bottleneck produces misplaced citizen dependence and apathy, as citizens assume ENGOS and similar institutional experts are working to solve the climate crisis via specialized, inaccessible knowledge. As an antidote to this apathy, Andrea sought to engage citizens at the community level as a trained presenter of AIT, specifically enabling audiences to make meaning for themselves, and to defend themselves against the counter-draft of misinformation produced by climate skeptics (occasionally in attendance at the presentations themselves). During her presentations, she actively encouraged audience members to answer one another’s doubts and questions directly and to share their personal experiences and beliefs about the impacts of climate change as a means of educating one another.

As a prominent environmentalist admitting the errors of her community’s historical top-down approach to environmental communication, Andrea represents a

practical manifestation of the communication paradigm shift now emerging in the literature of environmental communication.

The challenges posed by climate change

It is difficult to conceive of a social change communication challenge greater than achieving public engagement with climate change. By “engagement,” I use the sequential, three-component definition, originated by Lorenzoni, Nicholson-Cole & Whitmarsh, and further elaborated by Ockwell, Whitmarsh & O’Neill, namely cognitive (understanding/knowledge), affective (emotion/interest and concern) and behavioural (action). In the early days, when climate change was first becoming an issue, communicators faced communication challenges on all three fronts: audiences didn’t understand it (cognitive), they didn’t feel emotion or interest about it (affective), and they certainly weren’t in a place to take action (behavioural). Today, a basic cognitive appreciation of the issue has largely been achieved. According to research by Leiserowitz (2007, p. 45), 92 percent of Americans are aware of climate change with large majorities supporting (in theory) national and international policies to mitigate it (e.g. regulation of carbon dioxide as a pollutant, improving auto fuel efficiency, subsidizing development of renewable energy, etc.).

Based on favourable polling, you might expect North America to be well on its way to mitigating climate change. Of course we know that is not the case, in fact public concern and interest in climate change in Canada, a country that typically polls higher in environmental concern than the U.S., and that has largely avoided the harder-hitting impacts of the recent global recession, has nose-dived since 2006.

A recent report by McAllister Opinion Research notes that, “Climate change has fallen off the map as a major public concern, and holds the distinction of being the single environmental issue which lost audience share instead of gaining it during the surge of public environmental concern in Canada between 2006 and 2008.” (p. 16). McAllister’s research shows that climate change “plays to an audience” of just over four-in-ten Canadians, down from nearly seven-in-ten in the decade from 1996 to 2006. McAllister pulls no punches in suggesting a causal relationship, “...perhaps the most important [lesson] is that major policy progress [on climate change] rarely takes place unless the public is along for the ride. Without investing in better strategies and tools for public

engagement, this lesson is bound to be repeated.” (p. 16). One can't help but conclude that a failure to address the latter two components of public engagement - affective and behavioural - has played a key role in this disturbing trend. Unfortunately, when faced with continued public inaction and apathy, those active in climate change communication (government and civil society), rather than adopting a new approach, have instead doubled-down on cognitive-focused, information-deficit based campaigns, betraying a fundamental misunderstanding of the climate change communication challenge.

There are a number of factors that make communicating climate change extremely difficult. In contrast to the environmental issues of the 1970's, which were less complex, with acute, highly visible impacts affecting citizens in the “here and now,” climate change is complex and difficult to understand, with uncertain, remote or difficult to perceive “future” impacts affecting “others” (Speth, 2005, p. 100). Ecologist Simon Levin contends that the global feedback loops of climate change are weaker and less specific than more acute, localized environmental issues (e.g. oil spills), where the “...problems and rewards hit closest to home.” As a result, “Change is slower, and signals less clear (hence the delay in recognizing them.” (1999, p. 2).

Climate change is also a chronic, systemic problem, rooted in every aspect of modern society; from the way we build infrastructure, to the way we grow our food. It is a product of co-evolution between society and its institutions, and available technologies (e.g. the internal combustion engine), producing a “socio-technical lock-in” characterized by “a mutually reinforcing, high carbon trajectory for social and technological development.” (Ockwell et al., 2009, p. 309).

Gonzalez-Gaudiano and Meira-Cardesa go a step further, identifying the “cult of progress” and anthropological optimism as further challenges to engagement. They describe the situation created by these challenges as trying to, “take action in a labyrinth.” They also single out the incoherence between climate change messages and policy responses as another significant challenge, where climate change warnings and the urgency to act in the personal sphere are seemingly inconsistent with public policies and the optimistic messages projected in consumer culture:

This contradiction contributes to buffer the social perception of the threat, and acts as a disincentive for the adoption of alternative behaviours that are difficult to realize in practice without structures and conditions that

facilitate them (e.g. the use of public transportation, consumption of energy from alternative sources, etc.). People tend to perceive the slowness in the development of policy responses to climate change as a sign that the seriousness of the threat is not so great, that urgent actions are not required, and that there is still a large margin of time to act. (p. 24)

Public engagement on climate change as a “bigger-than-self” problem (Crompton, 2010) is also challenged by a well-documented series of socio-psychological and socio-cultural phenomena including the attitude-behaviour gap, the free-rider effect and a general sense of disenfranchisement and political apathy, resulting in citizen disengagement from politics and by extension the possibility of regulation. These challenges are rooted in a complex web of mental models made up of values, emotion, cultural and social influences, and affect everything from perceptions of danger to individual responses to climate change messages.

During a conversation with James Hoggan (another trained AIT presenter), Chair of the David Suzuki Foundation, and one of Canada's most successful PR practitioners, we both agreed that a central challenge of communicating climate change is marrying what Dessai et. al would term “external” or expert (what Beck would label “techno-scientific”) definitions of dangerous climate change with “internal” or lay definitions. Dessai et. al argue that, “...it is not possible to make progress on defining dangerous climate change, or in developing sustainable responses to this global problem, without recognizing the central role played by social or individual perceptions of danger” (Dessai et al., 2004, p.11). These perceptions are often clouded by government inaction or perceived policy hypocrisy, as well as the steady stream of consumerist appeals that dominate modern Western society.

Environmental philosopher Mark Sagoff (as cited in Dryzek, 2005) believes that every individual “has two kinds of preferences: as a consumer and as a citizen.” Environmental decision-making is largely dependent on the preference/identity primed by a particular message or deliberative environment. Citizen preferences are “more concerned with collective, community-oriented values, as opposed to the selfish materialism of consumer values.” (p. 509). Fine-tuning this notion of values, Crompton focuses on the conflict between what he calls “intrinsic” vs. “extrinsic” values. Intrinsic values include the value placed on a sense of community, relationships with friends and family, and self-development. In opposition, extrinsic values are “contingent upon the

perceptions of others - they relate to envy of 'higher' social strata, admiration of material wealth or power." (p. 10) Intrinsic values are associated with concern about bigger-than-self problems like climate change, and with corresponding behaviours to help address these problems. Extrinsic values are the opposite, associated with lower levels of concern, and lower motivation to adopt behaviours in line with such problems, namely living a low carbon lifestyle. These values are primed by communication (communication is never value-neutral) and play a significant role in determining behaviour.

So what is to be done? What can we do to address these issues as climate change communicators? Moser and Dilling provide a definition for successful social change communication, saying it must accomplish two things: "... [it must] sufficiently *elevate and maintain the motivation* to change a practice or policy and at the same time *contribute to lowering the barriers* to doing so." (2007, p. 494). Looking at the myriad challenges facing public engagement on climate change, both in terms of challenges to motivation, as well as barriers to change, especially their seemingly intractable socio-cultural and structural nature, we shouldn't be surprised that information-deficit based campaigns are failing to engage the public in social change that is commensurate with the pace and degree climate scientists say is necessary to mitigate dangerous climate change.

Perhaps not surprisingly, climate change communication scholars are beginning to advocate communication approaches that stimulate intrinsic values and a wider sense of environmental citizenship, including social acceptance and demand for regulation. Lorenzoni et al. stress that efforts focused on regulation (an element heavily weighted by Ockwell et al.), must be accompanied by concerted education to create community values and citizenship, noting that research has shown that regulation and economic measures alone do not necessarily change the values underpinning behaviour (p. 455). Furthermore, such measures, while effective, are also fragile in the sense that they can be repealed or reformed at anytime based on the ideological whims of government, all the more reason to seek a deeper change in societal values. All agree that the place to stimulate these values and renewed sense of citizenship and self-efficacy, is at the community level, a place that Ockwell et al. contend is also the most productive ground for low carbon social innovation (e.g. auto, tool and equipment sharing clubs, community gardens, carpooling and "walking buses," freecycle organizations etc.).

Environmental deliberation and public choice theory

Operationalizing participatory community-level climate communication is a daunting task, but good work has already been done in the fields of environmental deliberation and public choice theory, places where earlier, more immediate and visible environmental concerns have already forced questions about the possibility of integrating top-down and bottom-up approaches to deliberation and participation.

Writing in the field of environmental deliberation, Eden (1996) and Fiorino (1990) identify the limitations and pitfalls of “top-down” environmental decision-making processes that fail to integrate citizen input, namely poor decisions that erode public trust in environmental risk decisions, even in situations where such decisions are in a conventional sense, scientifically sound. Both advocate for the integration of counter-scientific and non-scientific contributions, including environmental data collected by concerned citizens, as well as “extended expertise” in the form of moral, ethical and cultural expressive and local concerns. Such integration not only encourages citizen participation in environmental risk communication, but can also contribute to an increase in citizen knowledge and understanding of the environment, as well as the creation of a “cooperation culture” (Gouveia et al., 2004, p. 136).

There is also evidence that lay participation makes for more scientifically sound decision-making. Fiorino praises the diversity and multiplicity of ideas effective lay participation can bring, including a broader range of values and even a reduction in the probability of error. He points out that, “...lay judgments about risk are as sound or more so than those of experts...Studies of lay judgments about technological hazards reveal a sensitivity to social and political values that experts' models would not acknowledge.” (p. 227). Building on this observation, he cites Barber in suggesting that, “The lay public may have a better capacity than experts alone for...‘institutionalizing regret,’ or for accommodating uncertainty and correcting errors over time through deliberation and debate.” This is where the collective memory of community is incredibly powerful, a self-corrective mechanism that can in theory guard against future environmental threats, oversights and unsustainable behaviours.

Operationalizing a “bottom-up” approach to environmental deliberation also requires a new social contract for science. Eden, with support from scholars like, Stone

(2001) and Gonzalez-Gaudiano and Meira-Cardona, notes that policy discussions have a strong deference to science that, "...draws upon an externally recognized set of claims to authority and understanding." (p. 199). The challenge then, is to develop and rationalize new externally recognized sources of authority, credibility, trust and understanding for non-scientific extended expertise (e.g. Traditional Environmental Knowledge), as well as inclusive, productive deliberation environments. Stone believes such environments must be conceived from a predominantly egalitarian rather than libertarian philosophical perspective. Achieving this means opening the doors and crafting communication vehicles that can accommodate indigenous knowledge while avoiding the tyranny of categories: "From a participatory standpoint, are we interested in the knowledge people possess or the categories within which we include them? The former will generate participatory concepts that are broad and inclusive; the latter, narrow and exclusive." (p. 215).

In terms of deliberative environments, Davies and Burgess (2004) stress the importance of "reflecting on the substantive effects of our forms of engagement and representation." (p. 360). Using a process of "deliberative mapping" they have sought to better understand the way citizen identities and rationalities are engaged in processes of deliberation, and the way they enact forms of dialogue that judge various forms of expertise and "redistribute competency" among different groups of citizens. At a basic level, they found these processes and redistribution were patterned by gender, with women expressing a preference for single-gendered deliberative groups that, "enabled them to develop a dialogue and competency around things that were important to them." (p. 359).

Findings like these put the onus on citizen-driven, self-organization, but not everyone necessarily needs to get along. Davies and Burgess cite Mouffe in suggesting that a consensual approach to public deliberation, "should be replaced by an agonistic one - a confrontation between radically different (but reciprocally respectful) social positions and world views." (p. 360). Indeed, it often seems that claims to external authority and credibility are derived from strong and determined communities, resolutely and often agonistically demanding more inclusive public communication vehicles for incorporating their opinions and expertise. But it doesn't stop there. Other forms of

citizen expression are equally valuable to the environmental deliberation and communication processes.

John Delicath (2004) makes a strong argument for inclusion of cultural activism which, "...involves the use of cultural resources (art, storytelling, theatre) as a means to broaden the range of expression in environmental controversies and to challenge assumptions about the organization of society." (p. 256). He argues that cultural activism is made up of skills, knowledge and emotions that should be included in the deliberative process, and that such activism can be an instrument of empowerment and trust building, "cultivating a desire to participate and mobilizing citizens to act; developing the confidence to participate; developing skills of self-advocacy; and discovering ways to participate that respect community voice and vision." (p. 261). Such a turn would also include important opportunities for participatory image making and expression.

Ecosee, the new study of visual rhetoric related to the environment, presents interesting possibilities of its own. Sean Morey (2009) believes our society is flooded with environmental images relayed by hegemonic structures that are, "so pervasive and transparent that they are overlooked and numbing, making one less inclined to public or private action." (p. 41). Morey sees the production of countervailing images as critical to correcting this imbalance, suggesting that theories of Ecosee should "attempt to make these identities of nature more apparent to audiences who can choose for themselves how they might understand nature, or at least participate in the debate, a participation that includes not just reading images but also producing them." (p. 41). Promising leads in this vein include landscape visualization of climate change futures where citizens are more equally equipped for judging visualizations and where the most important qualification in creating an image that resonates, is local knowledge (Nicholson-Cole, 2008, p. 267). When public policy discussions can be translated (with great caution and care) into images, non-scientific extended expertise, as advocated for by Eden and others, may find a more equal playing ground.

Rydin and Pennington, writing in the field of public choice theory, make another important contribution to re-conceptualizing the scale and underlying drivers of public engagement with respect to environmental planning, and by extension, environmental communication (in so far as environmental communication seeks to define audiences

and engage them as citizens in environmental decision making either at a personal level or in concert politically). Their inferences are simple and piercing, turning the conventional ideal of building the largest audience possible, on its head: “Expanding the opportunities for public participation in environmental planning is not always the best option.” (2008, p. 153). They point out that from the late 1960’s onwards, “...most Western democracies have sought to expand the role of participation in the fields of land use planning and environmental policy. The results have tended to be very mixed.” (p. 156).

The authors conceptualize the many instances of ineffective public participation as a collective action problem, requiring the generation of social capital to overcome. “Social capital...constitutes the pre-existing elements of social structures, which social actors can use to obtain their objectives.” (p. 161). Social capital, they suggest, is most often generated through, “...small-group situations, where the potential participants know each other and there is the prospect of strategic bargaining in an iterative social context.” (p. 153). It is thought that these situations guard against the free-riding behaviour that often sabotages effective public participation at larger more anonymous scales of interaction (e.g. region-wide efforts to reduce air pollution). “In an environmental context, these forces may account for the ability of local residents and neighbourhood associations to form relatively effective campaigns for opposing development proposals.” (p. 157). The sense of local accountability can also be generated through “scale manipulation” strategies, based on either rhetoric or actual practice e.g. “Think global, act local,” or the opening of local chapters of ENGOs and their focus on local issues. This is important work in identifying the appropriate scale and make-up of the climate communication audiences we seek to grow, and it seems to suggest audiences are best kept and addressed in small groups and localized contexts, affirming the new community-level emphasis of climate communication scholars.

In general, Rydin and Pennington identify six factors that influence the scale and nature of public participation, ranging from the costs of participation and expected likelihood of influencing the policy outcome, to the level of knowledge of the policy issue and the deliberation process required to participate meaningfully. These factors beg natural obverse solutions that should be used to evaluate environmental communication, such as reducing the costs of participation, penalizing non-participation (e.g. “naming

and shaming”) and making the impact of participation on policy decisions more obvious (e.g. highlighting success through local media).

These factors mesh naturally with the cognitive processing studies of James Cantrill, as cited by Coppola (1997), who contends that we filter information through at least three cognitive processing biases: schema, commitments and ideologies (Cantrill, p. 82). Commitments are the most relevant here. Coppola summarizes them as follows: “We tenaciously retain our private and public commitments. When confronted with environmental communication, we use our past behaviour to guide current appraisals so that our behaviour is consistent.” (p. 11). This finding emphasizes the importance of early and successful experiences of collective action and public commitment and is supported by McKenzie-Mohr’s research (2011) and integration of “commitment” into Community Based Social Marketing (CBSM). The more diverse the experience of private and public commitments, the better.

Depending on the severity of a collective action problem, Rydin & Pennington suggest three forms of deliberation based on the amount of social capital present, or the potential to generate it. *Environmental management* is provided by the state and is used in situations where collective action problems are severe. Public participation is relegated to the role of legitimation. *Environmental governance* is used in less severe situations and involves institutional redesign to incent greater production of social capital. Like environmental management it is still a means to an end, but public participation plays a role in implementation. Finally, *Collaborative environmental planning* applies to situations where social capital exists in such abundance that local actors can take on the various environmental planning and decision-making processes. It is the purest form of democratic environmental governance, and an end in itself.

Once barriers to local political and deliberative environments are cleared, the first and best step we can hope for, assuming that an engaged, educated and emboldened public is desirable, is the small scale achievement of collective action: “When individuals have been able to use their ability to overcome the collective action problem in small settings they may then be able to deal with more complex dilemmas.” (Rydin & Pennington, p. 161). Rydin and Pennington go on to cite Ostrom in pointing out that, “...when smaller units have managed to overcome the collective action problem, the

marginal cost of building on that organizational base is considerably less than the cost of starting with no prior base.” (p. 161).

Education programs and opportunities for citizens to experience “taking action” are critical. Early experiences of successful collective action have the clear potential to shape future behaviour including receptivity to environmental communication messages and subsequent willingness to participate in deliberative environments by increasing a participant’s sense of efficacy (Meyer, 2010, p. 25). Indeed, the greatest error environmental communication could make at this stage in the ecological and climate crises would be to fail to move from a top-down model of transmission, to a bottom-up approach that mobilizes audiences as citizens.

Research by McKenzie-Mohr, an environmental psychologist and “creator” of Community-Based Social Marketing (CBSM) shows the abject failure of traditional information-based campaigns to elicit behaviour change, often at great financial cost. McKenzie-Mohr’s CBSM response is carried out at the community level and involves direct personal contact, “because social science research indicates that we are most likely to change our behaviour in response to direct appeals from others.” The value of this approach is confirmed by Gonzalez-Gaudio and Meira-Cartea in their critique of traditional, information-deficit based approaches to climate change education, encouraging practitioners to,

...go beyond ‘transmission’ approaches as well as those of classic constructivist research centered on identifying and correcting errors in peoples’ ‘scientific’ ideas. Rather, sociopedagogical and psychosocial perspectives should be integrated and promoted...*It is important to create education situations where the subject-observer or information recipient becomes a subject-interpreter and subject-social actor.* (emphasis mine) (p. 28, 2010)

Moreover, true collaboration with subject-social actors means abandoning demands for a shared moral understanding of the need for change. Critics of this belief point out that behavioural change in areas like female genital mutilation does not require holding the same understanding or even moral outlook to bring about the same desired outcomes (Easton, Monkman & Miles, 2003). Historically, this has been a difficult pill for environmentalists to swallow.

When coupled with the work of Rydin and Pennington, it's clear that environmental communication must develop means for conceptualizing and communicating abstract global issues, in concrete local terms, and again, community, close to the environmental issue itself, is the most appropriate place, and indeed the only credible origin from which these communication efforts can begin. As Moser and Dilling (2007) write in the preface to *Creating a climate for change*,

We need to open up the communication process to a wider community, in which participants own the process and content of communication. Mutual empowerment and support for change then become central. Such communication will shift us away from mere persuasion and notions of information transfer to dialogue, debate, negotiation, and visioning. These more interactive forms of communication have a far greater chance of supporting individual behaviour change, change in organizations, and different sectors of society, but they can also help shift social norms, policies, culture, and social relations that underpin deeper societal transformation needed to address global warming. (pg.10)

Enter the intermediary

To return to Andrea Reimer's bottleneck analogy, we need to simultaneously improve the affective and behavioural engagement qualities of messages flowing through the bottleneck, while also blowing up the bottleneck itself. As Brulle (2010) paraphrases Luke, "...the core problem with the current environmental movement is the narrowing of the public sphere and a restricted understanding of the public interest." (p. 91). In response, Brulle and others call for a "public ecology" that can engage citizens in a collective effort to "rebalance the economic and social order with human and natural needs" through participatory communication (p. 91).

All of this is well and good, but given the high stakes and complexity in getting things right, the effort must still be informed by specialized environmental risk research and communication, so that while arbitrary barriers to public participation in the conceptualization and communication process are removed, the process still retains some semblance of institutionally defined environmental risk definitions as well as organized democratic vehicles for deliberation. "The challenge remains how to make global warming locally relevant and personally salient in scientifically credible ways." (Moser & Dilling p. 500).

Clearly not every citizen can have a face-to-face conversation with a climate scientist. Even if it were possible, it would not be desirable given the widely acknowledged shortcomings of scientists in encouraging affective and behavioural engagement with the issues they study (rarely is it part of their job description, or their understanding of how knowledge is acquired, e.g. epistemology). The goal of climate communication should be dialogue among community members, dialogue that can artfully delve into the emotions and underlying values in community perceptions of climate change, stoking intrinsic values, low carbon social innovation, and social acceptance and demand for regulation. I say “artful” because we need to tread carefully and mindfully in developing what Regan (2007) calls a “new conversation,” one that goes beyond the “old conversation,” which is a “discursive trap” fed by “strong opinions coupled with an urge to convince or persuade others.” Regan contends that if we can learn to talk to one another across our current divisions, including notions of favoured and privileged knowledge (e.g. lay vs. scientific risk assessment and opinion), then “we have a chance to re-imagine our shared future.” (p. 216)

A potential vehicle or bridge for this dialogue is the opinion leader or lay intermediary, “an overlooked yet necessary” resource for catalyzing collective action on climate change (Nisbet, 2009, p. 328). Nisbet describes a two-step model of influence in which opinion leaders (what I refer to interchangeably here as intermediaries) are “the special individuals across communities and social groups that can serve as vital go-betweens and information brokers, passing on messages about climate change and energy conservation that speak directly to their otherwise inattentive peers, coworkers, and friends.” (p. 329). Nisbet uses the metaphor of “connective tissue” to describe these individuals who alert their peers about what matters and what’s at stake in political events, social issues and consumer choices.

Other scholars have begun to focus on the importance of intermediaries as well. Moser and Dilling advocate climate communications training that goes beyond, “the typical communicators and messengers of the past” to include “regular folks” who would become “‘street communicators’ in neighbourhoods and communities which the traditional communicators just don’t reach.” (p. 512). They also advocate the training of “‘climate (or sustainability) ambassadors’ who could carry ideas and solutions” from company to company, a targeted approach within the corporate community. Julie

Corbett (2006) believes, “We need a new set of ‘articulators’ to communicate a fresh, broad view of relationships and actions toward the natural world.” (p. 310).

What these scholars have in common is a conception, or at least a way of speaking, that describes the “new conversation” as a “two-step” process of communication, evoking the two-step flow of communication model introduced by Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet in 1944. The model hypothesizes that ideas flow via elites (including scientific elites), through from mass media, to opinion leaders, and from them to the wider population. This static model of communication would suggest that the true, two-way dialogue as articulated by Regan and others, and so necessary to re-imagining a low carbon future through “an exchange of perspectives, beliefs and experiences in which people listen openly and respectfully,” (p. 217) is handicapped out of the starting gate.

In Nisbet’s metaphor of opinion leaders as “connective tissue,” he sees them as muscle fibre, capable of contracting and pulling an audience to new understandings - a one-way movement. In my research, that metaphor needs adjustment. Instead of muscle pulling one way, I find that intermediaries are more akin to the connective tissue of the brain, fluid and dynamic, with a plasticity that both acts and is acted upon. Two-step, becomes three-step and so on, continuing into a dynamic model of continuous, truly *two-way* influence between audience and intermediary - the ideal of true dialogue and a prerequisite for the “new conversation.”

Research questions

Practically, my primary research objective is to better understand the climate communication preferences of lay audiences and to reveal and qualify communicative techniques, discourses and relationships (rhetorical, negotiative and others) employed and established by presenters of *An Inconvenient Truth* in achieving successful public engagement with climate change, in collaboration with local audiences. More specifically and colloquially, if you need to give an audience bad news, to create a collaborative understanding of that news with them, and to then have that audience act in relation to that news in the form of collective action, what is the best way to do that?

Douglas Maynard argues that the delivery and reception of bad news represents a rupture in the fabric of everyday life; that deliverers and recipients adopt a “moral discourse” (he paraphrases Bergmann) and responsibility in communicating news where, “...bearers and recipients may take or assign different and asymmetric stances in regards to deliverers' responsibility for what they report.” (Maynard, 1998, p. 360). “Bad news” or the language of sacrifice (at least popularly understood as requests for sustainable behaviour change made by the elite) is actually not the right way to talk about the social change required to respond to climate change. According to Meyer, a more hopeful, equitable and democratic notion of sacrifice, one widened by a more expansive sense of self (also advocated by Crompton) offers greater hope for meaningful social change. Regardless, whether conceived of as “bad news” or a democratic appeal for hopeful sacrifice, there is no doubt that something is being asked and that, “Who does the asking, however, and why, may prove to be just as important as what’s being asked.” (Maniates and Meyer, 2010, p. 10).

I am particularly interested in how presenters make their “ask” and preside over these “tears” in the fabric of everyday life, a sort of inbetweenness as they negotiate a shifting discourse in response to their audience’s reaction. This area of interest differs from Nisbet and others’ high-level focus on opinion leaders as a strategic component of a two-step flow of communication model, and instead focuses on the intimate, dynamic process of communication, dialogue, influence and persuasion between intermediary and audience. This approach has parallels with other streams of sociological inquiry, and at their confluence lies a natural unit of study: the messenger or intermediary, in my case, the lay environmental communicator.

Antoine Hennion's argument for intermediaries as “the special object” of the sociology of art, and more broadly the “sociology of creation” is compelling (1989, p. 406). He sees intermediaries such as music producers, as analytical bridges to understanding the relationship between art and society, a relationship he argues they create themselves: “The intermediary is not at the interface of two known worlds: he or she is the one who constructs these worlds by trying to bring them into relation.” (p. 406). To be sure, there are differences between music producers and presenters of *An Inconvenient Truth*, but there are significant similarities as well.

Relating the world of institutionalized risk definition as produced by climate

scientists, with the world of values and socially constructed risk definitions of local communities, the presenter is translator, messenger and even author. The message he or she produces in order to engage and persuade is a construction of two worlds, and an original understanding, a compromise of its own. "There is neither another place to know nor means of knowing these worlds except in the work of the intermediary, the reporter from the worlds: he or she deforms, selects, regroups. What he or she has to do is to displace forces as to associate them, and any art of displacement is work." (Hennion, p. 406). It is this work in selecting and regrouping, for the purposes of relating two different worlds, that I am interested in studying. If I can understand the nature of work as practiced by presenters of AIT, and can assume that they are presiding over the tears in the fabric of everyday life with consideration of audience feedback, I will begin to answer my research objectives. This is similar to the way a study of music producers might reveal music listening preferences, albeit acknowledging the inextricable conflation of feedback loops between audience and intermediary, a social reality mirrored in the increasingly conflated origin of socially-produced environmental risk definitions, where individuals and audiences are both consumers and producers, a phenomenon I hope to better understand.

The intermediary approach also has advantages from a practical research point of view, in that intermediaries are relatively easy to identify, few in number and share similar characteristics, allowing more in-depth ethnographic study and potentially useful generalizations for others studying in the field of environmental communication. What is more, in the case of presenters of *An Inconvenient Truth*, many have been selected as exceptional leaders or citizens within their respective communities, and so the communicative tactics they evolve with respect to their peer communities allow a finer study in suggesting potentially strong techniques for influencers interfacing with particular societal constituencies (e.g. a leading PR practitioner reaching out to peers in his or her field). In these ways, the intermediary is a window into local risk audiences, a concentrated canvas on which the communicative preferences of local contexts can be projected and studied.

While this research does not measure the efficacy of the AIT public outreach campaign in terms of behaviour change beyond anecdotal stories shared between audiences and presenters, we are given a front row seat into the tensions and

challenges the institution and its trained presenters face in opening up the communication process to a wider community.

Indeed, while opening-up the communication process to something more dialogic sounds prescriptive, perhaps the most interesting phenomenon observed through this research is that the process is anything but prescriptive and is rather more self-fulfilling. It is a process pushed, pulled and governed by strong, dynamic feedback loops with audiences, as well as the strong sense of personal social responsibility felt by intermediaries.

As soon as lay intermediaries begin interacting with local audiences, the bottleneck begins to blow itself up, with a pressure strong enough to override inherent tensions between the “official,” sometimes information-deficit-based climate change messages provided by The Climate Project Canada as an institution (something some presenters feel obligated to uphold), and the drastic deviations in both message and audience make-up, that presenters commonly adopt and that actually resonate with audiences (e.g. affective messages and small group, dialogue-based environments where social capital and public commitments can be cultivated).

Our survey of the communication challenges posed by climate change indicates that we need an “all hands on deck” approach to researching the answers to the myriad questions posed by continued inaction in the face of the greatest environmental threat humankind has ever known. Climate change is a systemic problem that challenges our very evolution as a species, and asks if the same intelligence and speed of social and technological change that got us into this mess, might also be our salvation.

Climate experts like Kevin Anderson (2011) stress that if humanity has any hope of averting climate catastrophe, our response must include immediate, deep, demand-side reductions in carbon intensity, coupled with the aggressive deployment of supply-side renewable energy sources. This is significant because it contrasts sharply with most advocates’ focus on symbolic supply-side technologies, for example, solar, wind, biomass etc. As Anderson points out, climate models demonstrate that society cannot bring supply-side energy sources online fast enough to adhere to the emissions reduction curves necessary to mitigate climate change and to hold the world to a two degree Celsius global mean warming (defined as “dangerous climate change” and often referenced as the maximum ceiling for global warming in international climate studies),

let alone even more extreme and dangerous temperature increases. For example, the latest climate models show that with even modest reductions, which would be a major departure from the status quo (but peanuts relative to what climate experts are urging), the world is quickly heading toward a four degree global mean warming, a reality that Anderson describes as follows:

“There is a widespread view that a four degree future is incompatible with an organized global community - you might have little pockets of society still surviving - but it is likely to be beyond ‘adaptation;’ is devastating to the majority of ecosystems and has a high probability of not being stable (i.e. four degrees would be an interim temperature on the way to a much higher equilibrium level).” (SlideShare, 2011)

Anderson goes on to explain that the climate expert consensus is that a four-degree future “must be avoided at ‘all’ costs.”

What these findings tell us is that truly sustainable low carbon social innovation, if it comes soon enough, will arrive only at the urging of, and alignment with, our intrinsic values, values stoked at the community level through a new dialogue, a “new conversation,” that sustains motivation and reduces barriers to engagement. The modest contribution this research can make is to delve into the trenches of the “new conversation,” and to take a seat at the public presentations where opinion leaders and community members are interacting for the first time. By doing so, we become a fly on the wall, privy to the hopes and fears of intermediaries preparing to face their audiences for the first time, learning what works and what does not at the community level. Every presentation is a learning experience. Through in-depth interviews, we are able to sketch a critical portrait of citizen intermediaries, to better understand what motivates them and how their worldviews might help or hinder climate change communication with local audiences.

Through our own survey and the work of other scholars, there are also specific questions our observations can help to answer: What is the right balance of cognitive and affective messaging? How much knowledge of climate change is necessary? How much detail is too much and when does it become a hindrance to action? What is the relative impact of the dialogue format on understanding, motivation and behaviour change? What role do “interpretive communities” play within the process - are they more

important than standard demographic variables (e.g. gender, age, ethnicity, economic status)? How do intermediaries make themselves more credible, more open and more persuasive to audiences? How do intermediaries empower their audiences? What support do they require to fulfill the important communication role they serve? What role can and should institutions (e.g. ENGOs and government) play in initiating and supporting community-level dialogue?

In the afterword to *Red Sky at Morning*, James Gustav Speth writes, “In the end, we will need engagements with the climate issue in communities and local areas across the land. The issue must come alive where people live.” (2005, p. 228). As we’ve seen, climate change communication scholars point to the ability to bring issues to life, to interact with an audience, and to build new collective understandings of climate change as critical to effective public engagement on climate change. As we begin to examine the relationship between AIT presenters as intermediaries and lay audiences through the “work” of relation and displacement, especially in presenter edits to the slideshow presentation itself, as well as rhetorical strategies, narrative development, affect, framing, linguistic repertoires, iconography, trust and credibility, and tactics of audience pre-conditioning, we will begin to answer these questions.

Methodology

Sampling

For this research, I interviewed twenty presenters of AIT. To protect their anonymity, their names have been changed.

Presenters were identified and contacted using purposive and snowball sampling techniques, and an effort was made to reach as diverse a sample as possible. Diversity was measured and defined by a combination of presenter gender and audience specialization, that is, the various types of unique audiences trainees presented to.

Three key informant gatekeepers were critical in arranging my interviews: Andrea Reimer, a friend and colleague from the environmental movement who is also a trained AIT presenter; Peter Schiefke, National Manager of The Climate Project Canada (recently renamed, the Climate Reality Project Canada) who graciously sent an invitation to participate in the research to the organization’s presenter listserv; and Kathy, a Climate Project Canada mentor and active presenter who personally sent an invitation to

participate in my research to other presenters, and whose friendly urging to fellow presenters was critical in pushing my interview sample up to the twenty interviewee threshold.

One of the unique characteristics of this study is the enthusiasm with which most of the presenters, and TCPC itself, embraced the research. They have expressed a strong desire to qualify the experience and efficacy of presenters and the project's public engagement efforts (no research has been done to date on the project's efficacy or the experience of its presenters), and as a result have been active participants in making the research a reality.

Interview format

Working with methods refined from an original pilot study of British Columbian AIT presenters (a study I undertook for a graduate level research methods course), a semi-structured interview format was used to conduct recorded interviews via telephone with presenters across the country. Interviews were conducted using an interview guide that consisted of twenty-seven grand tour questions and 59 probe questions, covering broad areas including biography, self-selected personal qualities, presentation experience, definitions of success, changes to content, delivery, trust and credibility, empowerment, causation, blame, action and solutions, collaboration, as well as personal opinions on how society can solve the climate crisis and achieve sustainability.

Interviews were wide ranging (no two were the same), lasting anywhere from 45 minutes to over two hours, and were largely dependent on the work schedule of the presenter (most were happy to talk at length about their experience).

Each interview began with a standardized introduction explaining the purpose of the study and the interview format that would be used to collect data. Participants were told that a semi-structured interview was flexible, favoured their own responses and lines of questioning, and sought to uncover their experiences of the interplay between themselves and their audiences.

The semi-structured interview format relied on grand tour questions alternating with pre-planned probe questions. Typically, a grand tour question (e.g. "Can you start

by telling me how you became a presenter of An Inconvenient Truth?") would elicit a broad and interviewee-defined response whose relevant leads would be followed and probed until the line of questioning appeared to exhaust itself, at which point a related probe question would be asked, for example, "Even before the AIT training, what qualities about yourself do you think qualified you for the role of presenter?" This participative, semi-structured approach, as recommended by other social science researchers (Andersen et. al., 2005), is favoured for its ability to engage interviewees by allowing a more natural and potentially deeper flow of inquiry.

The first half of the interview was about building confidence, collecting background information (how they got involved as presenters) and getting a sense of how they viewed themselves and their responsibility as intermediaries. During this first half, grand tour questions were asked with greater frequency. With general information and a comfort level established, interviewees often moved into soliciting and generating probe questions on their own.

During the second half of the interview, probe questions increased in frequency and were often asked in slightly different ways to uncover instances of presentation adaptation, evolution of message adaptation style, and presenters' experiences of audience feedback loops. This process often involved interviewees jogging their own memory. As the line of questioning became clear to interviewees, recollections of adaptation accelerated, and probe questions became finer and finer, finally moving into questions that sought evidence of specific climate communication tactics, and community dialogue and building behaviours identified in existing climate communication research.

Data collection and interpretation

The recorded interviews, which were accompanied by extensive notes, were transcribed using ExpressScribe software and the resulting text files were imported into HyperResearch, qualitative analysis software. Interpretation was guided by grounded theory and open coding as defined by Strauss (paraphrased by Berg, p. 278), including analyzing the data minutely, frequently interrupting the coding to write a theoretical note, and never assuming the analytic relevance of any traditional variable such as age or sex until the data showed it to be relevant. Using this approach, 65 themes (or "codes")

comprised of 613 instances, emerged, representing the main data stream of the research. These themes were then grouped and examined in the larger context of each respective interview, and against my own notes and experiences as the interviewer. They were then considered analytically and worked-up to form the sections and chapters of which this research is composed.

Chapter Two: Cast of Characters

An Inconvenient Truth

An Inconvenient Truth (AIT) is the centrepiece of Al Gore's personal campaign to increase public awareness, concern and engagement with the issue of climate change.

Directed by Davis Guggenheim, the film is a 100-minute documentary based on Al Gore's personal climate change PowerPoint slideshow, a slideshow he had been developing and giving to audiences for many years during his time in political office. At its core, the film is a glorified, information-heavy lecture on climate change and a call for action. At the time of its release, it visually rendered climate science findings from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, and other climate change research, for the first time, for a mass audience, using animated graphs and charts.

To break-up the lecture format, the documentary includes a personal metanarrative consisting of Al Gore's rise and fall as a presidential candidate, and his political rebirth as an international environmentalist, bringing the climate message to anyone who will hear it. It also includes personal rhetorical vignettes dealing mostly with personal tragedies and near misses in Mr. Gore's life. These moving segments, which often feature epiphanies and hard-learned life lessons, are meant to address mental barriers audiences might face in accepting the "inconvenient truth" of climate change. We discuss the rhetorical composition of the film in greater depth in Chapter Five.

AIT opened nationally in the United States on June 2, 2006 and became the fourth highest grossing documentary of all time, winning the Academy Award for best documentary of the year. Biology professor/turned filmmaker, Randy Olson (2009), has unreserved praise for the film: "It is, plainly and simply, the most important and best-made piece of environmental media in history. End of story...[the film] took the broadest and most urgent environmental issue [climate change] and jumped it up from background noise to buzzword." (p. 107).

Olson's praise is supported to some extent by research that has attempted to qualify the effect of the film. A consumer Internet survey covering 47 countries and conducted jointly by The Nielsen Company and Oxford University in 2007, found that 12% (one in eight) of global online consumers had seen the film (17% in North America). Moreover, 66% of viewers who claimed to have seen AIT said the film had "changed their mind" about global warming and 89% said watching the movie made them more aware of the problem. Perhaps most significantly, three out of four (74%) said they had "changed some of their habits" as a result of seeing the film.

Jacobsen (2010) found a similar correlation between the film's release and an uptick in carbon-offset purchases in the U.S. Pacific Northwest (though the behaviour only lasted a year).

In Australia, the film is credited with having galvanised audiences and changed the minds of government leaders and even conservative media baron Rupert Murdoch (Smith and Hargoves, 2007, p. 17). "An Inconvenient Truth has ensured that the issue of climate change has reached middle Australia and is now a top concern in all polling." (p. 17).

Despite its conventional success in attracting eyeballs and nudging behaviour in a positive direction (if only for a limited time), it is important to note that the film and its message are not without criticism. In addition to charges of hypocrisy against Al Gore's own carbon-intensive lifestyle, some academic observers offer a sharper more structural critique of the film. Luke (2007) is deeply critical of the role he sees AIT playing in green washing the inherent unsustainability of capitalism, and contributing to the systematization of environmental degradation: "While Gore sees saving the Earth as an immediate moral imperative, sustainable degradation turns it into a long-term business plan, as his recent affiliation with Kleiner Perkins Caulfield and Byers [venture capitalists] reaffirms." (p. 1816). More of Luke's criticism and the concept of "sustainable degradation" are brought to bear in Chapter Six.

Turning to the Canadian experience, it is harder to find research on the reception and impact of AIT in Canada. Anecdotally, we know that 1000 Canadians applied for the original training call put out by Al Gore (following the film's release, Gore pledged to train 1000 presenters to deliver the message in communities across North America), and that

of those 1000, twenty-one were accepted (the initial training call was geared predominantly towards Americans). We also know that the Canadian province of British Columbia was one of only six jurisdictions globally to incorporate AIT into its secondary schools' curricula. Anecdotally, public demand was also strong for presentations immediately following the release of the film, so much so that five of the original 21 Canadian AIT trainees felt compelled to create The Climate Project Canada (TCPC).

Based on these accounts, Canadian interest in AIT seems relatively high in the global context.

The Climate Project Canada (TCPC)

The Climate Project Canada (TCPC), recently renamed The Climate Reality Project Canada (Climate Reality Canada), is a small non-profit organization modeled loosely after The Climate Project, the Nashville-based non-profit organization created by Al Gore and tasked with training and coordinating volunteer presenters of AIT. TCPC was founded by five of the original 21 Canadian presenters trained by Al Gore as part of his effort to train 1000 (mostly American) presenters immediately following the release of the film. These presenters became the first board members of TCPC.

Volunteer accounts of the organization suggest its early years were a struggle, in part because it was run as a largely insular, centralized board, without a membership structure (in ironic contrast to the decentralized community-based strategy of training presenters). One closely connected volunteer believes the board originally conceived of the project as a short-term, single training of 200 Canadians (this would swell to 250 and represents the largest and only cohort of TCPC presenters trained in Canada).

The intention was to train presenters and then send them out to present autonomously in their respective communities. There were limited, if any, plans to provide continuing support or presentation coordination, however, that soon changed.

A more formal organization and network took shape in the months following the training, based largely on presenter need and led by and made-up of volunteers and mentors who provided and maintained basic services like presenter email lists, outreach to presenters (support and mentoring), and newsletter production. It was not until nine months after the first and only training of presenters (April 4-6, 2008 in Montreal) that

official office space and a budget for TCPC staff were secured. Some presenters blame this gap in organizational support for early attrition among the original 250 presenters.

In terms of trainee selection, a call went out for applications just two months before the Montreal training. 1000 applications were received, and 250 were accepted. The bulk of applications were solicited through networks connected to the TCPC board members themselves. While an online application form did exist on the TCPC website, it was not shared broadly. The time between the announcement of training and the training itself was very short and contributed to a lack of public awareness of the training opportunity.

Applicants were judged on their passion (commitment to the issue and presenting), their public speaking experience, and the breadth and uniqueness of their potential audiences (they were asked to list audiences they planned to present to). Additional criteria included a focus on First Nations and underrepresented ethnic communities. Gender, age and regional representation balances were also sought, and where necessary, particular demographics were actively recruited. Interestingly, the application committee favoured applications from emergency personnel (doctors, firefighters and paramedics) because they were seen as credible, having first hand experience of climate effects (e.g. forest fires and heat exhaustion) as well as being different from typical messengers of environmental communication (e.g. scientists and environmentalists). A small number of seats were also reserved for sponsors and paying individuals who were connected to board members or the TCPC Executive Director.

Following the training, presenters signed an agreement to give ten presentations within the year.

Presenter training

The training itself was a two and a half day whirlwind tour of AIT and the basic mechanics of presenting. In the evening of the first half-day, presenters registered, met their regional peers and mentors and then attended a public presentation of AIT in the evening, delivered by Al Gore. The next day the presenters had the option of listening to an inspirational speaker during breakfast. Following breakfast, Al Gore went through the slideshow once, quickly talking about the science and explaining his presentation

strategy. He then went through the slideshow a second time, more deliberately and slowly, filling in details in parceled sections to allow trainee breaks.

It was in the second pass that he discussed the concept of audience budgets. The three budgets he asked presenters to be aware of were the complexity, time and hope budgets (the hope budget is sometimes called the “despair” budget), based on the idea that audiences are sensitive to too much complexity (they appreciate simplicity), too much time (they appreciate brevity) and too much despair (they need hope). These budgets correspond to some degree to the three dimensions of public engagement, as per Lorenzoni et. al. The complexity budget speaks to cognitive connection, the hope budget speaks to affect, and the time budget relates to behaviour in so far as brevity coincides closely with notions of efficacy (audiences should not be kept so long that they lose interest or the will to take action). For example, following a long run of serious slides, Gore would stop and say, “We’ve had quite a few serious slides here so now it’s time to have a break. We’re reaching the limits of the hope budget, and now we need to go back and give the audience some hope or another emotion.” (as paraphrased by presenter Kathy). In making these interjections, Gore explained the strategic and psychological rationale behind the various budgets in general terms. He emphasized that it is important for people to feel the presentation “in their heart,” but that a balance of emotion is critical. How to achieve this was less clear.

Gore offered no precise formula for managing the budgets or “switching it up,” he just emphasized that the process involved pushing and pulling, using emotion but not letting it get too far out of hand.

Kathy emphasized Gore’s attention to emotion. While not conceptualized as a budget, Gore talked about the importance of bringing audiences to the edge of strong emotional reactions (at the threshold of crying) and then backing off, building and dropping and switching from one approach to the other, similar to the oratory of great political speakers. This building and dropping is a recurring process throughout AIT.

Gore is also apparently mindful of his trainees’ own personal budgets, ensuring they are not overwhelmed by the training process. During the training, he makes a point of scheduling relaxing social and cultural events for trainees, between training days. In Nashville he has taken trainees to watch musical performances by famous artists like blues legend B.B. King.

The final day of training featured experts, many of them TCPC board members, speaking on various technical and pragmatic aspects of presenting. For example, one speaker talked about how to deliver science-themed public presentations, and offered advice on issues like personal grooming, dress and body language, as well as treating scientific information accurately and fielding tough questions from the audience. Another expert gave a presentation on how fossil fuel industry-connected think tanks use the media to spin climate change and spread skepticism. He used public polling to show trainees the effects of such tactics on popular beliefs about climate change.

As experienced and influential social change agents, the board members (all of whom were part of the original AIT training cohort) were able to provide valuable presentation insights and specialized knowledge. In some cases, they were able to draw on the knowledge resources of their own businesses and non-profit and governmental employers. This was an advantage during the early days of TCPC, in that such training from outside sources could have been prohibitively expensive for the young organization.

Apart from the training itself, each presenter was provided with an original copy of the AIT slideshow, which they were instructed not to share with anyone else. This is a very strict rule that has in some ways contributed to presenter notions that presentations should not deviate much from the original. It introduces a closed, proprietary value among presenters, that does not always seem to fit naturally with the wider goal of spreading the climate message (we discuss this in greater detail in Chapter Three).

Canadian presenters were also provided with a small supply of feedback forms and an electronic file to print additional forms, as well as secure access to TCPC's intranet. The intranet includes access to various presenter generated materials, including poster templates for promoting presentations, as well as new slide decks for specialized audiences (e.g. business audiences).

TCPC today

Since its inception in May of 2007, the project has trained and coordinated approximately 275 Canadians (the increase over 250 is attributed to a small number of Canadians trained in subsequent American training sessions), with 116 currently listed as active presenters on its website, a major drop of 58%, which we discuss shortly.

According to its mission statement (<http://www.climatereality.ca>), the project “seeks to raise awareness among all Canadians about the urgency of the climate crisis,” and to “motivate Canadians to become active participants in solving the climate crisis.”

To accomplish this the project lists three focus areas:

- Training a diverse range of citizens from numerous geographic regions and walks of life, who will then communicate to the public about the urgency and impact of climate change.
- Engaging the public through presentations, news media and individual conversations as well as grassroots advocacy and activism so that they will make informed choices about public policy matters related to climate change.
- Promoting personal, local, domestic and international initiatives to solve the climate crisis.

The audience categories provided on the TCPC website give an idea of the types of audiences the project caters to:

Business
Secondary school
Elementary school
CEGEP/college
University
Workplace
Faith-based group/event
Special event/conference
Government organization
Union
Other

With a staff of three, the project is modest in scope, and is housed in the Montreal office of the David Suzuki Foundation, which also provides communications and administrative support (the two organizations have separate boards). In announcing the partnership, Peter Robinson, CEO of the David Suzuki Foundation, called it a “fantastic opportunity” to work with “on-the-ground activists to educate and inform Canadians.”

The project is also sponsored in part by the government of Quebec, which announced a three-year financial commitment in 2009 to establish “the permanent secretariat” of The Climate Reality Project Canada in Montreal. The project is also sponsored by CN (Canadian National Railway), Desjardin General Insurance, BLJC (a

real estate management company), BDC (Business Development Bank of Canada), La Conférence régionale des élus de Montréal, Eco Apparel, the province of British Columbia and One Million Acts of Green (OMaOG), an environmental and branding initiative by Cisco Systems in partnership with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Described as “partners,” each organization has a small paragraph on the TCPC website describing their own efforts or commitments towards fighting climate change, positioning that fuels Luke’s critique of AIT’s involvement in legitimizing “sustainable degradation.”

In terms of organization, the project operates as a network, held together by a website with a secure intranet where presenters can communicate with one another and share slides. It is important to note, however, that this sharing is hamstrung by a lack of uniform slide labeling, as well as an effective presenter contact system. Many presenters have elected to only receive new slide notifications if they log into the secure website itself. They have not provided their primary email as a means of contact. There is anecdotal evidence that the website is used infrequently by presenters.

Presenters are networked regionally through volunteer mentors who are more experienced presenters, willing to answer questions and give advice. Smaller presenter committees are also established by interested presenters for the purposes of developing audience-specific slide shows (e.g. a business slide deck, or a high-school slide deck). These informal groupings are often organized by the TCPC National Manager who reaches out to specific presenters he thinks might have something to contribute.

Organizational support for regional networks and smaller committees is limited, consisting of small grants and honorariums to support volunteer-driven meet-ups and small trainings. For example, a regional group of presenters led by a mentor might bring in a public speaking expert. These meetings, which might occur twice a year, appear to be a valuable source of collaboration, and keep presenters connected to one another.

The health and cohesion of these networks is entirely dependent on the interest and commitment of the individual members and volunteers, with some presenters expressing frustration in not feeling much connection to the project or wider presenter community. Some presenters wished the project would put more effort into keeping them connected, such as providing basic logistical support for national conference calls (Lisa).

In terms of organizing presentations, the front-end of the TCPC website allows the public to request a presentation, including the option to request a specific presenter. Requests are posted on the website intranet and if no one volunteers to present, project staff reach out to a specific local presenter to see if they can give the presentation. One presenter reported that TCPC staff themselves are doing an increasing number of presentations in the Montreal area, suggesting that local presenters there are largely unresponsive. The presenter links this to the fact that many of the Montreal trainees were of the corporate “paying” variety, who may have seen the training as more of a networking and brand-building opportunity than a personal mission.

When asked what forms of assistance would most help them in their presentations, a common response was assistance from TCPC with marketing, promotion and scheduling of presentations. These sentiments echo a concern that presenters can get into “a lull” if they are not getting regular presentation requests which makes it difficult to stay active and ready to present:

They [TCPC] haven't really helped promote and set-up presentations for people, they have a website and that seems to be about it. You get trained and go out on your own. For me, it's difficult to continue to seek out presentations and to do that when you have a million other things you're trying to do. Why can't someone be setting these up for me?
(Michelle)

Recommendations for promotion of presentations include asking one’s network for media contacts (to generate local media coverage); setting up a referral system with other presenters in a local region to help increase traffic and cover off scheduling conflicts; and reaching out to local sustainability events and openings to offer to speak for free. The goal behind these tactics is to make an initial splash and to trigger the word of mouth referral system that accounts for the majority of presentations (we discuss promotional strategies in greater detail in the “Portrait of the Audience” section of this chapter).

One presenter, who has created his own climate education non-profit, began presenting with nine sponsored presentations covering seven different sector audiences. Following those nine presentations, 90% of his subsequent presentations have come through referrals. To understand the origin and potential direction of his presentation

requests, and to better target his own marketing via website, posters and word of mouth, he has created a genealogy tree to trace the source of each presentation. He uses the tool to sharpen his marketing, while also documenting the success of his non-profit to potential funders.

Portrait of the intermediary

In 2006, Daniel read the book version of AIT and told his wife, “I think this book is going to change the world.” He based his belief on the fact that the book was “written by a famous person” and because “it presents climate change in a way that anybody can understand.” Shortly thereafter, Daniel found out about the AIT training program and applied and reapplied until The Climate Project accepted him. “I thought, ‘There is my opportunity for my little voice to become a bigger voice.’” Following his training and reflecting on the ten presentations he was to deliver in fulfillment of his agreement with The Climate Project, Daniel decided to go further:

I thought, ‘I’ve got two boys now and this will be the most important issue in their life. To heck with ten, I’ll aim for 100 and I’ll take a year off of work to do it.’ So it was a big step and a scary one, but in the end, in fact, 100 presentations came easy. It only took nine months because schools were just lining up. When the year was up I thought this was still the most important thing to do, so I quit. (Daniel)

What followed was a concerted career transformation from being a lifelong provincial government employee, involved with agricultural marketing and energy efficiency through various government departments, to a professional writer and public speaker on climate change and sustainability issues. Today, Daniel gives speeches and runs workshops, has a newspaper column on green issues, and is a TCPC mentor, providing support to other presenters. To date he has delivered 250 presentations to an audience approaching 40,000.

So what makes Daniel tick? Our review of climate change communication literature points to the importance of intermediaries like Daniel, and begs to better understand them as individuals and to access their knowledge and experience interacting with audiences. What is it about Daniel that took him from the pages of a book on climate change that he thought was going to change the world, to quitting his

job and becoming a self-made opinion leader and change maker, passionately delivering a climate message to 40,000 fellow citizens? Daniel is successful at what he does and he is in love with the process. How did he learn to do that?

Moral / political motivation

Presenters expressed a strong sense of personal responsibility, community service, and a moral obligation to do something about climate change:

I care. I care a lot. I'm passionate. I believe in doing the right thing. I really believe in that profoundly, and I know that I'm a good communicator. I know I can get up in front of people and help communicate something that's pretty challenging to understand, so if I can use that ability to do good, it makes me feel a whole lot better about my life. (Richard)

A number of participants were inspired to take the training after seeing AIT on video or in the theatre, commenting to their partners about the power of the film. One presenter said she felt an obligation to become a presenter, partly because she wanted to temper the movie's dark message with something more positive. Others wholeheartedly emulate Gore's message.

In general, presenters were very partial to Al Gore's framing of climate change as a moral imperative. It ratcheted up their own guilt and concern with respect to the issue, and gave them an avenue to cleanse their guilt and to make a difference by "doing good." In terms of recruiting potential intermediaries, AIT did a good job inspiring potential candidates.

Probing their strong sense of personal responsibility, many participants linked it to their role as parents and concern for the future of their children. Two men in particular identified the birth of their children as moments of epiphany. Other presenters cite environmental awareness and an early, often childhood connection to nature as contributing to their sense of responsibility.

Thirteen of the twenty presenters interviewed cited environmental awareness and connection to nature as the reason for their sense of responsibility. Major sparks for connection were childhood experiences such as growing up on a rural farm, canoe camping, and being raised by parents with environmental values. Others cited professional exposure, for example, reading reports and hearing presentations on sustainability as a municipal councillor or being tasked with environmental issue

management through their job (e.g. sustainability planning). One presenter identified a trip through the third world as a formative experience in developing a social conscience.

Several presenters also expressed a strong level of personal commitment to “walking the talk” and felt that in some cases they were already implementing the solutions suggested in the movie, for example, reducing their own personal environmental footprint:

I was looking at the suggestions that Al Gore had put at the end [of the film]. Practical things to do. I was reflecting and thinking, 'Oh, I do that already, I do that already,' and finally I realized I was doing everything he suggested and I was wondering what more I could do, and then I was deeply hit by his last two last sentences: First, put your knowledge into action. Second, go into your community and talk about climate change. (Simon)

While AIT has received plenty of criticism for a lack of substantive solutions (we discuss this further in Chapter Four), this last message encouraging viewers to put their knowledge into action, and to go out into their communities, is critical. It jumps the viewer out of the realm of strict personal responsibility and into the realm of active citizenship and community-level dialogue, the only place, according to Ockwell et al. and others, that self-efficacy can be bolstered and where wider calls for strong regulatory responses to climate change can originate.

Personal motivation

As a general rule, presenters are confident in defining themselves as “good communicators” with previous public speaking experience, often associated with their professional career (e.g. professor, lawyer, business executive, entrepreneur, politician, non-profit leader, government bureaucrat, and author/consultant). Most participants are either comfortable with public speaking or identify it as something they enjoy, with nearly a quarter of interviewees identifying a long time association with the Toast Masters organization. Some commented on their ability to inspire others in the face of seemingly insurmountable challenges and to simplify complicated information.

Presenters claim to have a high level of passion and single it out as a requirement for successful presentations:

Well, I'm a good communicator, it's what I do professionally. I'm passionate about what I talk about, and I'm well informed, so when I get in front of an audience it doesn't intimidate me. I also have the ability to translate complex messages or information into relatively simple sound bites because of my training as a journalist and media professional.
(Merran)

Some presenters have specialized communities they felt personally motivated to connect with, or with whom they felt they had social capital, for example, the legal community, film production community or high-school students. However, successfully accessing these audiences did not always work out. Some presenters blame TCPC for a lack of support, though presenters may not have fully considered some of the barriers to audience penetration.

Presenters also possessed strong levels of creativity, a strong work ethic and what some might define as a tendency towards “over-achievement,” having multiple life projects on the go in addition to their public presentations, such as, writing books, running for public office or completing graduate education while running their own non-profits or businesses. Presenters appeared to be goal-oriented and thrive on challenges (talk of perseverance and overcoming challenges was common), with almost all of the presenters identifying the AIT training and subsequent public presentations in their communities as a big personal challenge.

The training seems to have met a need they were looking to fulfill. They often became aware of the training opportunity through a friend, contact, or connected network member who was aware of the would-be presenter's personal drive and interests.

Presenters expressed a strong desire to measure performance either in terms of number of presentations, audience totals, or presentation performance. It was never difficult for a presenter to recall the number of presentations they had given. In some cases presenters have delivered more than 100 presentations. One young presenter has presented to a combined audience of more than 25,000. In response to a question about whether or not he was still presenting, Simon, who has given 70 presentations to 10,000 people, and who has started his own provincial non-profit climate education organization

with 200 volunteers, expresses the typical over-achieving energy and curiosity of presenters, as well as the potential for over-commitment:

I have some [presentations] on my agenda, but I do a lot of things, and I have a new job, and I've taken a sabbatical year off teaching. From time to time I have to sleep, and I do a lot of things. I'm a musician. I have a new band and sometimes I just look at my calendar and wonder, when am I going to sleep? (Simon)

In the interests of preventing presenter burnout, it may be useful for TCPC to include basic training on time management and achieving a healthy work/life balance. Some presenters seem to present at full throttle, accumulating impressive numbers of presentations and audience attendance before burning out shortly thereafter, often within the year. While it is unclear how a slow and steady approach would differ in terms of number of presentations given, presenter burnout does present real challenges to the health of the AIT presenter community. A more balanced approach might extend the presenting life of presenters and maintain a more robust and long-lived presenter network, capable of training, motivating and supporting a larger number of presenters (thereby increasing audience numbers as well). We discuss the importance of presenter community health in Chapter Three.

Professional motivation

Presenters clearly have an urge to speak and to be listened to, and to transform themselves into public figures. In some cases it was clear that presenters thrived on the attention associated with their presentations, for example, promotion of their name and face on posters in venues as a marketing lead up to their presentation. This attention is both personally and professional gratifying. As professional public speakers, presenters need their name and credentials to be broadcast to potential audiences, and in the case of presenters making a career change, potential clients.

As human beings, attention feeds the ego. It may be the format of a personal interview seeking biographical information, but on more than one occasion presenters could be interpreted as being somewhat immodest, sharing their accomplishments and clearly relishing the attention. As overachievers acutely aware of relating to their audiences, it is an interesting question as to how well presenters navigate the tension

between connecting with audiences, while also balancing their own need for personal fulfillment and attention. One wonders if there is any risk to creating an empathetic connection with audiences when/if some presenters' stronger egoic tendencies come into play.

During their training, presenters were star-struck, expressing gratification at rubbing shoulders with Al Gore and David Suzuki (among other leading environmental figures), with many presenters working their personal stories with "Mr. Gore" into their presentations (sometimes in a self-deprecating, but still name-dropping fashion). It is clear that Al Gore's celebrity status played a role in enticing applicants. Presenter recollections of the application process and the chance to train with Al Gore are reminiscent of the search for the "golden ticket" in Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*:

...I was home when I got the email saying, 'You've been selected,' and I whooped and I hollered as loud as I could, it was amazing, a real privilege. (Laura)

...and meeting Al Gore, we didn't even get to shake his hand, but sitting there listening to him speak for ten hours and not missing a single word. He's ten feet away from you, that was really neat. That was a real bonus for me... (Karen)

Professional motivation abounds, and presenters cited increased credibility and professional networking as motivations to take the AIT training. An area of study worthy of further examination is the professional opportunities and success presenters have subsequently enjoyed in part because of their training. One presenter was adamant that the training and his new identity as an AIT presenter had created numerous opportunities ranging from authoring books, to new consulting partnerships and a professional rolodex with clout and influence.

Several presenters were very open about their professional motivations for being trained:

It presents me with a unique license to speak about my social venture, but with the additional layer of credibility, 'By the way here's the information from Mr. Gore.' In a very selfish way it gives me a whole other layer of credibility to add to the story I'm telling. (Steve)

Significant here is the role that networks played in the rollout of the AIT training in Canada. Many presenters appeared to gain entrance into the early trainings by knowing someone close to TCPC management. As previously discussed, the Montreal training was tightly controlled and spaces could be bought/sponsored by interested individuals and businesses. Steve bought several spots recognizing the value of training his employees from a brand positioning point of view. This approach meant it was more difficult for less connected presenters to receive the training.

Indeed, one half of presenters interviewed seemed to get into the training through professional connections, with little difficulty, while the other half talked about having to hound organizers to accept them. To an outside observer these anecdotes give the impression of different tiers of more or less “connected” classes of presenters.

Presenters appear to be conscious of these differences, which may have had some negative consequences for a cohesive sense of presenter community (there was an “in crowd” and then everyone else):

[The Climate Project] told me that [they] accepted me into the training because I sounded like I was relatively down to earth and kind of normal. [They] tried to accept a certain amount of people that were from a different type of background. People who were trying to get things done, but they weren't superstars. I was just a person trying to get some stuff done in my little community and provincially but it wasn't like I was big time. I wasn't an elected MP or MPP or something like that. (Kathy)

While some presenters identified the exclusive club mentality as being something that motivated or inspired them, it appears that those presenters who got into the training through personal connections, on average, completed fewer official presentations than those who applied through the formal process. The presenters most likely to continue presenting with a re-branded presentation focusing on their own professional agendas, were the presenters who got in through connections or by buying spaces, while the traditional applicants were the ones more likely to “stay true” to the original presentation.

Challenges to staying motivated

A number of presenters have found difficulty staying motivated and keeping their own spirits up in the face of intransigent audiences, plummeting public concern about climate change (as per the polling of McAllister Opinion Research), and depressing

climate news. The lack of public urgency and interest around climate issues means there is less demand for the presentations themselves, and that is demotivating for presenters, making their work feel less relevant and valued (ironically at a time when public engagement on climate action has never been more important):

...it [climate change] is very serious but not everyone is taking it all that seriously. We've certainly got a long road. I think the volunteer job of being a presenter has become even more challenging. I think in some ways it was easier in 2008, more in the mind of the public more so than now, and so yeah, it is challenging. (Vicky)

Presenters themselves are not immune to depressing news about climate change, particularly when the solutions and prospects for change seem meagre relative to the steady stream of dire climate change news. Laura recounts how being selected and trained as a presenter was initially an empowering experience. She felt like she was helping to solve the problem, a feeling that has gradually given way to one of despair and a defensive need to pull away from depressing climate news and information as well as the presentations themselves:

...the opportunity to be a presenter gave me a lot of hope. I really felt like I was doing something that needed to be done in this whole big problem that we're facing so it was really enabling for me, and very helpful when thinking about climate change, but I guess that sort of petered out. It has been two years now and it's definitely waning, your own hope is waning. I said to my friend the other day that I've had to step away from all the climate change news. I'm inundated through work and through other networks that I have with ongoing calamities in the world and not positive stuff and I was finding I was getting depressed and there was a bit of despair creeping in. So lately I've said I'm going to focus on other things, my kids and my family and I'm just going to step away for a bit. (Laura)

Losing presenters because of depression and despair suggests that TCPC needs to manage its own hope and despair budget more effectively. Are presenters adequately supported? Are the latest climate risk assessments accompanied by hopeful solutions? Are there measures of success that can be relayed back to presenters so they can have a sense of accomplishment, making the world a better place? In the absence of change, presenter attrition and burnout will continue. Indeed, most presenters appear to have presented for a one to two year sustained period before “retiring.”

Portrait of the audience

The most important rule of communication is “know your audience.” While this research did not survey AIT audience members directly, presenter accounts as well as my own personal attendance at several AIT presentations, provide some insights into the nature of audiences.

Who are these people?

Broadly speaking, if they are not coerced to attend a presentation (as is the case with school presentations and work “lunch and learns”) AIT audiences consist largely of people who believe in and are already concerned about climate change, though there are important exceptions (e.g. interested universities, conferences, and community groups who invite guest speakers). Many have already seen the movie, and the community presentations represent a real-life touch point for the climate change narrative and a source of “continuing education” and further guidance for solutions.

Presenters describe their presentations to these audiences as “preaching to the converted” and some presenters have tried avoiding these audiences, instead believing that unconverted or even skeptical or hostile audiences are more important to reach. This is a common notion among the ENGO community that needs to be challenged. “Preaching to the converted” is a bad thing, but not for the reason most consider it to be. When presenters attempt to avoid “converted” audiences they are throwing away their greatest chance for effective public engagement. As other presenters have noted, “converted” audiences are members of the community who are interested in the issue, want to know more about what actions they can take, and even want to share their own experiences with others – the basis of community.

It is yet another conceit of the transmission, information deficit-based model that presenters should seek to “preach” (and therein lies the negative element of “preaching to the converted”) to “unconverted” or even skeptical audiences where the chances of engagement are much lower. Preaching is fundamentally different than engaging, and no one wants to be preached to. The converted audiences that presenters and ENGOs turn their noses up at, are in fact the low hanging fruit for meaningful public engagement and community building, the place where social capital can be generated and behaviour change achieved. Their potential engagement and activism should be deepened rather

than treated as an inconvenience. Indeed, the status quo approach to “converted” audiences, reveals the immaturity of ENGO public engagement efforts.

Several presenters commented that shortly after the release of AIT in 2006, there was a more even mix of educated vs. uneducated, and converted vs. skeptical audience members. Presenters describe this period as a time of information gathering, before audiences had “dug-in” with their own beliefs about climate change. Since that time, the number of skeptics attending presentations has dropped substantially, with presenters attributing this to a “closing-off” of the minds of skeptics who can now find their own online sources of information and echo chambers (skeptic discussion groups and websites) so there is not the same interest in presentations. We discuss approaches to dealing with skepticism in greater detail in Chapter Five.

Specialized audiences

While some presentations are solicited directly through the TCPC website, the vast majority are through word of mouth and come directly to the presenters themselves. One presenter suggested that if presenters are cold calling to arrange presentations (and a few do) they may be struggling in delivering an effective presentation. The presenter’s reasoning is that effective presenters do not have a problem booking presentations because word of mouth takes over. However, it is common for presenters to solicit their first few presentations on their own. TCPC provides a press release template for presenters to announce to local media that they are available and ready to present. Those who have used the press release have typically received local media coverage and healthy presentation requests thereafter, though it is unclear how many presenters actually utilize this tactic.

Following the first few presentations, a networked snowball effect kicks in, where one presentation leads to another via word of mouth. This means that a presenter's first few presentations strongly determine the make-up of subsequent audiences. This specialization can be further entrenched through TCPC’s own specialized audience campaigns (e.g. high school campaigns) where the project teams up with a particular presenter to deliver presentations in a tour format. While the bulk of these campaigns have focused on schools, other specialized audiences include universities, business

audiences, municipal governments, hunting and game clubs, churches, private schools, legal, engineering and other professional audiences.

Professional audiences often engage with climate change from a self-interested or entrepreneurial point of view. One business presenter suggested leading with climate change as an opportunity rather than a threat, e.g. “How much money can I make off this?” This framing makes climate change “valuable” independent of a businessperson's beliefs about its causes or even its existence.

Lawyers and engineers were groups singled out for thinking that they are “really smart” and engineers in particular were identified as an audience having a higher percentage of skeptics, a trend that presenters attribute to their tendency to think and see the world in a linear fashion versus a systems approach. Linear thinking tends to throw out a whole process if one piece of information (like the correlation between rising CO2 levels and rising temperatures) is imperfect at any stage. For climate scientists who look at the totality of effects, a 98% consensus is meaningful. For an engineer, 98% means a 2% chance of serious structural failure (for example the design of a bridge). They are not interested in peer review, they are interested in precise calculations.

We’re a sensitive, fickle bunch

Overall, presenters paint a picture of audiences as being a highly sensitive and restless bunch, especially sensitive to the aforementioned complexity, time and hope budgets. If you want to engage an audience, these factors need to be carefully balanced, and as presenters recount, they are constantly reminded that the real-life bounds and monitoring of these budgets are even more unique and sensitive than they learned in the TCPC training.

Based on audience reaction, presenters describe a common experience of shifting and modifying their presentations, playing with time and content formulas and tending to scale back the science and climate impact slides in favour of more time for discussing solutions and ending on a high note. Twenty minutes has been identified by a number of presenters as being a length of time on the cusp of when audience attention wanes and the approach needs to be altered:

...in the old days, when I did 50% as sky is falling and then switching over to what we're doing, I'd see a lot of fatigue in the audience (at the 20-30min mark). By the time you get halfway, people have sat there about how the sky is falling and then you switch. As that ratio has shifted down to 10% or 20%, people are coming to hear exciting stuff. In Canada there isn't very much preaching left to be done, everyone gets it. How will it affect us? Not rainstorms and hurricanes, it's instability in our economy, insecurity in our nation and so on... (Steve)

Paying attention to complexity, and keeping the science sections simple and short also makes more time for the solutions section, identified time and again by presenters as being the most important part of the presentation. Even the solution section itself could benefit from simplification. One presenter expressed her frustration with the recent (June 2010) TCP solutions training in Nashville, the first solutions-focused training offered by Al Gore for existing presenters. The decision to hold this training was widely seen as a response to audience and presenter demands for a more effective solutions section. Stephanie believes the pedagogical approach to the solutions training was too complex for her audience and focused too much on supply-side solutions that are beyond the realm of personal relevance for the general public:

That's the thing, it [Nashville solutions training] was supposed to be more solutions focused and it just wasn't really. It talked a little bit about renewable energy but in a very broad way and a lot less what individuals can do, and more about broad technical innovation stuff that may one day, maybe be helpful. I'm not sure. 'This is wind energy and this is how a wind turbine works. This is nuclear energy and this is how nuclear works.' I'm not going to talk about nuclear energy. It's too controversial and I don't know if my audience really cares how a wind turbine works. The geothermal slides were really technical and some of the energy portfolio stuff, it just seemed too dense and too broad. It didn't say 'you can do this.' They were too complicated. (Stephanie)

Perhaps if the supply-side solutions had been accompanied by a call for government action and subsequent political steps citizens could take in support of such measures, then the above pedagogical approach could work, or would at least resonate more strongly with audiences. Explaining how a windmill works is dangerously close to catering to armchair activism, where learning about a subject becomes confused with actually taking action in relation to it. This approach to providing heavily detailed solutions information no doubt takes inspiration from the information-deficit based,

transmission model of communication. Some climate scientists, environmentalists and even some of the presenters interviewed for this research, still believe that fundamental climate science concepts like the volume of a gas, are a pre-requisite for action and behaviour change. As noted earlier, this is a belief that has been strongly criticized both in the climate change and wider social change communication literature. Gonzalez-Gaudiano and Meira-Carteia contend that:

...such a perspective starts from the premise that once people acquire updated and valid scientific information, their attitudes, values and behaviour will change and they will become environmentally literate citizens. This, however, is a simplistic, mechanistic and deterministic assumption which has already been much discussed, not just in terms of the instructional approach (transmission of knowledge) (Sterling 1996), but also, above all, because of the precariousness of the results after years of implementation, as well as the undesirable side-effects observed (Sterling 2001). (Gonzalez-Gaudiano and Meira-Carteia, 2010, pg.15)

We need to have hope (and are easily despaired)

Despite deliberate training in managing the complexity and hope budgets (concepts that have stuck strongly with presenters and are close at hand during interviews), presenter experience suggests managing these budgets involves a steep learning curve including learning to “read” audiences closely:

I think I would say half the presentations, at least half, after the presentation was done, they looked like they were deer in the headlights. Sort of shocked, just very quiet and so not a lot going on, and that was in the early presentations, because I must have modified it after seeing too many audiences in shock that I must have lightened it up somehow.
(Laura)

Presenters talked about the struggle to bring back “the energy” as well as to maintain audience attention following prolonged sections of dire information. They were also concerned about audiences' sense of self-efficacy and emphasized the importance of offering hope and “a place to go” in terms of solutions.

Even in situations where audiences want a full account of climate impacts (high school students are a good example), presenter experience suggests there is a limit to what an audience can comfortably take-in:

High school students do not want a sugarcoating put on things, they're telling me they don't want that. On the other hand you watch their faces and their reactions and it's not a good way to go to try and scare people, or ram things down their throat. (Vicky)

If you push them over the precipice and they fall into the pit of despair, you've lost them, so you always have to keep things light. For example when I give a presentation to younger children I don't show the slides on the flooding. That's because, if a part of Antarctica or Greenland melts, the sea level will rise about six meters, and that means that parts of India, Vancouver, and Manhattan would all be under water. There's a slide that simulates the flooding and that is extremely scary, that to me, is over exceeding your budget of despair for young children, so I would never show that. (Karen)

It depends on the audience. Sometimes I've been at schools and they'll seem really depressed by the information, so sometimes you want to gloss over some of the stuff that's happening to other people. You still explain it but downplay it and move on to solutions. Everyone has a certain limit as to how much they want to learn about something. Eventually they're like 'I'm just at home, I don't want to do anything.' You really want to walk that line between really scaring someone and making them understand. (Hannah)

These accounts offer some insights for scholars interested in the appropriate role and level of fear appeals for engaging audiences.

The complex and multivariate nature of climate change, lends itself to communication via cascade. Part of the dramatic effect of AIT is its use of cascade and “the domino effect” to describe the chain reactions inherent in the climatic system when temperature rises. A favourite of environmentalists, cascade and montage communication styles use rapid-fire images and facts to condense space, time and information while also building a strong sense of urgency. Significantly, perceived failures to properly manage the hope and despair budget are often linked by presenters to the use of cascade. One presenter recounts two occasions where he realized he had made women in the audience cry:

I realize how important it is to respect the emotional budget and now I'm really aware of that. When I talk about the facts and I cascade the facts I have a circular look to the audience to see, to get the moment when they are not able to have some more. I have a remote control, and then I put the black screen up and I go to my computer and I skip some slides because I reach a tipping point, and then I go to the next part for

solutions. Those two presentations were really instructive for me. I always remember those presentations, because when you see people who cry because of what you have said it's very disturbing. (Simon)

Simon's tactic of monitoring the audience more closely and looking for emotional tipping points leaves something to be desired, given that an emotional tipping point into despair is just that, a point that has been taken too far. Rather than trying emotional remediation after it is too late, more appropriate tactics could involve a more even mix of information from the onset of the presentation (e.g. Steve, who has a 10% mix of hard hitting climate impacts relative to the other discussion and solution sections).

Tactics and techniques to establish and manage emotional connections with audiences are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five.

Chapter Three: Preparation

Presenter preparation

Continuing with Hennion's conception of intermediaries as the master builders in the "sociology of creation," we now turn to the preparation they undertake in bringing "two worlds together" through the processes of deformation, selection and regrouping. Practically, their goal is to bring the world of climate change science, risk assessment and mitigation, into conversation with lay audiences at the community level.

Immediately following their training, presenters go into an intense and emotionally taxing process of preparation, centred around modification of the original slideshow, as well as the creation of their own identity and narrative as presenters. The intense and emotional nature of this process is rooted in the social rewards and consequences of communication, especially notions of earning and maintaining credibility.

Creating a receptive environment for the generation of trust and credibility involves preparatory tactics that preform the presenter, as well as the audience itself. These tactics range from securing family support and resources to cover the time and energy required for presenting, to more subtle shifts in communication, choosing to mention some aspects of a personal biography and not others, or arranging a receptive audience environment.

The objective of this chapter is to identify and better understand these tactics, the rationale behind them, as well as the difference between presenter and audience forms of preparation.

Credibility and "people like us"

Climate and risk communication scholars affirm the importance of trust and credibility in communicating effectively to risk audiences both in terms of message acceptance (Leiserowitz p. 56, Bingham p. 153), information processing (Trumbo and McComas, 2003, p. 343), the establishment of a two-way dialogue (Ageyman et al. p.

134), as well as discrediting climate contrarians (McCright, p. 207). Our own interviewees identified credibility as the most important factor in effectively communicating with their audiences, a prerequisite for two-way dialogue (the “new conversation”), especially given the heightened cynicism and skepticism in the public sphere around climate change:

Credibility. If you don't have that you're done. Period. Simple as that. Your reputation is the whole thing you can spend your whole life building and have it ruined in a second. It's the most important thing to me in anything. (Presenter PC)

...I feel the biggest goal in any presentation is that you're connecting with people, and if you're going to connect with them you have to build enough trust so that you're able to personalize it for them, because anytime that people, if they're really going to absorb information or change their behaviour, or want to do anything coming out of it, they have to be personalized so that it touches their heart. So it's very important that you come off as being very credible, that you earn their trust and that you seem very sincere and full of integrity. (Kathy)

Closely linked to the desire to be seen as credible, is the desire to be seen as “people like us” (as Ageyman and Moser call them, and hereafter referred to as PLUs). Environmental and risk communication literature strongly contends that PLUs are critical to relating to audiences, especially with respect to personal comfort, identity and group-internal norms and cohesion among audiences. PLUs have “greater credibility and legitimacy than those who do not know our circumstances as well.” (Moser, Ignition, p. 91). Indeed, we all experience the powerful influence of the “PLU effect” on a daily basis, both as public speakers and as members of various audiences, trying to “fit in.”

From the way we dress, to the way we talk, and what we do for a living, a wide range of signals allow us to identify and be identified as PLUs among our respective social groups, audiences and interpretive communities. Communicating and interpreting these signals is an intensely social and judgmental process. It involves picking over a wide range of social information from visual cues like body language, to vocabulary and larger messaging frames established by personal narrative in the form of biography as well as explanations for one's personal motivation in engaging in environmental politics. This process has real social consequences involving personal identity, friendships and

career prospects. It is no wonder that presenters spend a great deal of time and energy preparing for their first presentations. It also accounts for a piece of advice from Richard:

Choose your audiences strategically. Choose the audience you can make a difference on. For me it happens to be a business audience. Choose an audience that's going to relate to you, and that you can relate to and then do that, relate to them, get off the podium and relate to them. (Richard)

In terms of body language, presenters are mindful of keeping an open and welcoming physical presence (arms not folded, and never with their back to the audience). Kathy, who has studied musical theatre performance emphasizes the importance of projecting a warm and open presence, as opposed to a body rigid with tension, a discomfort that audiences quickly pick up on and internalize. A relaxed, informal demeanour is critical to engaging an audience.

Presenters also dress to match their audiences' expectations:

Image is critical, I don't care if you have the best content imaginable, if you show up at a high school looking like a piece of crap people are going to judge the message by the messenger. I'm always aware of how I appear. (Anthony)

One presenter recounted an occasion during the Canadian training when Al Gore's personal assistant called ahead to find out what people were wearing at the training – a quick real-life lesson in sartorial matching.

Most presenters attempt to dress moderately, neither “above” nor “below” their audiences. As one presenter put it, you want to be appropriate without taking away from the material. It is like telling a story on video without noticing the edits:

...when I talked to the Fish & Game club it was out at their club building which is out in the bush, so I don't think I wore jeans but I didn't wear high heels. So it was a dress down casual kind of look there. When I go to the college I try to look a little more hip maybe, so yeah sure, absolutely, I try to gear it a little bit more to the audience. (Laura)

It might sound cliché, but several presenters also emphasized the importance of developing a way to “pump” oneself up as a form of confidence building before addressing an audience. Visualization techniques (imagining memorable life moments

like summiting a mountain top), recounting past presentations and audience reactions (e.g. eyes lighting up), even listening to inspirational music, were cited by presenters as useful aids in preparing for a presentation. These preparatory tactics help to establish confidence and an appropriate tone and level of energy, which appeals to audiences.

Beyond self-awareness, various versions of self-reliance, self-confidence and determination were cited by presenters as being important throughout the continuum of presenting, from marketing the presentation itself, to addressing technical issues as well as having the confidence to build a relationship with an audience and to lead a conversation. Some credited their own research skills, interest in reading, commitment to practice and “geekiness,” in their ability to glean relevant data and stories from everyday communication (e.g. magazines, online video etc.) and to integrate those stories and data into their presentations.

Biography

Even before a presentation begins, presenters are often asked to supply a biography to event organizers, and it is common for presenters to tailor their biography based on information about a particular audience to increase the chances of being identified as a PLU. For example, Kathy, who has a public political affiliation, will remove any mention of her political work if she feels the audience will interpret it as a bias. Richard, who presents exclusively to high-level business audiences purposely downplays his passion for the issue, while bolstering his green marketing expertise. Robert has four versions of his biography, each differing by three or four lines, allowing him to tailor his background for “more technical” as well as non-technical audiences. These biographical versions or narratives, are actually unique frames that preform Robert and his subsequent approach to communicating climate change.

Robert’s example offers an interesting wrinkle for scholars like Nisbet who advocate the development and testing of climate message frames across different population segments and “targeted specialized audiences” before integrating them in media campaigns and matching them “to opinion leaders for inter-personal or online dissemination.” (Nisbet, p. 338). What the biographical frame modification and development by presenters like Robert suggests, is that scholars have overlooked an important starting point from which to begin development of wider climate messaging

frames. It would seem that the personal frame of the public opinion leader should inform the development of climate messaging frames from the start, further proof of the importance of a bottom-up (as opposed to top-down) sensibility throughout the entire communication development process. Furthermore, opinion leaders with more diverse backgrounds would appear to have an advantage in connecting to a wider range of audiences from a biographical point of view. While the environmental movement often favours specialized knowledge and messengers for framing issues, individuals with a greater breadth and depth of knowledge, should in theory, have a greater chance of successfully connecting with a diversity of audiences.

Biographical modification involves both overt and covert forms of positioning, with overt examples characterized by direct verbal self-identification. A strong overt example comes from Candace who is also a local municipal politician, in her introduction to audiences, she cites a public opinion survey about credibility:

I often build into the presentation at the beginning a story around a survey that was done on “who do you believe as a messenger?” and scientists ranked the highest. Politicians were only above people whose industry has to do with businesses that are impacting climate change, so right down on the scale of who's a credible deliverer of the message. I often point out that neighbours were ranked higher than politicians. ‘So as a politician I'm way down there, but today I'm speaking to you as a friend and neighbour and you should give me a little more credibility.’ (Candace)

The strongest examples of overt positioning are when presenters explain who they are and whom they are not, often relating to their own intention and motivation as presenters. They are not paid presenters. They are volunteers. They are not alarmists. They are concerned citizens and parents. Above all, they attempt to convey that their motivation is intrinsic, bigger-than-self, linking this orientation strongly to credibility:

It's very important that you come off as being very credible, that you earn their trust and that you seem very sincere and full of integrity, which again is one of the problems if you have a self interest that you're promoting through your presentation. People automatically distrust that, and it can be totally against your objective. (Kathy)

Perhaps most emphatically, presenters are “not an expert”:

...you tell them right off the bat that you're not the expert, you're like everybody else in the world on a journey to do good and to spread the message...I want them to understand that I'm not a scientist. (Lisa)

That's huge [trust and credibility] because there's a lot of cynicism and skepticism in this entire debate so a couple of the key points that I'll point out and make sure audiences are aware of is first and foremost I'm a volunteer. I'm not here on the payroll of anybody. This is my own time that I'm giving. I'm also not a scientist. I've learned what I've learned. I'm a media guy. I'm a businessperson and I'm a parent. I'm here because I'm someone who's been affected, who's been upset who wants to evoke change. (Anthony)

The strength and frequency of the “not an expert” sentiment, as expressed by presenters, might suggest a larger backlash against specialized knowledge and the aforementioned challenges posed by the transmission, information deficit-based model of public engagement on climate change.

“Owning” credible material

Presenters emphasized the importance of “owning” the content, making it theirs and feeling fully knowledgeable and comfortable with both the content itself, as well as presenting. The chief value of owning the material is that presenters appear confident, welcoming and appealing in their body language and demeanour. Confidence means they can shift their concentration from one of memorization and delivery of a rote presentation, to focusing on being credible, empathetic, reading the audience and communicating more effectively:

Once you know the material you can add the passion, the personal touch. You can make it your own and then you make it more effective. PowerPoint should be the accessory to your talk. Your talk shouldn't be the accessory to the slides. Until you're comfortable with the material, the material is going to dominate you. (Anthony)

“Owning” the material in the form of actual knowledge and wisdom on the subject takes time, but is a prerequisite for not just knowledge transfer, but also “translation,” a subject we discuss in greater detail in Chapter Five.

Apart from actual presenting experience, practice is the next best thing, and friends and family can be a good sounding board. Determined practice is critical for developing a confident rhythm of delivery, including timing, emotional drop points and the use of humour, as well as allowing presenters to “be themselves”:

The more prepared I feel the better...the more I've gone on I've found that it's just really about telling your own story in your own words and in your own way. I was so worried in the beginning about learning all the slides and that I understood every detail... (Laura)

Presenters also spend a great deal of time ensuring the accuracy of their content, both from the original presentation itself, as well as their own additions. According to presenters, credible content is strongly linked to audience perceptions of credibility:

I think credibility is a thing that people believe you because you don't bluff anything. I stand on facts, official reports, official data & statistics. (Simon)

Right from presentation number one if there were parts of the original presentation that I was uncomfortable with or didn't like the stand of, I took them right out at the start...In terms of sources if there's anything that's less than a credible source I just won't consider it. (Daniel)

To ensure the accuracy of their information, presenters use “only credible” scientific sources and news organizations like NASA, NOAA, the National Snow and Ice Data Centre in Colorado, the IPCC, Reuters, Globe and Mail and CNN. Some presenters are careful to footnote the sources for each slide and recommend audience members check their own information against credible and “upright” sources. Paradoxically, one presenter also likes to include relevant articles from Fox News and the National Post, describing them as “..even better because they are right wing media outlets and it's hard to find any acknowledgement of climate change from them.” (Daniel). While Daniel's tactic is understandable, if in fact certain outlets and publications are inaccurate or misleading with respect to climate change on a consistent basis (as Fox News has been), it would be advisable not to lend credence to such outlets, despite their rhetorical value.

The challenge of presenting as a source of credibility in itself

Before doing anything else, even before worrying about their biographies and “owning the material,” future would-be presenters are advised to fully appreciate the challenge of presenting. Presenters stressed making sure that one’s rationale for presenting would weather the inevitable challenges from friends and family, as well as the stresses of the role itself, including the time and money required to present. One presenter recommended writing a personal mission statement so that presenters could remember clearly why they got involved with AIT in the first place (“When you know the why, the how will come.”). A personal mission statement serves to bolster and further flesh-out the commitment that trainees make to deliver ten presentations following the AIT training. Given the seemingly high presenter attrition rate (a number of those interviewed admitted to presenting fewer than ten official presentations and commented that many more had likely dropped out), any mechanism that can further ground and motivate presenters is a good idea:

This is a great challenge, it's not easy, you're going to invest evenings, weekends, time, money and several times people will give their opinion that you are crazy, that climate change is a lost cause, that you do it for nothing. 'Why think about these problems?' they'll ask you. 'We can't solve it,' they'll say. You lose your time...instead of sleeping you'll work, instead of good times with friends you'll prepare presentations. (Simon)

Indeed, time is always in short supply, especially for over-achieving presenters. Presenters listed time, as well as the need to support their families financially, as two of the biggest constraints on their presenting schedule. Presenters who have presented to a large number of audiences typically have another breadwinner in the family who supports the presenter’s mission. One presenter singled out his wife as his greatest resource as a presenter:

My wife. She's sitting right here...the only reason I was able to take a year off is because she was working too and she could kind of sense this was really important for me and really big and she said, 'You go for it' and when it came to quitting and launching myself as a speaker/writer/consultant, she said 'Go for it.' There are lots of presenters out there who don't have that luxury. (Daniel)

Supporting a family on his wife's income while his own income became much less predictable meant that Daniel's family adopted a more frugal lifestyle. This shift was more feasible because the family was now able to save money on transportation and child care because Daniel became a stay-at-home dad when he wasn't presenting (his travel expenses in association with presenting were covered by TCPC): "It's amazing how much less you can live on if you choose to. We don't live high off the hog here. We talk the talk and walk the walk. We consume less and with that we spend less..." (Daniel). This new found frugality, as well as the generous donation of time made by presenters (time is our most valuable possession) serves as a powerful lifestyle model for audiences, as well as a means of bolstering credibility:

At the end of the day I still have to be a breadwinner for a family of six. I always joke that everyday I have to justify my existence to my wife, children and bank and not always in that order. If I was financially comfortable no matter what I did, then I would do this non-stop. (Anthony)

...all of this stuff is done at your own cost right? So it shows a level of personal commitment. Some people who are doing it, maybe their business lives are tied in and they can charge it, but most of us are taking money from our family's bank account to get ourselves to the training and you volunteer your time on top of that. So it shows a level of commitment to the message and how important you feel it is to share it with other people. (Candace)

The level of personal commitment demonstrated by presenters if communicated with tact (potentially as part of their biography) is a powerful message for countering the claims of hypocrisy ("You drive!") typically thrown by denialist, do-nothing media pundits and fossil fuel-linked think tanks, who seek to preserve the status quo. By communicating without self-righteousness or guilt-inducing morality, the very real sacrifice that presenters make in spreading the climate change message can increase their credibility.

A supportive network

A supportive network of other dedicated presenters, and even other helpful members of the environmental movement, is a critical support for both preparing presenters and maintaining their motivation to present following the AIT training. A supportive network serves at least three important functions: Emotional support and a

sense of community; learning support including development and access to expertise; pragmatic message delivery and professional opportunities. I briefly expand on these functions.

As we saw in the previous section, it isn't always easy being a presenter. Family support is critical, but even dedicated family members will have troubles understanding some of the unique challenges of presenting. Presenters can feel like a lone voice in the wilderness and they can feel a heavy responsibility to "save the world" in the face of a steady stream of worsening climate change reports and news stories. Presenters use words like "connectivity," "cohesion," and "friendship" in describing the value of their peer network.

The sense of community and social capital that the presenter network creates plays a critical role in motivating presenters to continue presenting. Presenters who feel disconnected from the network are unmotivated and talk about the challenge of getting out of a rut. Karen described an experience where she went to watch another AIT presenter, who is affiliated with an ENGO. After the presentation she introduced herself as a fellow presenter and asked if she could borrow some of the slides he and his organization had developed. The response she received was tepid and guarded, and she immediately felt deflated because the other presenter did not share her sense of sharing and community. Treating public engagement slides like proprietary information within a community is a quick way to extinguish the social capital and goodwill between presenters. Information should be shared openly, with celebrated credit for those who innovate within the community.

A supportive network also plays an important role in facilitating presenter learning, as well as providing a resource to fall back on when faced by tough audience questions. This support includes sharing information, experience, acting as a sounding board for new ideas, collaboration, and helping presenters answer each other's audience questions. As a network, the individual credibility of each member is enhanced. David relates how, when he is asked a tough question that he does not know the answer to, he can respond, "I've got a whole resource base and I'll get the answer to you." This response enhances his own credibility and shows a desire to work with the audience. This support is especially important in the face of the daunting task of developing a presentation.

Presenters cautioned newbies not to “reinvent the wheel” and to instead make use of available mentoring opportunities and to “use and abuse” other presenters’ knowledge and experience.

Lisa related a process of cross-pollination that occurred between her and a scientist at the TCPC training in Nashville. The scientist was uncomfortable with the public speaking aspects of the presentation, while Lisa, who was a local politician and comfortable with public speaking, was uncomfortable with the science. By working together, they were able to cover off each other’s respective “weaknesses.” Similar stories from other presenters suggest the value of a “buddy system” both during the training itself, as well as during subsequent presentation development.

While TCPC does employ a mentoring approach, with designated mentors (senior presenters) associated with geographical areas (e.g. Southern Ontario), the efficacy of this approach depends largely on the tenacity of the mentor in keeping the group connected, as well as the willingness of area presenters to stay in touch.

The value of a strong network includes mentor support around even basic but fundamental issues like IT. One mentor related how a newly trained presenter called him asking for support in re-formatting her newly downloaded PowerPoint presentation, which was not operating well. Without his support and knowledge of the original presentation, it is doubtful she could have presented: “How many people are out there in the same position and maybe don’t dare to ask? How many people are too far away from their mentor or don’t have any kind of IT support?” (Daniel)

Finally a supportive network has other practical and professional benefits as well. Being in close contact with other presenters allows presenters to cover for one another if a presentation conflicts with their personal schedule. This ensures the AIT message is effectively shared with the public, that the credibility of the original presenter is preserved (by fulfilling the public’s demand for a presentation, as opposed to being a “dead end”) and it preserves the possibility of spin-off presentations through word-of-mouth.

The presenter network also serves as a professional network, with some presenters collaborating on related sustainability business initiatives, writing books together, and generally making use of each other’s knowledge, resources and contacts in the sustainability community. This professional network can serve as a social safety net of sorts, especially valuable as some presenters make transitions from one career to

another. Who you know, can help soften the blow of such transitions, by helping with access to specialized knowledge, potential clients, potential employers etc.

Audience preparation

Even before a presentation begins, presenters engage in a wide range of preparatory tactics to increase their chances of having a receptive audience. These tactics include the composition of the presentation venue itself, controlling audience size and make-up, as well as advanced audience research and attempts to make “contact” before the presentation even begins.

What makes a good venue?

Every one of us has had the experience of attending a public event (for example, a wedding), finding our seats and settling in. Consciously and subconsciously we take stock of our physical surroundings. Is our chair comfortable? Do we have a good view? Can we hear well? These basic physical elements have a strong bearing on our interpretation of the proceeding event. We might even make a sarcastic comment about our situation to the person seated next to us.

When it comes to public presentations, venue is critical, even more so when the content to be discussed requires attention, concentration and might be something that is not easy to hear (in contrast to a popular film or performance). In the case of AIT, youth audiences are particularly sensitive to these basic venue elements, and presenters recommend serving food (snacks and drinks) and holding presentations in as comfortable a venue as possible, noticing considerable differences in student attention spans depending on these variables. Indeed, comfortable seats, a clear view, and adequate volume (they need to be able to see, and to hear the presentation) were listed as prerequisites for success. A 5x5 screen in front of a gym full of students doesn't work well, whereas a large backlit screen does. In cases where basic provisions are lacking, Daniel describes it as a handicap: “Without those, it's a little bit like you're writing a test but don't have a hope of getting higher than 60 or 80 percent.”

It would also be beneficial to model low carbon social innovation in the venue itself, for example green lighting, energy efficient equipment and natural materials.

A common practice for PR practitioners at press conferences is to provide food and drinks, a welcoming gesture that hopefully creates a more appreciative audience, or

at least encourages attention. One presenter associated food with being warm, present and informal with an audience, a clear sign of consideration and concern for their well being. It sounds simple enough, but presentation organizers regularly overlook basic creature comforts like food, music and comfortable chairs.

In terms of music, only a few presenters talked about integrating it into their presentations, but the anecdotal results suggest it should be a more common practice. Vicky, who presents primarily to high-school students likes to blare loud contemporary music (e.g. The Black Eyed Peas' "Let's get it started in here.") in her venues as students arrive. She finds that the volume and choice of music are a signal to students that she is not a conventional authority figure. As a 54-year-old mother of two, she feels the music makes her more relevant to students and less like a parent. She also feels it pulls their attention and relaxes them. She uses the same tactic with adult audiences, using classic songs from the 1970's, including tunes by Joni Mitchell, "Mercy, Mercy me (the Ecology)" by Marvin Gay, and songs from Pink Floyd's Dark Side of the Moon. She pairs these songs with their lyrics projected on a screen as the audience arrives, again as a way of pulling focus and increasing the relevance of the presentation.

As a larger tactic to build audience numbers and interest, Vicky has also conceived a larger sustainability education event framed as an "off-grid music festival." The festival will feature local bands and some larger, more popular musical acts. In developing the event, Vicky used an online survey and met directly with student groups (environmental clubs and global studies groups) and classrooms to find out what would interest them in a sustainability education event. The inclusion of local high-school bands, the members of whom were known by their peers at adjacent high-schools and within classrooms themselves, elicited further student buy-in, interest and even school pride in the event. This was one of the most successful audience-driven engagement efforts, encountered in our interviews.

Ideal audience size

While audience size is more often than not determined by presentation organizers, there are occasional presenter efforts to preform audiences in terms of size and make-up (the easiest way to do this is to only accept invitations to present to audiences of a certain size). While seemingly mundane, audience size is an issue that

prefigures an important debate about audience engagement, one that challenges the very efficacy of the presentations themselves.

There are two schools of thought among presenters when it comes to ideal audience size and the difference appears to be between those who are trying to inform a large number of audience members and those who are trying to more deeply engage and empower their audiences. This difference of opinion is a point of serious contention for some presenters, and is rooted in a belief that the mass awareness raising of TCPC is antiquated. These presenters believe that audiences are already aware of climate change and its potential impacts, and that it is now more important for climate change outreach to focus on audience empowerment and the generation of social capital and systemic change at a community level.

Some presenters feel so strongly about the need to empower audiences more effectively that they have abandoned their commitment to deliver ten presentations, and are instead delivering their own hybrid presentations focused on empowerment and change at the community level. This approach contradicts the dominant information sharing narrative of TCPC, which was founded as a way to personally spread the AIT message to a large number of Canadians. Inspired by its mass media origins, the project talks about its success in terms of the number of Canadians who have attended a presentation. This is prominently displayed in a counter format on the TCPC homepage (<http://www.climatereality.ca>), akin to McDonald's "Billions and billions served." The counter reads, "As of today 413,604 Canadians have attended a Climate Project Canada presentation. Help us continue to spread the word." For disaffected presenters, the AIT information deficit-based transmission model contradicts and is at odds with the personal medium of delivery.

Even the presenters who favour larger audiences prefer an average audience size of between 100 and 150: "Larger than that, it's hard, you have to work a lot harder to keep their interest and smaller than that you just don't feel like it's worth it." (Karen). The tension that some presenters feel (small audience presenters prefer a size between 25 and 45), suggests that there are significant expectations and human communication needs with smaller in-person audiences that require something more than an information-deficit based approach to communication. At a most basic level, an audience needs to be able to ask questions: "I would rather do five presentations in a day at a

school than do one super huge one and maybe miss out on somebody who wanted to ask another question” (Lisa).

Merran, who was particularly frustrated with the TCPC approach at the time of her training, gave this response when asked if there was anything she did to empower her audiences:

No, because I have never been given a framework to do that by TCPC. They focus on information sharing and dissemination as opposed to problem solving and changing people's behaviours. This was about spreading the word, and in social change speak, at some point you have to move beyond generating awareness to initiating and inspiring action, and so for me, the tendency and bias, rightly or wrongly, is always about how do we make sense of this information and how does it inspire me to do something differently [behaviour change]? People are already there. We have been talking about climate change for a decade. I suspect we need to move beyond the, "this is an urgent issue." It's still too deficit-based in my opinion, too much fear-mongering type stuff. (Merran)

In her ideal of communication for social change, Merran recommends audience sizes of less than 50 for engaged, meaningful dialogue, and smaller groups of under 20 “early leaders” if the goal is meaningful change and to get participants to ask, “What can I do in my community?” This trend towards favouring smaller audience sizes where members know each other, and discussion is richer, seems to reflect a natural preference among presenters and audiences for smaller communicative environments where social capital can be created and invested, and where public speaking is more comfortable.

The tension between the “mass media” awareness-raising approach of TCPC and the smaller, more intimate audiences and dialogue advocated by some presenters, raises questions about presenter training. Should more effort be made to attract a diverse range of presenters who can play to their strengths, especially in engaging smaller audiences, or should all presenters be trained to give stadium-style presentations? If meaningful public engagement is the goal of AIT, then it needs to embrace an approach that can cater to smaller audiences with diverse needs, as well as to larger audiences.

While some presenters prefer smaller audiences, others seem to revel in larger audiences. “There’s no audience too large for me,” says Anthony, mentioning how a rock concert promoter was hoping to bring him in to speak to an audience of 250,000 (to be

fair, Anthony has said that he is happy to present to groups of five or ten people if he knows he can “really touch them.”). While it certainly offers an opportunity for mass awareness raising, what kind of meaningful social change is possible at that audience size?

Research by McKenzie-Mohr has shown that awareness alone rarely has a causal relationship with actual emissions reduction (and as mentioned previously, information acquisition or “awareness building” can easily slip into armchair activism where information consumption becomes a substitute for real action). While there may be a political argument that as climate change becomes more salient among a larger percentage of the population, a wider range of political alternatives to the dominant growth paradigm might emerge, it is nearly impossible to extricate and connect voting preferences and behaviour change to climate change awareness campaigns. For example, if the 250,000-member audience mentioned above was polled today, the recent research referred to earlier by McAllister Opinion Research, suggests that it would be less interested in, and concerned about climate change, than a similar audience between 1996 and 2006.

Audience research

The first rule of effective communication is “know your audience” and presenters appear to have taken that to heart, spending considerable time doing advanced research on their audiences:

I try to understand the demographic before I go in. I try to talk to a number of people in the room and kind of get a feel for where they're at, what they understand, what their biases are, or not, and then that helps to determine what you're going to do. (Kathy)

There appear to be at least four key reasons for advanced audience research. First, presenter comfort and credibility - presenters want to feel like the “most informed” person in the room. Advanced research allows them to identify especially knowledgeable audience members and to co-opt them as part of the presentation. Rather than being interrupted or corrected by audience experts during the presentation, such experts become valued partners in educating the audience.

Second, presenters engage in research to assess the audience’s pre-existing

knowledge, comprehension of the issue, attention span, attitude and expectations for the presentation. This information is critical in setting an appropriate tone, as well as understanding how a tone might need to change based on real-time audience reception. One presenter asks organizers, “Do I need to convince people?” Another gives organizers an audience “spec sheet” to fill-out. The form collects information about the audience, their expertise, what they need to know and the larger message they are receiving (if part of a conference).

Third, presenters feel a strong need to include local and recent information, as well as industry and host-specific slides. This tactic ensures the presenter’s climate message is relevant and strongly anchored in the audience’s own values and frames around climate change (the importance of which is well-documented by Crompton, Nisbet and others). Indeed, presenters sometimes experience frustration or aggressive questioning when presenting to a specialized audience whose professional interests may not have been reflected in the presentation or included as a solution. For example, one presenter experienced a difficult presentation when presenting to nuclear scientists from Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL): “...they knew way more than me, well about all sorts of minute things and also challenged me on stuff so it was tough, because the presentation doesn’t include nuclear.” (Laura).

Finally, presenters engage in advanced research to inspire and empower an audience by connecting the audience’s own successes and initiatives to solutions to the climate crisis. This is an extension of appealing to, and reinforcing values and frames that have been instilled through the audience’s own progress and success in low carbon social innovation.

Audience connection

...In acting, they talk about the agreement between two actors on stage. The constant conversation you're having with the subject is 'I'm here are you there?' And so I think I'm constantly having that dialogue with an audience, 'I'm here, are you there?' (Stephanie)

Presenters often spoke of the need to establish “a connection” with their audiences. Typically described in emotional terms, a connection allows presenters to communicate information in a more personal fashion, and the quality of this connection

can determine how personal a presentation will become and how vulnerable presenters are willing to be with their audiences.

A number of presenters attempt to form a personal connection with audience members before their presentation even begins. This normally involves interacting with the audience on a one-on-one basis, introducing themselves at the door and shaking hands. In addition to establishing a connection and friendly reception before the presentation begins, one presenter found this technique useful because it allowed him to identify skeptics, establish audience archetypes (described in greater detail shortly) and it increased audience participation after the presentation:

I like to be at the door and shake hands, just to show I am human, a good guy, a citizen and 'I'm glad to speak to you, glad to share with you what I learned.' When I go on the stage the contact is already done. After the presentation a lot of people I met at the beginning, they feel free and more confident to come and make the line-up. I think the contact with the audience is very very important before the presentation and after. (Simon)

Advanced audience connection is especially useful with youth audiences. One of the most interesting tactics in this area, was a presenter's efforts to identify the "alpha" males and females in an audience and to get them on board and talking and participating in the presentation early on, "...once you've got that, you've got everyone." (Stephanie). A sure way of identifying these "alpha" students would be to talk with teachers in advance. Another possible route of investigation would be "on-the-fly" audience participation challenges, such as inviting students to volunteer for an exercise, or to finish the punch line out loud in a comedic story told in front of the audience, acts that require a certain amount of chutzpah often associated with "alpha" characters. In a similar vein, Vicky, who specializes in youth environmental education, recommends early contact with students who are already engaged in environmental and social issues either through school leadership programs or environmental and global studies clubs.

Michelle used advanced contact with her audiences to learn more about what they were interested in (an example of advanced audience research), but even if she did not plan to change her presentation based on that feedback, she found it useful because audience members felt like they had been consulted. While faux consultation is problematic and on balance inadvisable, it does demonstrate that even within the

constraints of TCPC's lecture format, there are efforts at small scale social capital generation that place presenters on a more equal footing with their audience.

Audience archetypes

I try to pick people, for example a grandmotherly type woman, who you can feel that quick emotional buy-in to what's going on, and look at her when you want to dig into the emotional part of it. But if there's what appears to be a skeptic, I would look at them when it came to someone where it might address a skeptic's issue...you can pick certain people out of an audience that you can sort of pick on and that feeds back to you.
(Robert)

Presenters described a technique where they purposely seek out certain audience archetypes that they can make eye contact with and focus on to deliver targeted messages. These archetypes can either be found in advance and connected to through a personal introduction, or they can be cued in on visually during the presentation, though a personal connection is best. This technique establishes a connection between the presenter and the archetype, as well as the people near the archetype who might also identify with them (e.g. elderly women seeing the presenter pay attention to a PLU). This technique is also useful for motivating audiences to listen as direct eye contact demands attention. The technique also appears to be a short-hand form of connecting with potential influentials and PLUs within an audience itself, and shows a presenter awareness in presenting to both traditional demographic groups, as well as "interpretive communities."

Interpretive communities are defined as "social or cultural groups," by Moser & Dilling (2007, p. 510), who, along with other climate scholars pose an important question in the previous literature review: Is membership in such groups more important than traditional demographics in influencing communication preferences? Presenter experience suggests that it may be.

Robert recounted a story from David Suzuki's biography where he talks about being in the woods and talking to a forester. Suzuki asks, 'Doesn't it bother you that you're cutting down the forest for future generations?' The forester responds by saying, "Well, I need a pay check." Robert went on to explain the importance of being mindful of an audience member's membership in a specific interpretive community. In the case of

the forester who is living pay check to pay check, you do not sell climate as an issue 20 years from now, instead you sell it as an issue happening right now with direct impacts on his livelihood (for example, the climate-linked devastation of North American forests by the mountain pine beetle).

Similarly appropriate solutions are those that can be realized within the means and expertise of audience members, for example insulating one's house and the associated savings on heating costs. Such a solution might appeal to the personal values and identity of audience members who see themselves as "handymen." As Robert says, "high-school students [another interpretive community] have their whole life ahead of them and you can talk with them about future-thinking stuff," but with blue-collar workers (he uses the example of Department of Transportation employees), "You don't get cute with guys who drive trucks all day."

Audience seeding

Presenters described a symbiotic relationship of escalating connection initially kick-started by a receptive audience, often seeded in advance by a strong local champion who helped the audience develop questions or think about the issue in advance of the presentation (e.g., a popular science teacher):

...they had been prepared I think better than any other class or group by their teacher and the teacher was a really awesome guy who could have retired last year but didn't because he loved teaching. A science teacher and he, had prepared his students and had told them to prepare questions or to prepare themselves to ask questions and they did and I told them at the end, you were the most awesome group... (Karen)

Examples of receptive audiences include tough-talking grade three students ("Let's put polluters in jail"), a welcoming church congregation, and an appreciative all-girls school which was excited to have a presenter who was the same age and gender as themselves. In contrast to these receptive, welcoming audiences, presenters complained about audiences that are forced to attend presentations (e.g. student audiences and work "lunch and learns"). Presenters strongly believe that audiences should only attend if they choose to, primarily to ensure a democratic learning process, but also to ensure a receptive audience environment.

Preparation is the invisible foundation for presenting, a prerequisite for credibility, confidence and comfort. With a support network, biography and audience research in hand, presenters begin to personalize the content of their presentation. We now turn to a deeper examination of the specific edits and changes presenters make to the original slideshow to make it their own, and to more effectively engage their respective audiences.

Chapter Four: Personalizing the Presentation

There is neither another place to know nor means of knowing these worlds except in the work of the intermediary, the reporter from the worlds: he or she deforms, selects, regroupes. What he or she has to do is to displace forces as to associate them, and any art of displacement is work. (Hennion, p. 406)

The “work” of AIT presenters consists primarily of developing their own version of the AIT presentation. This entails bringing together the world of AIT as constructed by Al Gore and TCPC, consisting of narrative, image, rhetoric and climate change risk definitions, and the world of the audience, a unique community in its own right and a subset of wider communities of anxiety, as theorized by Beck (1992). As previously stated, if I can understand the nature of work as practiced by presenters of AIT, I will begin to better understand both the presenters themselves and the audience, and by default, the nature of community-level dialogue as practiced by climate change communication messengers/intermediaries.

A significant portion of presenter interviews were dedicated to exploring modifications to the original slide show. A typical grand tour question was, “What’s different about your presentation today when compared to your first presentation?” Probe questions would then attempt to ascertain the nature of specific changes, their origin (presenter or audience initiated) and their evolution and effect in relation to audiences. Because the original slide show consists of 400 slides, and presenters must take those original 400 slides and animations and personally pare them down to 100 or fewer, there is a great deal of presentation personalization:

After a while I got a sense of what slides worked and what slides didn't, what stories of your own worked and what stories didn't work, what slides didn't make sense and what wasted time and that was an iterative experience...say I did 65 presentations, not one was the same, I tweaked every single time and I would just say it was an iterative process to learn what worked. Where do you pause? What slide does not resonate with that audience? That type of thing. (Robert)

Presenters make changes based on their own motivation to be seen as credible. They want to feel and come across as being natural – they don't want to recite things in a rote fashion. If a presenter doesn't have comfort and mastery over his or her slides, they can end up self-conscious, focusing on remembering content rather than reading the audience to see what is, and is not, working. In fact, many presenters described their first presentation as a “disaster.” These first presentations are often too long, with significant audience disturbances that suggest a failure to properly read and connect with the audience. Presenters may even skip potentially important information if they don't feel comfortable with it.

I'm putting myself in their shoes, if someone's talking to me, I want to feel credible and I want to feel comfortable with the material I'm presenting. If I've asked myself certain questions about a particular slide and I don't know where to get the information and I don't feel like looking for the answers and it's not that easy, then I'll just skip over it. (Karen)

It is this selection, regrouping and original creation of slides both on their own initiative and in response to audience feedback that constitutes the primary “work” of the intermediary, and which this chapter explores in greater detail.

Localisation

Two themes that have worked well and that I try and incorporate always: People are impacted by recent information and by local information. For example whenever I do a presentation here in Atlantic Canada, I use a map of sensitivity to rising sea levels...When people see their own community on the map you can almost hear them catch their breath... (Daniel)

Localization is one of the strongest motivators for presenter edits to the presentation and appears to fulfill at least five needs:

First, audiences respond better when they have a personal stake/interest in learning something complex. Local examples and stories motivate learning and concern about an issue. In some cases a lack of familiarity can even be a significant barrier to comprehension simply due to audience disinterest.

Second, localization taps into and builds upon pre-existing knowledge or familiarity with a subject, helping audiences to visualize issues, acting as analytical

shortcuts in the learning process. It also empowers audiences by tapping into something they already understand and are familiar with.

Third, localization keeps attention and interest. Audiences tend to zone out if something has little to do with their everyday life.

Fourth, inside local knowledge enhances the credibility of the presenter, making them seem like less of a parachute presenter and more of a PLU. For example, one presenter asks audience members in advance for a piece of local information about the community that he shouldn't know "by rights," such as the name of a local sports team, or when talking about sourcing food locally, the proximity of a nearby berry farm.

Fifth, and finally, localization is the only credible means for communicating climate impacts that are affective and can convince audiences on the need for local adaptation.

Common examples of localization relate to weather, sea-level rise and geographical and hydrological changes. The prevalence of this type of localization points to a strong intermediary sensitivity to the importance of local knowledge, to accessibility of the information (research produced by government and climate-related research centres is a favourite resource for presenters), as well as the tangible and memorable nature of major and unusual weather events e.g. droughts and floods in Alberta, and forest fires in the winter in Quebec. The purpose of these stories is to show that the climate is going out of its "natural balance" and ushering in an era of uncertainty that demands preparedness.

This focus on weather and natural disasters, as well as the need for adaptation (one presenter talked about aquifer water levels, and critiqued the development of water infrastructure in a local region) is supposed to be effective in stimulating climate action according to Kirby, Morgan, Nordhaus & Shellenberger (2007). Citing the results of a small focus group that saw climate change skeptics become supportive of "global warming preparedness" through strategic framing of the discussion, the authors claim that, "Uncertainty in the context of weather and natural disasters is therefore a stimulus rather than a barrier to action" (Kirby et. al, p. 69). Going further, they contend that, "Once people have accepted that global warming is an immediate threat worth preparing for - an acceptance that global warming preparedness shows great promise in cultivating - the question of wider action can resume, but this time without the baggage of human

culpability weighing it down” (p. 71). By focusing on “known unknowns” such as strange local weather events, presenters may be able to create consensus among audiences (even skeptical ones) on the need for action.

Perhaps one of the strongest testaments to the powerful need for localization is the fact that Hurricane Katrina was replaced by local weather examples by almost all presenters, even when local replacements were much older (e.g. replacing hurricane Katrina with Hurricane Hazel from 1954. The presenter noted that storms in the South aren't storms by the time they reach Canada). In lieu of Katrina, another presenter in Ottawa references recent local ice storms and heat waves. These edit decisions are especially remarkable because in many respects the affective imagery of Hurricane Katrina is probably more salient and recent than some of the local examples used by presenters, again, a testament to the power of local.

Localization isn't just about inclusion of local environmental impacts. It can also involve exclusion. One presenter from Alberta almost never mentions the controversial oil sands and their relationship to climate change, primarily because of their economic and cultural influence in the province. While this approach might strike some as using kid gloves to the extreme, the presenter points to an example of a previously hostile audience member she “won over” with her approach and who hopefully, once establishing a personal commitment to adapt to climate change, will seek to align his personal behaviour and other values with climate change mitigation. The research of Kirby et. al, as previously mentioned, suggests this is quite possible as audiences can think about and determine their relationship to climate change in a non-linear fashion, even working backwards from accepting the need to adapt, to accepting the need to reduce the threat in the first place (reduction of greenhouse gas emissions).

Finally, it is interesting to note the potential limitations and blind spots of localization in the Canadian context. Leiserowitz has shown that associations to melting glaciers and ice are the most salient images of global warming among the American public (and it is not much of a stretch to believe the Canadian experience is similar). The result of this association, and similarly distant image associations, is that Americans “...perceive climate change as a moderate risk, but think the impacts will mostly affect people and places that are geographically distant...most Americans lack vivid, concrete,

and personally relevant affective images of climate change.” (p. 49). Based on these findings it would seem that scientists, environmentalists and climate change advocates do themselves no favours when they use images of melting ice and polar regions to persuade audiences - a bad habit that many are unaware of: “If I was doing a Canadian presentation there'd be a whole lot more on permafrost melting and polar bears than maybe somewhere else, because that's something that Canadians identify with.”

(Daniel) Yes, Canadian audiences identify with melting ice and polar bears, but are they personally relevant? Four fifths of the Canadian population lives within 150 kilometers of the US border, thousands of kilometers away from the Arctic.

Perversely, efforts that build notions of Canadian identity around the Arctic may have the effect of focusing Canadian attention on climate impacts in an area that is part of our national identity, but that is geographically too far to be personally relevant. This might explain a seeming contradiction between the Canadian Conservative government's focus on building-up the Arctic through visits and photo-ops as part of the Canadian identity, while simultaneously undermining efforts to combat climate change both in terms of international agreements on greenhouse gas reductions, as well as supporting expansion of carbon-intensive projects at home, like the oil sands - things that will have long-term negative impacts on the people and animals that actually live in the Arctic.

Hybrid presentations

One of the unexpected findings of this research was the number of presenters who developed what I term, “hybrid presentations,” a cross between the original presentation and something else. The motivation for developing hybrid presentations is normally self-promotional, helping to achieve related business or professional goals.

Interestingly, not all hybrid presenters appear to have developed their presentation in a pre-meditated fashion. Of the presenters interviewed, only two appear to have gone into the training beforehand with the sole intention of creating their own version to help promote a social marketing business initiative of which they are both partners. Other presenters developed their presentations as part of career changes (becoming full-time public speakers and sustainability consultants); when the original presentation failed to connect with their audiences; when they themselves were unable

to feel comfortable or credible presenting the original presentation; or when their own employers felt uncomfortable with Al Gore's political brand.

Hybrid presentations offer interesting opportunities to reach beyond AIT's traditional audiences into specialized interpretive communities. At least five unique characteristics make these opportunities possible. First, *institutional support* - presenters are able to draw on their businesses' internal communications and logistical support. As an example, two presenters working with a large company have support that includes dedicated speaking promotion and event organization, an internal research department with access to consumer data from approximately 80,000 households, a professional speaking coach, and professional slide development support with an advertising agency.

Second, *audience reach* – critics have singled out Al Gore's political symbolism as a major weakness in forging bipartisan consensus around climate change. Freed of political baggage and speaking on topics of specialized interest in the vernacular of business (e.g. social marketing) presenters are able to reach and communicate with audiences they would not otherwise be able to reach with a strictly Al Gore-branded presentation.

Third, *motivation to present* – presenters who tie their own professional success or livelihood to effective public speaking around climate change are more likely to continue presenting.

Fourth, *motivation to stay fresh* – presenters tend to retain the basic climate change science (something that does not change appreciably over time), while staying up to date and constantly working on new forms of dialogue and discussion around changing economic and business contexts (e.g. the price of oil). They find new ways to relate the basic climate change messaging to the constantly evolving social context of their interpretive community - valuable thinking and research that could benefit TCPC presenters in general.

Fifth and finally, *specialized content* – one presenter, who works for a major aircraft manufacturer, has given six presentations internally to his company on climate change and aviation. He has also done several “lunch and learns.” The presenter's ability to provide unofficial, “unbranded” presentations that were less political allowed him to expand presentations within the company, which was grappling with climate change as a strategic threat to its business. Initially the company did not want to have

anything to do with Al Gore, but they have since changed their mind with the addition of a CSR department, expressing more leeway and interest in finding out what climate change means for the company.

Hybrid presentations raise a number of interesting opportunities and one important question: Is there, as another presenter has suggested, a danger that audiences will not trust the message if a presenter appears to have an ulterior motive (e.g. business promotion) above and beyond encouraging engagement with climate change? In many instances I would suggest this is a non-issue because the specialized interpretive communities that hybrid presenters speak to, often share the same ulterior motives e.g. business opportunities created by climate change. In practice, this question is also less problematic because most hybrid presenters either never claim to be presenting AIT, or will explain that only part of the presentation is a TCP presentation. They all tend, however, to identify themselves as trained presenters and use slide materials from (or materials closely inspired by) the original presentation:

To clarify, unless I specifically mention, I use them [TCP official slides] occasionally, I'll say this is partly a TCP presentation. Most of the time I don't use them, but I use similar slides showing increased CO2 with increased temperature, but not actual TCP slides...We talk a lot about reporting and disclosure issues and what it means for business and investors and talk specifically about marketing claims or business opportunities around verification issues. So really specific issues around climate change and how it's changing the legal and professional landscape and where opportunities might be to engage or where to be careful of risks... (Michelle)

One cannot help but wonder if TCPC is missing out on an opportunity to track and share success stories from these “outsider” presenters who have valuable experience to share, especially with hard to reach interpretive communities. For example, one presenter collaborated with education colleagues in her graduate program to develop a presentation that retains some of the basic science and solutions of AIT, but is based on a far more interactive and practical experience for youth audiences. The presenter found she was continually losing the attention of her youth audiences during extended periods of talk. Her presentation reflects a growing belief that the traditional lecture format is ineffective in motivating and engaging students, as demonstrated in recent studies by UBC’s Carl Wieman, who contends that, “It’s probably almost certainly

been the case that lectures have been equally ineffective for centuries.” (Munro, 2011). Wieman’s improved approach to education emphasizes interactive classes that are crafted to be interesting and personally relevant to students, as reported by Munro:

Wieman says it is ‘high time’ to abandon long lectures and PowerPoint presentations in favour of more lively, stimulating interactive classes...‘Learning really happens only if you have this very active, intense engagement’ Wieman told reporters... (Munro, 2011)

Hybrid presenters have already adapted many of Wieman’s recommendations, often tailoring their solutions specifically to the knowledge/context of their specialized audiences, as well as tying them to their future professional success, thereby making them personally relevant and engaging.

Timeliness, recency & pre-emptive address of outside news events

“This whole file is evolving so fast it’s a full time job to stay current. It’s like trying to drink from a fire hose...” (Daniel)

A common refrain among presenters is that if they were in charge of TCPC, they would have a full-time person responsible for creating slides in response to science and news updates, as well as the latest skeptic arguments:

From the first one, I think today my presentation is at least 90% update. I need to update things almost every month, some news, some facts that feel to me really out-dated. I never refer to the movie, it was produced in 2006, the facts in that movie are from 2003, 2004, 2005, really really far. I prefer to use recent news, recent facts that I get in the news, some clips and pictures from YouTube. I show [the present state] of the world...the general scenario...I just update the content and statistics. (Simon)

The intense desire to stay up to date with the latest news, research and statistics (e.g. mentions of major climate studies, and new studies on polar bear population health) is rooted in at least three key beliefs:

First, that recent and local news is important for breaking through the smugness or nonchalance of audiences about environmental issues, especially audiences that have been lulled into a false sense of environmental leadership through political

advertising (this is the situation in Quebec according to Simon). Local and recent headlines can help establish local problems that require action.

Second, audiences need to constantly be reminded that climate change is still happening. Out-dated slides might suggest things haven't changed much. Audiences respond with the realization "Oh yeah!" when confronted with recent local headlines, possibly building trust, credibility and personal interest in the presentation.

Third, presenters feel the need to appear up-to-date. As previously discussed, presenters are highly sensitive to audience perceptions of their knowledge, expertise and credibility.

In speaking with some presenters, the apparent time and effort they spend in staying abreast of the latest climate news feels out of proportion relative to what audiences might actually require in terms of recent news (especially when we consider the issue of complexity, as discussed in the next section). Indeed, some presenters appear to be part of a highly charged, insular climate news community, as demonstrated by efforts to pre-empt climate news events that audiences haven't even heard about:

...it's funny because I talked about the Glaciergate...that's something I read up on and was very interested in, and I felt very comfortable about talking about Glaciergate, but every time I started talking about it, I'd ask if anyone heard about it, but not one person ever had. I could have just not said anything. (Vicky)

In working to stay up-to-date, presenters need to stay mindful of the actual information needs and interests of their audiences. For all their insistence on not being "experts," they can quickly become what they most fear, if they devote too much time staying up to date with the latest outlying skeptic arguments or debates. By wading into specialized debates, unprovoked, and using specialized jargon, they have the potential to inadvertently create artificial barriers to engagement between themselves and their audiences, while also legitimizing and popularizing otherwise unknown skeptic arguments. These are all risks of the knowledge/ignorance paradox as conceived by Ungar, a subject we engage more fully in Chapter Five.

Shortened & simplified

Presenters are taught in their training to manage the complexity budget. To help manage this budget, presenters shorten and simplify various presentation elements:

...there comes a time when you just have to give the gist of the issue, and maybe that's why I go straight to the pattern as opposed to the numbers, because if you get bogged down in the details you lose them, you lose your chance to communicate... (Karen)

Indeed, the greatest motivation to shorten and simplify is to maintain audience attention and comprehension, abilities that respond in an inverse fashion to longer and more complex presentations. Presenters even risk losing their own enthusiasm for the material:

...I also found that some of the complex stuff I had to nuke because you lose people, but your sense of enthusiasm and sense of presentation gets lost too because you're trying to figure out how to explain all this to a bunch of people who aren't quite getting it. (Robert)

Charts and diagrams can be some of the worst offenders with some presenters finding audiences "extremely unresponsive" to them, linking their use to a rise in disturbances during high-school presentations. Indeed, youth appear to have an especially sensitive complexity budget. One presenter relates how she had to "learn the hard way" that the original one-hour presentation was not connecting with her youth audience:

It was killer. It was totally killer. Afterwards I realized when kids asked questions they had missed a huge amount of information, even if they were listening and paying attention. But it's a lot of information for a high-school kid who is being introduced to this for the first time, even a step-by-step explanation is a lot to take in. (Stephanie)

Ironically, presenters who are most committed to public speaking find themselves challenged in managing the complexity budget, precisely because they like to talk:

...I am a scientist, from time to time I forgot that most people cannot read a chart, sometimes I realize people didn't follow me, so I'd skip that slide and replace it with other things. The best thing I use is pictures, with

pictures it's easy to talk for minutes and minutes. The bigger challenge is usually the time budget. I can speak for hours...so a little speech of one hour is very very short for me. It's a big challenge to get everything into it. (Simon)

In general, presenters emphasize the use of visuals, short videos, animated cartoons, analogies and storytelling, more impacts on people, animals and invasive species. For example, Karen uses a picture of a woman gathering water in a Himalayan watershed to accompany time lapsed slides of ice recession in that area. She finds that audiences are better able to connect through the woman's personal story. These strategies better accommodate the diverse learning styles and personal interests of audiences and also free-up time for more persuasive presentation elements.

Presenters also advocate the removal of jargon, ideally aiming for a grade six reading comprehension level:

I used to have slides about ice and measuring ice and the layers, I found that students really don't get that and neither do people. For some people they need the technical but I haven't presented to a group that was completely technical, so the people want to hear words they understand, things they understand... (Karen)

Presenters also recommend keeping the science and impacts shorter while including more solutions. One presenter prefers "very easy solutions," published on his website. His goal is "just to show that they exist" and to send audiences to his website for more information and details.

The other major motivation for simplification of the slideshow is briefly touched on by hybrid presenters who attempt to free-up more time to cover their own material. These presenters still rely on TCP slides to cover the basic "climate change is happening" story and to do this quickly they favour visuals as well: "...some of the most visually compelling slides like the Arctic Ocean ice cover and things that tell the story visually right away." (Steve).

The trick in using simplification is to convey the right amount of information: too little and you risk misinforming the audience, too much and you risk losing them altogether. Climate change communication scholars like Moser believe the balance is

somewhere in the middle, pointing out that fundamentally flawed understandings of climate change (like blaming it on ozone-depleting chemicals) will lead to misguided solutions, but also that information alone will not produce behaviour change. In fact, acquiring more information about an environmental issue can sometimes lead an audience to believe that they've done something about the issue – a form of armchair activism (Coppola, 1997, p. 10). Indeed, attending a complex and depressing climate change presentation could well feel like doing one's part for the issue.

Participation and opportunities for taking action

While the lecture format of AIT does not lend itself to natural audience participation, presenters have found ways to integrate more opportunities, ranging from drastic modifications to the presentation format itself (e.g. breaking into groups, encouraging audience brainstorming etc.) to inserting more opportunities for questions and discussion, including pre-emptively asking typical questions to stoke participation, personal involvement and stories from the audience:

If not a single hand goes up, what I would do, is say, 'Well, I do a lot of these, and I get questions all the time, so here are some of the most common questions that I get.' Take the lead...a lot of people ask them..and that might trigger other questions or make the audience more comfortable...you can always ask, 'Does anybody have any personal experience with this?' (Kathy)

The reverse of this problem can occur in forced attendance situations (e.g. school assemblies) where Hannah was sometimes reluctant to ask a question because rowdy high-school students would shout out answers and it took five minutes for the audience to calm down again (though the restrictive lecture format deserves a large share of responsibility for this as well).

Perhaps in response to youth sensitivity, some of the most interesting developments in encouraging participation and action have been in presentations to youth, where the traditional lecture format is abandoned in favour of greater interaction and co-generation of knowledge.

Presenters specializing in youth audiences stress the importance of finding ways to connect youth to the larger climate movement through easy and accessible channels,

helping them to see a path to taking action immediately. For example, Stephanie gets youth to brainstorm ideas for action that they can undertake, and then gets them to sign pledges that they can put on their fridge as reminders of what they were committing to in the first place, and why. This pledge action has been one of the most effective means Stephanie has found to maintain youth energy and engagement. In addition to the pledge, Stephanie has students write letters to their local representatives and pick one action they can engage in later that day (e.g. checking to see if light bulbs at home are CFLs, or reminding parents not to idle their car), thereby engaging students in early action before they even leave the room.

The importance of this approach is affirmed by our review of social capital, environmental citizenship and community-based social marketing literature. Indeed, experiencing diverse forms of action that confirm self-efficacy and collective efficacy, early on in life, should be the highest aim of climate change communicators. Audience members who have taken action and had a positive experience are more likely to engage in subsequent action and behaviour change, and to be more receptive to environmental communication appeals in the future.

In terms of making action seem more accessible and down to earth, presenters also make a point of discussing and celebrating their audience's behaviour change successes (no matter how modest). This gives the audience an important sense of self-efficacy and accomplishment, and shifts their identity from passivity, to engaging in action to combat climate change. Providing a wide range of potential actions is important:

People are more likely to change their behaviour if you give them enough things that they can do, so that they can find something they identify with. My goal with doing presentations is to get them to do one thing when they leave, and some people believe that that's too small of a goal, but I believe if you can get people doing something in their daily life where they're thinking and actually connecting it to climate change, that it will snowball. (Kathy)

Finally, several presenters stressed the importance of keeping presentations brief to maintain audience empowerment and interest in participation: "It's all important information and you feel like you can't cut any of it out, but it's very easy to talk too long

and then even though you've got them on board, they just want the thing to be over with." (Stephanie).

Solutions

I can tell you right from the start I thought this presentation is excellent but it's weak in the solution end of things. It really raises awareness but doesn't tell them what now. Right from the start I shortened it and added a whole solutions piece, right from the first presentation. If you get peoples' attention and then say, 'Here's the problem and good bye,' it's a real let down... (Daniel)

Solutions are viewed as one of the most critical elements of the presentation, but also one of the most underdeveloped sections. It has been widely acknowledged by presenters and by TCP, itself that the original presentation did not offer enough in the way of solutions. Despite this feedback, a dedicated solutions update was not provided until late June 2010. A number of presenters who attended this training felt that it still missed the mark in terms of providing accessible, prescriptive actions that audiences could engage in:

...the people we're speaking to are pretty familiar, fairly informed and I don't know that [the solutions slides] are introducing anything new...you've convinced them at this point. You've convinced them that you know what you're talking about. They want you to take all this information that you've been talking about and make an informed decision for them about what they should do. They've heard the debate about hybrids. They've heard the debate about hydro. They want you to have decided how you feel about it, so that they can feel that way about it too, but that's not what the [solutions] slides do. (Stephanie)

Presenters who seemed most prepared with solutions and who made their edits easily, typically brought in solutions from outside organizations, either through their own business/consulting practice, complimentary NGOs (e.g. David Suzuki Foundation) or in one case, a provincial climate change marketing campaign. The reliance on outside solution sources emphasizes the inadequacy of the original solutions section, while the fact that presenters undertook edits despite concern about adhering to the original presentation is a testament to the strong need presenters and audiences have for solutions.

Harkening back to the issue of complexity as well as the social change communication maxim of increasing motivation while simultaneously reducing barriers, Stephanie feels the solutions slides themselves create barriers for audiences. She feels they do this by including too many details and pros and cons, as opposed to prescriptive recommendations. The desire to explain solutions in great detail and to address specialized climate issues (e.g. the relationship between ethanol production and the price of corn) quickly runs up against the audience's complexity budget and wades into areas that audiences are unfamiliar with, and that may not be relevant to behaviour change:

Right now they [solutions slides] present a lot of options, but in complex ways: 'Right now geothermal is a technology that may be developed in an economical way in 10 - 15 years,' and blah, blah blah. 'A wind turbine works like this and nuclear like this, and they've installed solar panels here.' 'You're giving me a lot of problems and they seem very expensive.' They present a lot of hurdles to solutions. Honestly that's people's problem with acting on climate change in the first place. They're thrown way too much information and they're thrown new information almost daily. For example, 'I thought biofuels were a good idea but they're not. What am I supposed to do? I thought ethanol was a good idea you got a bunch of legislation for it, I'm just gonna keep driving my car because that's really straight forward.' And I think the solutions section might contribute to that. It presents the pros and cons of the solutions way too much and it needs to be a 1,2,3,4,5 go home do this, this, this, this, this. (Stephanie)

Presenters also identified the solutions section as the place where they adopt an upbeat emotional persona. In one case, a presenter described the solutions section as the place where he manages the "emotional" budget, using it to right any emotional unbalances the rest of his presentation may have created:

The solutions are for me the most important part of the presentation, sometimes not the longest, but the most important and the part where I invest more energy, more enthusiasm, more hopes. For me it gives nothing to speak about a problem if you don't have some ideas for solutions...a way to close the presentation...I use that part to deal with the emotional budget. (Simon)

I think I have a fair amount of emotion in mine in the beginning and in the end just in terms of connecting with people to have them understand that I'm genuine and that I care about this and that I'm relatable to them, and I think at the end it's really important to feel the power of making that point,

that point we have to drive home and making it in a strong way at the end that is heart felt. (Vicky)

The upbeat emotion of this section is designed to empower audiences and typically includes an emboldened call for action, often motivated by the fate of future generations, suggesting that with determination, anything is possible:

You try to end it [the presentation solutions section] off on an emotional note and personalize it, 'and the main message I want you to go home with today is that it doesn't matter who you are where you are what kind of background you have, whatever. The whole thing is that if you care enough to keep trying you will make a difference and together we can turn this around and really be able to address climate change and make a better future for us and for future generations.' So, you want to end on an appeal if you can. (Kathy)

In some cases, presenters cite their own success in becoming presenters, or the fact that they are presenting with determination, as evidence of efficacy. Presenting and talking about the issue become almost an end in themselves. This approach risks confusing dialogue on the issue with action (though dialogue, as we have seen, is clearly a pre-requisite for action).

In contrast to the presenters who feel that an upbeat solutions section is a powerful send-off for audiences, there is a group of presenters much less confident of the impact of their presentations:

So I often ask myself when we give presentations and we give solutions there's absolutely no incentive, there's none of that. We're just giving the message. We don't measure if they actually do it. Does it even sink in, does it resonate, do they agree? And I find that there might be a more targeted approach. We might have a more unified approach and saying 'These are the three things that we ask people to do,' as opposed to being all over the map, (a whole slew of solutions) instead of focusing. (Karen)

Presenters sounded frustrated and uncertain about their own impacts in the absence of concrete measurement and feedback about audience behaviour change. One presenter felt that she was connecting with only 1 out of 100 audience members in the absence of strong solutions slides. These sentiments also suggest that the project's own failure to

develop adequate solutions slides, as well as a two-way public engagement model for discussing those solutions with community audiences, is taking a toll on the presenters themselves.

As the bearers of “bad news” with no place to give audiences to go, presenters, despite their passion and commitment, can begin to experience the same cognitive dissonance their audiences do, triggering defensive psychological responses and undermining their will to present. Indeed, one presenter suggested that TCPC’s desire to control messaging as well as the lateness of the solutions training, may have resulted in some presenters being turned-off or dropping out, due to an inability to innovate and respond to audience needs:

The organization all along has tried very, very hard to control the content of what’s officially allowed, which has also negatively impacted the presenters in being able to feel that they could create new things and share them with other people...I think that for some of the presenters that may in fact have been the straw that broke the camel’s back....Al Gore created *An Inconvenient Truth* in 2006 and there was only minimal adjustment to the solutions part of the presentation. He’s only doing the solutions training in a couple weeks [June 2010]. (Kathy)

Finally, these sentiments suggest that in addition to more adequate solutions and forms of public engagement, presenters need to be provided with more hopeful (and scientifically-sound), constructive messages. So much energy and focus is spent on the risk side of the climate equation that the solutions side is anaemic and non-prescriptive. For citizens to make personal changes, they need to know where they are starting from. Carbon and ecological footprint calculators that would seem a prerequisite for personal action are not well publicized and rarely touted by environmental advocates. Indeed, this appears to be a serious blind spot of public engagement advocates, one with ramifications for the credibility of what they are asking of citizens, governments and corporations.

In order to have hope we need to know what hope looks like. What exactly is credible low carbon social innovation? What are we striving for? Carbonfootprint.com says we are striving for a carbon footprint of two metric tons per capita in order to avoid a two degree Celsius increase in temperature (a threshold climate scientists say is crucial for avoiding the worst effects of climate change). Currently, the average American produces almost ten times that amount.

Various reports on climate change break carbon footprints down into the major emission sources, including recreation and leisure, food and home heating etc. Interestingly the actions advocated for by public engagement programs like AIT, for example, replacing light bulbs and car-pooling, while still valuable, actually fall into categories with already lower emission contributions. While these actions are symbolic and something the public can readily identify with, they can also be misleading in painting a less than accurate picture of what truly effective low carbon social innovation looks like.

Scholars say that effective climate communication must encourage personal change as well as demand for regulation. A well-informed and realistic personal effort to reduce carbon footprints could serve as an educational tool for showing citizens the limits of their own personal efforts and when government regulation is necessary (e.g. reducing power consumption but making the jump to demand renewable sources of energy when coal-powered electricity puts a hard limit on further personal reductions).

Edits in response to audience feedback

Audiences do not typically make specific requests for content changes. When audience feedback is received, it is normally after a presentation, by an interested audience member, often with a strong personal or professional interest in particular subject matter or solutions (e.g. forest experts providing feedback on bark beetle slides, or a geo-thermal installer seeking to improve a presenter's explanation of heat pumps). Sometimes audience members will complain about too much focus on one area (e.g. glacial melting) but that kind of feedback is rare. This can be attributed largely to the mass lecture style format of the presentation, a significant drawback in engaging the public.

The most substantive and direct feedback between presenter and audience is during the presentation and is based on audience reactions to presentation elements. This feedback includes verbal and non-verbal cues. Presenters talk about “reading the audience,” being aware of body language (is the audience welcoming or are they being forced to watch the presentation?), energy and interest, as well as emotional responses in managing the hope and despair budgets. Audience cues can include children losing focus and “acting up,” or audience members asking questions about disconcerting

information, laughing and even crying. “Ooohs” and “aaahhs” signify a popular or interesting slide that presenters tend to retain, believing slides that elicit emotional responses build “confidence” with their audiences. One presenter found that a polar bear image meant to elicit sympathy and concern about melting arctic ice did the opposite, causing a student audience to laugh at the polar bear’s predicament. The presenter quickly found a new image.

In terms of post-presentation feedback, TCPC provides presenters with feedback forms at their training, and a template to print more when they run out. Despite the existence of this form, there is little evidence that presenters use it. One presenter had developed his own feedback form, and another presenter mentioned using the original form but eventually abandoned it because she did not see the value in it, believing the questions were too general (the feedback wasn’t valuable), and that TCPC itself wasn’t truly interested in the feedback organizationally.

This lack of presenter participation in collecting feedback is something that should be investigated and remedied. The risk of not doing so is potential disillusionment among presenters. Indeed, some are already there, feeling as though they are operating in a vacuum, demoralized and unsure of their impact. As overachievers deeply committed to making a difference, presenters need to have a concrete sense of achievement beyond audience numbers. In the absence of measurement, presenters are making their own estimations of efficacy:

I often ask myself why do we give presentations? And that goes back to when I was saying that I love to measure. We're not measuring any impact, we're not asking them, 'Has this changed your life, behaviour, attitude, values in any way? And if the answer is no, well why are we doing it? And so that's what I find difficult, that there's no follow-up. We don't know if we're changing anything, you know? I find sometimes we are acting in a vacuum, there's no follow up so I find that difficult...and I'm sure to a certain extent, we're not changing behaviour. (Karen)

Karen’s sentiment, one shared by others, suggests that even a basic measure of behaviour change, conducted by either follow-up surveys or even anecdotal reporting between presentation organizers and TCPC, would go a long way to giving presenters a sense of accomplishment. Some grounding for presenters is critical, especially in light of

the fact that many of the conditions that made the public reception of the AIT message a success in 2006, have significantly eroded since then.

In the absence of formal measurement and feedback, other presenters are assessing their engagement and defining success based on the criteria closest at hand, including how engaged, emotional and attentive an audience is. These presenters place special emphasis on whether audiences ask questions and engage them in conversation during or after the presentation. Presenters feel they have achieved success if they have “touched people,” made them think, generated an “aha moment,” or heard anecdotal reports of audiences “buzzing” afterwards:

...a success for me is if I know there are people out there who are talking about the subject matter and really having legitimate discussion. Maybe if I gave them that "aha moment." If I resonated into their subconscious...
(Anthony)

This ability to generate real and “legitimate” discussion, according to Ungar (2007), is valuable in creating issue cultures and developing bridging metaphors to decode scientific problem definitions like climate change, and to bring them into conversation with popular culture so that they can become recognized social problems. Central to this process is “lay theorizing,” a process characterized by the fact that people learn more from other individuals than from any other source (Ungar cites Dunwoody and others). “It is conversational presence, encompassing things like talk radio and informal talk related to mundane practices, rather than media coverage per se, that can put an issue in the air and let it acquire a life of its own.” (2007, p. 83).

Presenters also used their own personal feelings following a presentation as a measure of success. One presenter paid attention to how energized she felt after a presentation. As an extrovert, her own energy and motivation in speaking comes from feeding off the energy of the crowd. Anthony contended that if he wasn't sweating and feeling like he'd just had a workout at the end of presentation, then he hadn't done it properly. “Roaring crowds” were his definition of success.

In addition to qualifying the actual intent and effect of personal edits, this chapter demonstrates the importance of supporting presenters in their role as editors, shaping

and moulding official risk communication in ways that make it more credible, accessible, acceptable (avoiding defensive reactions from the audience) and effective (increasing notions of audience efficacy). Shifting content and time to focus on solutions appears to be a universal edit, and in this vein, presenters spoke of the need for real-life examples of low carbon social innovation. By enabling increased cognitive engagement as well as empowering audiences with credible solutions (in the absence of such solutions, both presenters and audiences feel powerless and become demoralized), personal edits set the table for stronger affective engagement, the communicative process to which we now turn.

Chapter Five: Affective Engagement

This chapter delves more fully into affective engagement and the tactics and strategies presenters use to engage their audiences on an emotional level. Specifically, we examine the use of, and relationships between narrative, emotion, humour, rhetorical strategies, analogies and metaphors, and how presenters deal with climate skepticism. These are the basic and more advanced mechanics of conversation and engagement, and each section suggests implications and new departures in strategy for those engaging the public in community-level dialogue – the new conversation.

At the outset of this chapter, it is important to acknowledge a major pedagogical disagreement between the mass audience transmission model approach to public engagement, as practiced by TCPC, and the community-level approach advocated for by a number of AIT presenters, and strongly stressed by communication scholars in our literature review. This disagreement produces a palpable tension on the part of intermediaries. It manifests itself in a variety of ways, including presenter uncertainty about the efficacy of the presentations, presenters making tangible changes to the format of the presentation, and presenter failure to deliver the agreed upon ten presentations, instead developing hybrid versions of their own. While this pedagogical difference was expressed in varying ways by a number of presenters, Merran, a professional community mobilizer, was especially insightful, devoting a significant portion of her interview to the topic:

Put it this way, what worked, what got Al Gore a Nobel Peace Prize and what got him an Academy Award was that he was the creator of a very powerful message that spoke to the masses, and he was able to cut through some of the scientific jargon and no one else had done it quite that way. That's Al Gore, that's him. I'm not Al Gore, so why should I be delivering Al Gore's presentation? (Merran)

At the core of Merran's criticism is a belief that the AIT presentation does not translate well to community-level public engagement, for three major reasons:

First, the presentation is static. Presenters don't feel like they have permission to substantively change the slideshow to make it their own, and as a result, feel that the presentation fails to respond to evolving audience needs, namely strong solutions focused on community-level responses to climate change:

They [TCPC] wanted us to present it as is, they wanted us to make very few modifications. The reality is this, if you want to mobilize people you have to allow that message to grow and spread and remain current, nothing is static, so their ability to be dynamic, they need to recognize that the audience is different. (Merran)

Second, local audiences want a dynamic conversation where they can share their own concerns, expertise and ideas:

People are going to want to come out and share, not listen. They'll listen to Al Gore; they want exchange with me, so there's a real difference. People in community [intermediaries] especially don't want to feel like they're better or know more than their audiences, it's not like I'm Al Gore. (Merran)

This last sentiment strongly expresses intermediary concern about connecting with their community as PLUs, rather than "higher-than-thou" presenters. It also raises questions about the pros and cons of using celebrities like Al Gore to attract and inspire presenters, while avoiding a notion on the part of audiences and presenters themselves that they are "special" because they spent a weekend training with a famous public figure.

Third, and finally, Merran felt that the training did a good job of *transferring* knowledge, but it didn't do a good job of *translating* it for presenters, a contention Merran applies to TCPC's approach to audiences more generally. Merran felt that only those presenters with a previous professional environmental background could "run" with the AIT material as presented. She and others had to spend considerable time translating it to a point where they could feel that they "owned" the material (comfortable and able to present it with conviction), and some never got there. Merran herself gave up on the original AIT presentation, stopping after only three, but went on to present many more in the form of hybrid presentations:

What's more important is providing your early leaders with the ability to take the information, feel like they own it and then inspire them to spread it. They [TCPC] inspired me to spread it, but they didn't allow me, or provide me with the tools I needed to be able to spread it in a way I could feel comfortable spreading. (Merran)

At the close of our interview, Merran outlined a counter framework for public engagement, much closer to the ideals surveyed in our literature review. Merran's model is based on, "moving people from data, to information, to knowledge, to shared wisdom." Along this continuum, Merran felt that the AIT approach spent too much time in the earlier stages of data and information transfer, both for presenter training and public engagement. While necessary in the early stages of understanding a problem (the cognitive dimension of public engagement), Merran felt that audiences were past that stage and now needed the kind of affective and behavioural connections (the other two components of public engagement as per Lorenzoni et al.) that can only be achieved through community level dialogue, the place where shared knowledge or shared wisdom is generated and "embedded in the system so that it lives beyond the individual." She defined shared wisdom as "the ability for two people or two groups to come together and get those 'aha moments' or collective realizations of 'Yeah, this is good, I want to do something about this,' a shared process of "awakening" and acknowledgment that the new wisdom is owned by the group.

In terms of practically operationalizing her model of climate dialogue, Merran listed four guiding principles: 1) share a little bit of science, 2) listen to the tone of the conversations and the inquiry and the questions, 3) don't get into the debate of the substance of the issue, 4) try and keep it at the community level focused on future visioning e.g. 'What can we as a community do to honour our commitment to caring about the environment?'"

Describing a successful workshop presentation, Merran emphasizes a two-way dialogue highly conscious of audience attention span (20 minutes max "unless you're Al Gore or Nelson Mandela"). She recommends a 20 minute PowerPoint with lots of small group dialogues and then plenary dialogues to exercise audience members' brains and to "co-create knowledge" (suggestions that are consistent with our previous discussion around new forms of audience participation anchored in the findings of Wieman). As opposed to focusing on the risk message, the focus should be on setting context,

providing just enough research and information and then shifting to “Where to from here?” Merran asks audience members to offer examples of climate change issues they’re experiencing in their community as well as possible solutions that might benefit the group:

Gore’s message, like it or not, scares the shit out of people, and I’m not a deficit-based thinker, so his message doesn’t connect with me, because fair enough you had me at ‘climate change.’ What I want to know is what can I do about it? Most people are past the this is a good idea, people want to get into the ‘So what?’ of this, ‘What are you asking me to do?’

From this point of view, Andrea Reimer’s “bottleneck” metaphor becomes much clearer: environmental groups and other public communication campaigners aren’t keeping pace with the public who are willing and wanting to go further. The community-level dialogue about solutions just isn’t there. The social capital that can fuel low carbon social innovation is abandoned in favour of the quick and easy (but largely ineffective) transmission model of communication. The result is a ratcheting-up of public concern without giving it a place to go. This ultimately results in denial and other psychological defense mechanisms, a contributing factor no doubt in the dramatic drop in public concern about climate change in Canada (as observed by McAllister Opinion Research) from 2006 onwards, and that shows little sign of abating (at least not thanks to the usual climate change communication suspects).

Significantly, Merran relies on a values proposition approach to engaging with her audience (very much in line with the intrinsic values research of Crompton and others):

I challenge people to be thinking about their role in the global community, because if they have a value like respect in their values statement, I ask them point blank, “Well does this extend to the environment? Does your commitment to respect of others or respect of place or respect of diversity, does that respect extend to the environment?”

By asking these questions out loud and getting employees to answer, Merran is able to produce a collective understanding of whether or not a particular value extends to an organization’s relationship with the environment. If the response is incongruent, employees who hold such values may take-up the issue in an attempt to better align

workplace action with those values, and will organize car pools, or ethical purchasing policies and volunteer days. They might also explore incentives for motivating action, as well as barriers that need to be removed to encourage sustainable behaviour e.g. showers for active transportation to work.

Narrative

Climate blogger Joseph Romm believes a key part of the failure of public engagement with climate change can be attributed to poor use of rhetoric on the part of climate scientists, and those who communicate their findings. He draws a sharp line between logic, “the art of influencing minds with the facts” and rhetoric, “the art of influencing both the hearts and minds of listeners with the figures of speech.” (2010, p. 183). In other words, climate science is good at logic and facts, but not so good at creating affective or behavioural connections to the issue. Scientists typically trade in unemotional, policy agnostic pronouncements.

Faced with climate denialists who are adept at using rhetorical figures, especially simplicity and repetition, climate advocates must embrace more affective and behaviour change-supportive communication. While the AIT training does provide intermediaries with some rhetorical tools, they are largely counter arguments and analogies developed to combat skepticism. Beyond this, presenters have developed new rhetorical devices and strategies of their own, largely in the form of personal stories, which are themselves composed of various rhetorical elements. These vignettes and personal flourishes are the places where presenters are actually encouraged by TCPC to make the presentation “their own” (albeit still within the slideshow’s cookie-cutter format). This approach is modeled after the use of Al Gore’s own personal narrative in breaking up the science of his slide show, and crucially, building an emotional connection with audiences.

Some observers attribute the success of AIT to Al Gore’s personal narrative, woven throughout the film. This narrative was developed in close association with Director Davis Guggenheim, who oversaw the empathetic characterization of Al Gore. Guggenheim stressed the difference between live stage performance, where there is an element of dramatic tension and human connection, “that keeps your attention,” and a movie where that same connection must be created. Gore related the process of characterization in an interview with Grist magazine: “He [Guggenheim] explained to me

that you have to create that element on screen, by supplying a narrative thread that allows the audience to make a connection with one or more characters. He said, ‘You’ve got to be that character.’” (Roberts, 2006).

In addition to being a structural storytelling technique, Al Gore’s personal vignettes are also a meticulous rhetorical strategy, consisting of melodramatic and comedic rhetorical frames and figures of speech. These personal vignettes serve to overcome the audience’s own unique “mental obstacles,” as Gore calls them, mental barriers and rhetorical resistances that may impede audiences in fully engaging with climate change.

Everyman narratives

Presenters work hard to develop their own positional narratives, drawing inspiration from some of Al Gore’s narrative approaches. Gore uses the vignette dealing with his near-miss loss of the 2000 U.S. presidential election to make himself more human. He talks about it as a “heavy blow,” and offers his famous and humble introduction at the beginning of the slideshow, “I’m Al Gore, I used to be the next President of the United States.” It is a humorous and very honest admission of personal defeat, designed to bring him down to earth. Presenters use similar admissions of “not being perfect” to empathize with their audiences, either admitting to not always adhering to a low carbon lifestyle, or admitting to not knowing all the answers to audience questions (know-it-alls aren’t trusted by audiences). Karen showcases her own process of learning and behaviour change to achieve this effect:

I do talk about the fact that I’m not a vegetarian and that I will never be a vegetarian but I’ve reduced my meat intake by about 60% and I talk about my ‘aha moments’...the reason I do that is to show them that I, like them, came into this not knowing that much.

Karen’s subtle “everyman” tactic strongly reinforces that she is “not an expert” and also invites the audience to learn fresh on the heels of her own recent learning, making the knowledge seem fresher (possibly more credible) and also more accessible.

Parental narratives

In one of his personal vignettes, Gore talks about the near-death of his son in a car accident. He uses the story to foreground parental concern for future generations, the fragility of life, and the origin of his strengthened determination to fight climate change. Children are also a common story element among presenters and appear to serve at least three key positional purposes.

First, they demonstrate concern for future generations, including notions of innocence, vulnerability and lost opportunity (e.g. a future biologist might not be able to study certain species that go extinct because of climate change):

I talk about my personal situation with two children and that gets people. You know when you talk about kids and next generations it hits home right? I'm getting choked up about it now for crying out loud...so you put that spin on it and talk about why you're so driven and you pull on their emotional heart strings there a bit I guess. (Laura)

Second, they create an empathetic connection with other parents, drawing a line to their parental role and in the case of presenting to younger audiences, making sure youth know that the presenter has children of his or her own: "...especially with kids they find it interesting to know I have kids at home very much like them." (Vicky)

Third, they justify the motivation to present, making it a bigger-than-self cause:

...'I could never have guessed I'd be speaking about the environment, and the reason is that it's just logic. I'm worried and now that I have kids of my own I'm really worried. As a parent I'm really hoping that this will go away on its own and I really hope one day I'll wake up and it's been disproven and I can just go back to doing a 9-5 job and won't have to worry about this.' (Daniel)

One example of parental positioning that is particularly powerful is a story told by Robert who explains how he and his wife began writing a journal to their unborn daughter a few months before her birth.

Before her birth they put the journal in a time capsule and they plan to give it to her on the day of her high school graduation. When his daughter was born, Robert described an epiphany when he realized the world could well be an inhospitable place by the time his daughter graduates, on account of climate change. From that moment on

he realized he needed to do more, transitioning from plans to manufacture auto-parts, to full time climate change mitigation efforts (energy auditing, teaching, writing and eventually presenting AIT).

Another male presenter told a similar story of having epiphanies at the birth of each of his children. One wonders if this positional storytelling might also serve as a justification for a public intervention, and appeal for empathy, that might otherwise not seem very masculine.

These stories cast the presenter as a protective father/hero with a responsibility to protect future generations. Fighting climate change becomes parental instinct as opposed to moral or environmentalist ideology. As a personal narrative, it invokes one of our society's highest moral callings - parenthood (on par with military service - "life for country") - and therefore makes it difficult, if not impossible, for opponents to question one's personal motives or moral consistency in advocating action on climate change. It is a strong, persuasive personal narrative that should be used more broadly as a rhetorical tactic.

For presenters without children, a similar protective role can be invoked by citing extended family members' children. The key to this melodramatic frame appears to be the power dynamic and vulnerability differential between adult and child.

Robert's story, which has made some audience members cry, took him seven or eight presentations to feel comfortable sharing. Because his daughter was born on Sept. 11th, 2001, he also ties it into the terrorist attacks in New York city on that day (another powerful melodramatic meta-frame), as well as slides about the potential sea-level rise and flooding in Manhattan, thereby lending some of the symbolic power of the event and wider struggle against terrorism to his own story, a form of melodramatic multiplication.

Personal climate impacts narratives

In one of his personal vignettes, Gore talks about his connection to his family farm and the changes he sees happening to it, and the river that flows nearby. He references the river specifically and the change it has seen in its "lifetime" to underscore that while some climate changes appear gradual over the course of a human lifetime, they are rapid in the context of other timelines.

Presenters use similar life experiences, timelines and even the experience of others to bring climate impacts closer to audiences. Examples include a government

forest employee observing changes over time in the local forests she manages, and another presenter relating the plight of a woman in the Third World, carrying water over long distances from water sources threatened by climate change.

Alex takes time to wade through the Hurricane Katrina slides before “dropping the bombshell” that he is originally from New Orleans (the audience gasps), quickly transitioning to pictures of his parents’ house where the floodwaters were twenty feet deep. The audience gasp is indicative of the empathy-drawing power of personal climate impact narratives.

The presence of someone in the room with a personal connection to climate impacts forces the audience to take the perspective of a more immediate “person in need” and is an example of “induced empathy” a form of empathy that has been effective in improving attitudes towards marginalized and minority populations. Berenguer (2007, p. 270) and others contend that induced empathy shows promise in creating more responsible environmental attitudes as well. The personal experience of the presenter also enhances credibility, by making the story more believable through proximity to the impact (e.g. eyewitness news accounts).

Michelle uses her own lifetime and in particular her own youth (she's in her late 20's) to illustrate the long emergency nature of climate change and drawn-out climate negotiations. She connects her future self (at age 68) to when some of the more serious impacts of climate change are expected to increase in frequency. She points out that many people think they'll be dead in 2050, but they can visualize her when she's 68. She uses her own lifespan as a time frame for audiences to understand the amount and pace of change required to mitigate climate change.

Daniel tells the story of going to school in a building situated between two factories whose smoke prevented the children from going outside during recess (it hurt the children’s throats and made them sick). He remembered as a child thinking that there was something wrong with the picture. In addition to explaining to audiences how he developed his concern about environmental issues, he uses the story to illustrate backward thinking and to demonstrate that what we once thought was normal is now seen as a serious health threat, and by extension, today’s “normal” carbon-intense lifestyles and fossil fuel projects might also be dangerous.

In cases where a presenter lacks immediate or affective climate impact stories of their own, they'll adopt stories from audience members. Examples include the story of a young girl who experienced major flooding in Mumbai, and had to stay in an apartment with her grandmother and young brother for a week before help arrived. The story emphasizes the vulnerability of the young storyteller and her family. The presenter adapts the story for the Canadian context, asking audiences what they would do if something similar happened in their own communities. This tactic illustrates the value of two-way dialogue with an audience, and that the most powerful stories are often drawn from the community itself.

Other stories include a boy being chased by a bear at a local campsite, and local residents carrying guns on their walks because bears are coming closer and closer to town due to climate change pressures. The same presenter also references the civil unrest in Darfur, exacerbated in part by climate change and warns that more human conflict is likely as climate change puts pressure on scarce resources:

I think it's really important to be bringing these kind of personal stories, down so that people see it's not just a slide, but that they understand that there is a direct personal human effect from them. (Kathy)

While these stories can be powerful, if they are not told efficiently, they can add to the length of the presentation, pushing up against the time budget. This makes especially long stories, self-defeating, by reducing audience interest and intention to act.

Emotion

Interacting with a receptive audience, presenters describe a process by which they become more open, more relaxed and humorous, and even more vulnerable and heartfelt during their presentations, facilitating a stronger, more emotional style of communication:

...it depends if that synergy is there. There can be opposition in the audience, but if you still are connecting with a lot of them strongly, that enables you to be more vulnerable and personal and your wording is more connective rather than objective...if you have a good response from your audience, it makes you more charismatic, so I remember it really well, being, much more caring and heartfelt in the kind of wording I was using and in the way I was talking, and it was visible to the audience that

my heart was there, and in that circumstance they all connected to me.
(Kathy)

Kathy contrasts her experience with receptive welcoming audiences to student audiences where children are forced to attend. She strongly believes student audiences should only attend if they choose to, primarily to ensure democratic learning, but also to ensure a receptive audience environment.

In the same vein, the kinds of audience preparation outlined in Chapter Three play an important role in increasing the receptivity of audiences and setting the stage for more complex emotional communication strategies.

At their training in Montreal, presenters are taught the importance of managing the hope budget and establishing a presentation flow and rhythm that involves building and dropping emotion. While Al Gore's own presentation provides many concrete examples of when and how to build and drop audience concern, each presenter has their own unique rhythm.

In several cases, presenters shied away from the harder hitting emotional aspects of Gore's presentation in favour of a more hopeful approach, especially with sensitive audiences like high school students:

I didn't use the drought and ice cap photos unless they asked to see them. It's heavy and it's hard to bring back the energy, once you get into that section in the presentation. A half-hour of depressing, where do you go from there? I think a big part of mobilizing youth groups like that is to keep them excited and hopeful and I think that is lost. In Al Gore's words, it exhausts the hope budget, especially with youth. (Stephanie)

A less "Cassandra" approach is advocated by some presenters, who found that audiences were less receptive to sustained frightening and disconcerting information, versus a greater focus on solutions and community visioning. These presenters felt that Al Gore's star power was a major reason that audiences were willing to sit and listen to sustained dire climate communication, an allure they felt that they themselves did not possess:

I don't think people need to see a million slides on flooding and hurricanes. They're really fascinating, but the point can get across in a few of them...it's really easy to show people that we have a problem...I

found it [that approach] wasn't that helpful for me. People will listen to Al Gore talk about that for an hour but they weren't interested in me talking about it for an hour. (Michelle)

Interestingly, a number of presenters have said that the emotion they express is greatly influenced by their audience, and echoes sentiments that the audience “makes the presentation.” This influence can be premeditated if the presenter knows in advance who the audience is and what kind of tone would be most appropriate to set, or it can be organic, including examples of presenters who have allowed themselves to become emotional (including crying) in front of certain audiences and not in front of others. One presenter recounted crying in front of a group of female librarians, an environment she described as feeling safer to be emotional in, versus a room full of male business executives.

Presenters stress using the strongest emotional vulnerability possible, finding such expressions important in establishing a connection with the audience and making clear one's personal motivation and intent as a presenter.

In an interview between the CBC's *Tapestry* and Rosemary Phelan (Hynes, 2010), an end of life music therapist and nurse, Phelan contends that when we listen to music, “the first thing you feel is the person's intent, before you even hear the music.” Emotion betrays presenters' intention in a similar and beneficial way, engaging audiences with the issue on an affective level (the second component of public engagement):

...that is an important part of the presentation, showing your own emotional connection to it and showing your own vulnerability so that people connect to you on a human level and it pulls that out of them as well, and they see that it's a moral and a human issue and not just a scientific and technical one that they can distance themselves from. (Stephanie)

While a general economy of the presentation involves building and dropping emotion with audiences, including more dramatic delivery around animals, invasive species and human impacts, most presenters save their biggest emotional “build” for the end of the presentation when they discuss the bigger picture and solutions. For that section, the main slides are pictures of the earth, including “The Pale Blue Dot,” a photograph taken by the Voyager 1 spacecraft in 1990, six billion kilometers from earth.

The *pale blue dot* photo inspired Carl Sagan to write a breathtaking narrative summary of human history, in his book of the same title:

From this distant vantage point, the Earth might not seem of any particular interest. But for us, it's different. Look again at that dot. That's here, that's home, that's us. On it everyone you love, everyone you know, everyone you ever heard of, every human being who ever was, lived out their lives. The aggregate of our joy and suffering, thousands of confident religions, ideologies and economic doctrines, every hunter and forager, every hero and coward, every creator and destroyer of civilization, every king and peasant, every young couple in love, every mother and father, hopeful child, inventor and explorer, every teacher of morals, every corrupt politician, every "superstar," every "supreme leader," every saint and sinner in the history of our species lived there – on a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam. (Sagan, 1994, p. 6)

Similar photos, like “The Blue Marble” (the first clear picture of an illuminated earth) taken by NASA astronauts in 1972, enable such narrative. They are critical birds-eye views of earth, mirrors that allow us to look at the totality of human experience retrospectively as Sagan does so powerfully.

Indeed, narrative is only possible with retrospect, or history, and the best narrative is personal history. Narrative without emotion means very little. How often do we complain about boring stories, or acquaintances who tell stories bereft of emotion? When Al Gore screened AIT at the Sundance film festival, he didn't get three standing ovations because of the accuracy of his graphs, or the new tree ring data he brought to the world. Audiences only express the emotion of gratitude when something has been shared with them, when they've been touched emotionally by a person's candour and courage. Al Gore's admission of depression following the 2000 Presidential election, as well as the stronger personal vignettes involving the death of his sister and the near death of his son, did more to establish an empathetic connection with his audience than any amount of climate statistics ever could. Emotion, similar to the way we take in visual images, is involuntary - an honest and true reaction over which we have very little control. That's what makes it so powerful.

Emotional delivery

A number of presenters talked about learning to use silence effectively in their presentations, partly through training and partly through their own experience. Silence,

as in other ceremonial uses, is a cue for contemplation and inward thinking. It is also an important tool for a pressing subject, with presenters who are passionate and keen to speak, and who might not naturally think to let audiences have a moment to contemplate, reflect on, or analyze the material:

In fact I try not ever to have a slide with words on it at all...I learned the power of pause and the power of silence and people just looking at an image was considerable. Each time I tweaked it you got a sense of which slides people would look at. You could see in their face, they're kind of going 'wow.' You'd literally just pause for five to ten seconds and let them just suck up the image. (Robert)

Pauses, speaking slowly, and even turning off the slide projector are used for emphasis as well as to focus attention: "If I explain things like it is a moral issue, I use a black screen and I speak slower and I look into people's eyes and I need a great connection with them." (Simon).

Kathy uses a deliberate pause midway through her presentation to ask audiences to stop and think about what kind of future "we" want. She asks, "Is this the way we want to go?"

Karen describes her version of Al Gore's "scissor lift" moment, the part in AIT where he uses a scissor lift to show carbon dioxide concentrations literally going off the screen and off the charts:

I do believe in keeping a certain rhythm. There's a point where I'll stop and pause...and I tell them that 'In the entire history of this planet' - and that's the type of delivery - 'Never. Ever. EVER has the parts per million gone above 320ppm.' I become very theatrical for that part. 'If we all agree that the pattern over 800,000 years and the CO2 levels and this little tiny part,' and I show them with my finger, on a screen it's about an inch, I say, 'This inch is the equivalent of a sunny nice day and a mile or 2km of ice above your head, what will this do?' and I show them the difference between 300ppm and 600ppm which is where we're heading and I almost think that I'm exceeding my despair budget here. But that's a delivery I really focus on. I do it every presentation and I know at that point, I bet you I have 99% of eyes on me and they remember that, and I can't keep their attention for an hour on everything but I want them to remember that, I want them to understand the ice thing. (Karen)

Al Gore's more recent book is entitled, "Our Choice." Interestingly, the book was originally titled, "The Path to Survival," and one wonders if the name change has

something to do with the need to engage readers in decision-making, as opposed to telling them how to survive. “Our choice” is a figurative fork in the road, inviting participation, dialogue and action, in contrast to “The Path to Survival” which invokes prescriptive, one-way communication (not to say that Gore’s recommendations are anything but crucial to mitigating climate change). These kind of contemplative forks in the road, and asking honest future-oriented questions that invite community dialogue, are the kinds of questions that public engagement advocates need to pose more often.

It is this appeal to engagement and larger community values that other presenters have found useful in engaging audiences, particularly in winning over hostile audience members. Candace, who presents mostly in Alberta, gives the example of an audience member who came to a presentation to give her a hard time, but who she managed to win over using a softer, non-confrontational emotional approach:

‘I came to this event to give you a hard time and I wanted to really ask questions to show that I didn't believe what you were talking about, but you presented it in a way that made me comfortable to listen and you've changed my mind.’ (Candace recounting what the previously hostile audience member told her at the conclusion of her presentation).

She rationalizes her approach this way:

Anger is tempting but it doesn't work, because we put up protective barriers and stop listening. I'm not a fear monger either, because fear can paralyze and I don't want to make it seem insurmountable. (Candace)

Indeed, Candace tries to remove any sharp edges or potential points of disagreement that might cause her audience members to close their minds (this last anecdote can be interpreted as a vote against using hard fear appeals to encourage affective public engagement). A powerful example is that she avoids any discussion of the oil sands because they are deeply connected to the livelihood of her audience and therefore stir intense emotional responses.

Indeed, through my work as a communication specialist working with environmental groups campaigning against oil sands expansion, I have experienced the heated response and defensiveness, not only of the general public, but even normally more objective newspaper editors and reporters. The trick of course is balancing

legitimate and important critique without closing your audience's mind.

Presenters like Candace can only hope that in gaining a high-level buy-in to the principles of climate change, previously skeptical audience members will resolve to change their personal behaviour or political positions in favour of mitigation. As previously discussed, Kirby et al. (2007) suggest that such non-linear "reverse engineering" is possible, having observed previously skeptical audience members speak favourably of mitigation after having bought-in to global warming preparedness (a higher level climate frame based on risk and the value of preparation, as opposed to climate science or even immediate personal low-carbon behaviour change) (p. 71).

Humour

"Comedy is defiance. It's a snort of contempt in the face of fear and anxiety. And it's the laughter that allows hope to creep back on the inhale." (Durst, 2002).

Despite its serious subject matter (and indeed, largely because of its serious subject matter), humour plays an important role in AIT.

In addition to Al Gore's own self-deprecating jokes ("I used to be the next President of the United States") the film features an animated short from Matt Groening, creator of *The Simpsons* and *Futurama* television series, titled, "Global Warming - None Like it Hot!" The clip, which is rendered in the classic Simpsons-style of animation explains the greenhouse effect by personalizing "Mr. Sunbeam" who when traveling home from a day of work "brightening" earth's day, finds himself surrounded by "greenhouse gases." The greenhouse gases are dangerous street thugs who attack Sunbeam, kicking him and telling him "You ain't goin nowhere." In addition to grossly-caricaturing the science of climate change (an announcer explains, "Pretty soon earth is chock full of sunbeams, their rotting corpses heating our atmosphere."), the clip uses a familiar *Simpsons* comedic sensibility poking fun at the paternalistic, misinformed government information and geo-engineering motifs of the 1950's. This is used to make fun of political denial and last minute solutions to dealing with global warming.

Explaining the government's solution to a little girl whose ice cream melted away because of global warming, the paternalistic announcer/host explains:

Fortunately our handsomest politicians came up with a cheap last minute way to combat global warming. Ever since 2063, we simply drop a giant

ice cube into the ocean every now and then...of course since the greenhouse gases are still building up it takes more and more ice each time thus solving the problem once and for all...ONCE AND FOR ALL!

The second “ONCE AND FOR ALL!” is in response to the little girl’s hesitation (“but?”) at the unsustainable nature of the solution. The script’s referral to “handsomest politicians” may also serve to inoculate and separate Al Gore from wider public distrust of politicians. He is after all a handsome career politician, known as “The Prince of Tennessee,” who literally grew up in the Fairfax Hotel on Embassy Row in Washington D.C. (Maraniss & Nakashima, 1999).

The movie itself was promoted online using a short animation posted on YouTube and featuring “Bender,” the robot with a drinking problem (one of the main characters from Matt Groening’s *Futurama*), and Al Gore as himself. An announcer introduces the clip: “Stand-by for a terrifying message from Al Gore!” Al Gore introduces himself: “Hello, I’m Al Gore and I’m here to scare you about global warming.” The clip continues with Al Gore stating the worst effects of climate change in a comedic, understated fashion, with Bender interrupting him to celebrate a world with fewer humans and “more beer for robots.” Humour works here to disarm potential accusations of alarmism or lecturing.

Clearly humour plays a crucial role in Al Gore’s treatment of climate change (it helps that his daughter was a staff writer with *Futurama*).

It is important to note that the literature on climate change communication has little to say about the utility of humour. Schwarze (2006), writing on environmental melodrama, is an exception, and he is critical and cautionary in the use of comedic frames in social change rhetoric, believing that for certain types of social change, harder polarization through the use of melodrama is required. He cites William Lewis in describing the unique rhetorical effect of comedy: “it subordinates the pain of social life and the felt reality of conflicts to visions of integration that somehow reconcile the vital tensions of politics and society.” (p. 242). Moreover, “comedy seeks to reconcile conflict via compromises” whereas “melodrama sharpens conflict through bipolar positioning of characters and forces.” (p. 244). While there is no doubt that the harder framing of melodrama is useful in many environmental conflicts, one could argue that the use of

humour is an underdeveloped (and understudied) rhetorical strategy within climate change communication. Indeed, the melodrama frame of climate change is well established, but unfortunately the main characters haven't been as compelling as we would like.

Additionally, with a focus on community-level dialogue, the reconciliatory power of comedy may play an important role in building consensus and compromise on the importance of personal behaviour change as well as wider calls for government regulation. The environmental movement has no historical shortage of melodrama and perhaps it is time to consider other (or at least additional) rhetorical frames.

Through interviews with presenters it became clear that humour serves as an important multi-tool in communicating climate change. Humour engages audiences and holds their attention (particularly youth audiences). It is also a critical escape valve that prevents audiences from tuning-out or shifting to a defensive denial position, and, as Alex says, it “allows you to pass information or an idea you couldn't pass with a straight face.”

Humorous clips are used to “break up” an audience, to go from serious to frivolous, but often followed by a more serious anecdote, slipping the serious message under the door, after the moment of levity. Humour is also a balancing tool, managing the hope budget by using laughter to offset dour information. Additional uses include the use of humour in establishing an informal, self-effacing, approachable persona e.g. “not an expert.” It can also serve as a form of self-inoculation for audiences, against skepticism as well as protecting the credibility and intention of presenters themselves.

Practical tips to help those who don't naturally “joke” emerged in our interviews. Above all, presenters stressed the importance of balance in the use of comedy, still making sure to preserve the seriousness of the message while showing that it's “legal to have fun.” Some presenters are comfortable starting their presentations with jokes; others think it can set the wrong tone. An organic approach that adjusts to see what works and what does not, and that responds informally and organically to the unfolding presentation, was recommended, versus a memorized “stand and deliver” approach.

Presenters found humorous clips and short videos particularly useful in keeping the attention of youth, with some emphasizing quick, animated, cartoon-style clips as

being useful for grades one to seven. Humorous clips used in general included climate change related video clips from Saturday Night Live and 30 Rock (both shows have featured appearances by Al Gore with a self-effacing portrayal). Other examples include a clip from the Late Show with David Letterman, featuring a figure skater who upon performing a triple axel, crashes through the arena ice, the joke being that global warming is causing drastic ice melt at the winter Olympics.

Messages can only be received by an audience that is listening. The “escape valve” function of humour is critical in maintaining active listening, preventing an audience from “shutting down” or “tuning-out.” These are code words for the defensive response of denial:

If you're going to wade into something that is this hard to stomach, this dire in terms of its content, if you don't allow some sort of escape valve along the way, the room gets quite oppressive and people get fidgety and it gets hard to pay attention and hard to hold the whole thing together...particularly at the end of the day the solutions are never as conclusively fabulous as one would like. (James)

From its role in preventing shutdown, humour quickly pivots to a more active role, generating audience buy-in by closely associating the agreement that humour represents (agreement that something is funny) with another message that may not be funny:

It [humour] makes a presentation so much more enjoyable, and it allows you to pass information or an idea you couldn't pass with a straight face. An audience or person wouldn't accept it...It's comic relief. It takes the weight off a very serious and worrisome subject and allows people to listen. (Alex)

In addition to aiding in message transmission (listening and acceptance), humour goes a step further by actively managing the hope budget, which can positively contribute to a sense of empowerment and self-efficacy (variables thought to be key in behaviour change). If we are able to laugh at something, then there is probably hope that we can do something about it, that an outcome other than the end of the world is possible:

...humour is a big part of it...riding that fine line between saying we've got a problem and making sure people understand that it's not so big that it's

overwhelming, that we're here to talk about how you can make your own change and being able to push things forward... (David)

Alex, who is a climate change expert and public presenter at a popular scientific institution, gives regular public talks via videoconference to schools and the general public. He and his colleagues use a great deal of humour, including physical slapstick, (rolling around on the floor) to help teach their audiences. In his experience, most groups express appreciation for the use of humour, singling it out as a reason they enjoyed the presentation. It must be heartening for the general public to see those with an in-depth, “official” knowledge of climate change, making light of it. Of course, there is also the danger of inadvertently causing audiences to believe that the problem is less serious than it is. Striking the right balance is critical:

Yes, definitely you need to lighten it up, [humour] has a way of diffusing tension or negative energy but it also needs to be used delicately...everything in moderation, it can also act against you. (Stephanie)

Presenters honed in on the value of humour in making themselves seem more approachable to audiences. Presenters who are able to make jokes, especially about themselves, demonstrate a level of self-comfort and assurance that audiences find attractive:

I think having moments when people can see you take the topic seriously but not yourself seriously, that's very important. (James)

It's important to stay organic when you're delivering the presentation, making it informal...when I'm talking to youth, making yourself seem like you're one of them, that they can interrupt you at any time, you're totally approachable, you just have information to share, and so humour does that, it makes things more informal, takes the edge off, makes people feel like you're not lecturing them, you're not blaming them for anything...unifying isn't the right word, but something like that, it brings people together. It takes the edge off. (Stephanie)

Humour can help in establishing the “not an expert” identity, while also emphasizing a presenter’s PLU qualities. Two presenters, who present as a father and son team, like to riff on the animosity and struggles for authority between father and teenage son:

You need to be fairly self-effacing and you need to recognize that you're not an expert and you need to say that up at the beginning. When I do it with [my son] it's always easier because he makes insulting comments like he's brought me along and 'there's hope for this generation' kind of thing. (David)

Anthony uses self-deprecating humour to "make fun" of his training and connection with celebrities/climate experts like Al Gore and David Suzuki, while also building his own credibility through association. This achieves two rhetorical aims with one joke:

For my first two or three slides I use a little self-deprecating humour. There was a group photo from Montreal with Mr. Gore and I was pretty much next to him, until Dr. Suzuki cut in and all you see is me covered up, and I say 'That's me, that's me!' It gets people chuckling and puts them in a more receptive mood. (Anthony)

He also uses humour to show the strength of the human spirit in the face of adversity, a way of breaking-up serious information, while also empowering audiences:

Then I get into the heavy stuff, then the nasty stuff, but at some point I'll say 'Look,' I'll throw in a light-hearted slide, or sometimes you can throw in a light-hearted comment. I have a picture of flooding in India with thousands of people commuting shit-high in water. In the picture there are four or five guys hamming it up for the camera. You point out light-hearted things like that. It breaks that depressing cycle. You always consciously have to make an effort to say this is a problem, but let's finish on an upswing, let's empower you, motivate you, let's get into some solutions. (Anthony)

While presenters are committed volunteers who have often been inspired or motivated by the gravity of climate change as a threat, audience members don't necessarily have the same level of concern or interest. Recognizing that audiences respond to their physical and emotional cues, as well as their intent, humour can be a useful tool in moderating the intensity that speakers feel about the climate change issue.

[Humour] makes a link between speaker and audience, because I can get pretty intense about this issue, but usually that doesn't sell very well, if they don't like what you're doing they tune you out, it's a little water in your wine... (James)

Inoculation theory is well known within communication and persuasion studies, the basic idea being that audiences can be inoculated against counter persuasion by exposing them to weak doses of a foe's counter message. Humour is particularly well suited for inoculating audiences because it is based on weak, short bursts of agreement with something "funny." Indeed, comedians, and even non-comedians are well aware of the persuasive power of comedy over audiences. The attempted use of humour by managers in attempting to gain the compliance of subordinates in the workplace is well documented in linguistic studies. Adorno has said, "He who has laughter on his side has no need of proof." (Gantar, 2005, p. 9). Presenters use humour to help audiences self-inoculate against climate skepticism, as well as to inoculate themselves from questions around their own credibility, sometimes making fun of themselves (e.g. if a presenter trips on something during presentation, they make a joke about it).

Anthony, who devotes a sizeable chunk of his presentation to fighting organized climate skepticism (the PR industry's "weapon of doubt"), uses humour with audiences as an opportunity to make fun of skeptic beliefs and gullibility: "You can use humour, you can ask, 'How can we believe this?' We laugh at ourselves. 'I can't believe we're so dumb and so gullible.'" (Anthony).

James inoculates against political rhetoric by including a section featuring mystery climate change quotes, where he asks the audience, "Who said this?" Often the quote is associated with a world leader who seems the most unlikely to say it. In one example, the list of possible respondents includes Barack Obama and George H.W. Bush, among others, and the quote attributed to one of them is about the importance of fighting global warming. When the next slide comes up, the answer is revealed: "George H.W. Bush" followed by a slide that reads, "The smarter George Bush." He then apologizes for being political and goes on.

Not all presenters are comfortable using humour in their presentations, and not everyone can tell a joke:

If you're a funny person, be funny during your presentation, take advantage of your sense of humour and camp it up by all means. If you're not a funny person, if you don't tell jokes or make wry asides, if you're just an earnest person who doesn't easily tell a joke, don't sit at the front and try to tell a joke because you're going to crash and burn. (James)

For people who are not naturally humorous or are not comfortable being humorous in public, our interviews yielded possible tactics to preserve the communication benefits associated with humour. Presenters recommend using someone else's humour, but in a sure-fire form like pre-recorded video clips (e.g. the *Futurama* video clips used by Al Gore). Other ideas include the development of surrogate stories or humorous aids for presenters who have trouble identifying with different demographics and their sense of humour (e.g. funny stories from high-school students themselves).

Additionally, a strategy emerged to allow audiences to integrate their own humorous stories and anecdotes, by organizing presentation sections so that the audience can fill in the punch lines themselves. An example of this is Karen and her story about not being a vegetarian. In talking about the importance of eating a low meat diet she asks audiences why they think that is. For youth audiences the answer is invariably "Cow Farts!!!" causing the whole audience to erupt in laughter. The "cow fart" reference is to methane, one of the world's most potent greenhouse gases. Global livestock populations, cows in particular, account for a major percentage of methane emissions. In the U.S. they account for 20% of methane emissions (EPA, 2011).

Rhetorical strategies

Simplification, patterns and trends

Simplicity and appealing to broader trends and patterns is a key element of rhetoric, not just in language but in conceptualizing climate science as well:

I keep telling them the numbers don't matter, x and y don't matter; what matters is the concept and the curve and the tendency. I try to simplify things as much as possible because that's how I relate to things. I go to the gist of the message; I don't get bogged down in the details. (Karen)

It is common for presenters to side-step detailed discussion and debate of climate science by focusing audience attention on larger patterns and trends. Presenters will even shift the frame of reference to focus on shared values and community consensus on the need for action in order to avoid detailed discussion and debate of climate science ("We might not agree about climate change, but we can agree about clean air, energy self-sufficiency, a cleaner environment etc."):

Rather than trying to convince people about the science, I fast-tracked that, and said, ‘You know I’m not here to convince you about whether or not climate change is an issue because there’s so much compelling evidence out there to give a reason to believe this is true. The purpose of my conversation today is to elevate the dialogue and to have us think about climate change on a very practical level and to then offer up some solutions that we might be able to take on immediately, collectively.’
(Merran)

These rhetorical turns are motivated by both a presenter need for comfort and efficacy (they aren’t trained to facilitate in-depth conversations about climate science), as well as audience demand for more discussion about solutions and community-level action. Trends and patterns are a shorthand way of giving audiences the “gist” of climate change, without getting mired in the details. Indeed scholars like Ungar point to the “knowledge-ignorance paradox,” that posits that there are serious barriers to the public’s ability and interest in learning more complex pragmatic knowledge (e.g. understanding climate science) if it doesn’t have a direct bearing on their own livelihood or personal safety (as Leiserowitz has found, climate change is perceived as a future-oriented threat that impacts other people). I discuss the implications of the “knowledge-ignorance paradox” in greater detail in a following section on analogies and metaphors.

The rhetoric of empowerment

When it comes to empowering their audiences, presenters often invoke the leaders of historical social movements. They tell stories about exceptional individuals who have taken a stand or sparked important change, individuals like Gandhi, Mother Theresa, Martin Luther King and Terry Fox. While it is understandable that presenters would reach for cultural touchstones and well-known historical figures, there is also a potential danger in this form of persuasion: it puts change out of reach of the average person by putting a strong focus on exceptional characters rather than average citizens acting together. This form of story telling was a favourite pet peeve of Tolstoy. In his historical novel, *War and Peace*, Tolstoy attacks historians’ tendency to falsely ascribe control over social movements to “great men,” when really the collective will of society determines the nature and direction of such movements. There is a similar danger in using examples of “great individuals” to engage the public. For example, Robert was concerned that some of the American social movement victory stories, at least when

focused on individual leaders, make fighting climate change seem too far out of reach of average citizens. He perceived a potentially disempowering disconnect between the everyday changes that fighting climate change requires and seemingly more epic stories like JFK's announcement of NASA's moon program:

You want to bring it down to what I can do. I don't think that Martin Luther King or JFK accomplishments that are beyond the reach of the average Joe are useful...you want to take it back to educating the audience members about changing light-bulbs or when they vote, talking to their politicians and what they're going to do about clean energy, as opposed to 'Gee I'll never be able to go to the moon so screw it.' (Robert)

While the sentiment against great leaders makes some sense, presenters need to be careful not to throw the baby out with the bath water. For example, Rosa Parks is a social movement icon, known for her courage, as well as a form of social protest that was within the grasp of everyday citizens – refusing to give up her seat. The social movements that are symbolized by these individuals are still the places where community-level dialogue and change has made all the difference. Rather than focusing on changing light bulbs, we need to focus on telling social movement stories effectively, from the community-level and in a way that inspires and empowers everyone.

Other appropriate frames for social change include mottos and slogans like “change your corner of the world,” correctly emphasizing that humans can really only ever meaningfully be aware of and sustainably manage their immediate personal environment. Frederick Kirschenmann asserts that, “We can only manage local ecosystems in an ecologically sensitive manner when local people live in local ecosystems long enough and intimately enough to know how to manage them in an ecologically sound manner.” (2010, p. 53).

Rhetorical turns like the “butterfly effect” and the “power of one” attempt to amplify and connect the seemingly isolated actions of individuals into compounding collective action. One presenter personalizes his story and brings it down to an accessible level by recounting a story about advice his mother gave him before he went off to university:

...something my mom told me years ago before I went off to university:
'You can't change the whole world but maybe your little corner of

it'...Could something as gentle as the flap of a butterfly's wings over Brazil trigger a tornado in Texas two weeks later? Change your corner and you know what, 'Sometimes you might actually change the world.' (Daniel)

He said the approach has resulted in audience comments like "I don't feel hopeless at all" and "I feel energized to go do something about this."

Two presenters who have focused on youth and student audiences use local examples of actions from youth at other schools to empower their audiences. Examples include schools that have incorporated solar panels and wind mills, green teams, composting and planting trees: "I like to show youth in action or what's going on in other schools because I think kids in particular like to see images or video of kids 'just like them' doing things that they'd like to do. You know that's what works. It connects to them." (Vicky)

Simon likes to renew faith in the power of individual action contributing to collective action by demonstrating the impact of energy conservation:

...I take time speaking very slowly to show them with the law of numbers, if each of us does simple things, all together what it gives. I compare the results with the total emissions of Quebec and people are very surprised that really in fact our simple reduction in global emissions can add together and make great results. (Simon)

Michelle has found success in showing her audiences success stories and local examples of problems that Canadians have overcome collectively or through innovation. She believes it is important to keep the climate problem definition broad and simple, and to focus on solutions.

Hannah tells the story of how she became a presenter, using the challenge of being trained and standing up in front of thousands of audience members as an inspirational story in itself: "I say I'm just a 14 year old girl who's relatively normal, living in small town, Ontario, and I decided I really wanted to do this and this is what happened." (Hannah)

In a different, but related vein, a number of presenters traced similarities between the rhetoric of sport and the rhetoric of empowerment and social change. These are similarities that have been put into practice through the prominent use of athletes in the

“Play It Cool” public education program, a partnership between the David Suzuki Foundation and TCPC. The program uses Olympic athletes and big-name sports figures to advocate for action on climate change. Athletes cite the direct threats to their sports posed by climate change (e.g. downhill skiing which is threatened by changing snowfall patterns) and the shrinking opportunity of future athletes to partake in these sports. Presenters also identified sports’ need for a social license to operate, its volunteerism and philosophy of giving back to the community. They also cite the goal of “finding the best in ourselves” and the generation of social capital through community sports, as natural affinities with community efforts to fight climate change. It was generally agreed that the persuasive rhetoric of sport and the ability of athletes to draw audiences (maybe even harder to reach skeptical audiences) were grounds for further exploration and development of sports involvement in public engagement on climate change.

Analogies and metaphors

Sheldon Ungar puts a heavy emphasis on the importance of “bridging metaphors” in allowing the general public to conceptualize environmental problems or issues as “hot crises,” that is, providing a “sense of immediate and concrete risk with everyday relevance.” (Ungar, 2000, p. 297). It was the potent “penetration and shield” metaphor, according to Ungar, that made the ozone hole a hot crisis. The public greatly feared the weakening of the “shield” that protected earth. By the same token, and in contrast, Ungar contends that because climate change has a future orientation and is difficult to link metaphorically to popular culture, it currently exists in a “public limbo,” far less salient than the ozone issue ever was, or even is today (as evidenced by polling that shows the public still erroneously connects global warming to ozone depletion). However, if climate change worsens, these metaphors may soon take care of themselves. Popular news articles have begun to warn that staples like chocolate and coffee (crops highly sensitive to climate impacts) may soon disappear or become prohibitively expensive – what can put conversation “in the air” faster and more earnestly than a morning cup of coffee under threat?

Furthermore, Ungar believes that modern society is characterized by what he calls the “knowledge-ignorance paradox,” the notion that the general public acquires pragmatic knowledge, such as understanding climate change, only on a “need to know” basis because knowledge specialization creates “entry costs” and speech barriers to

knowledge acquisition. This means the odds are already stacked against complex climate change communication. Nonetheless, AIT is rife with analogies and metaphors intended to increase accessibility for audiences. Presenters spend a great deal of time developing new ones, wringing themselves to find new ways to communicate. What follows are some of the more popular efforts among the presenter community.

In AIT, Gore uses the story of his older sister's death from lung cancer and its connection to his family's tobacco farm to address climate change denial. He delves directly into how his father denied the link between tobacco and cancer despite health warnings and medical reports in the early 1960's. It was only after his own daughter's death that he gave up tobacco farming. This analogy compares the professional misinformation campaign funded by cigarette makers to deny a link between smoking and cancer, to the professional misinformation campaign funded today by fossil fuel companies to raise doubt about the causal link between carbon dioxide emissions and climate change, despite a clear scientific consensus. This is the most prominent analogy in AIT and is still used verbatim in TCPC presentations today. Anthony calls this tactic "The Weapon of Doubt" and asks audiences to steel themselves against it, acknowledging that change is hard, but necessary and that doubt preys on our aversion to change, even when we need to do it.

Presenters ask audiences to carefully evaluate the source of denial information. Where is it coming from? Is it a reputable source? What are the motives behind it? That these attacks have potentially increased in intensity and efficacy in recent years, is reflected in public polling that shows a low sense of urgency in relation to climate change, as well as Al Gore's recent "24 Hours of Reality" climate change communication campaign. Repackaged as a presentation about "Reality," the smoking/weapon of doubt analogy is central to the new presentation, and has varied little since the release of AIT in 2006, using many of the same slides.

An extended version of the "Smoking / Weapon of Doubt" analogy is the "Doctor Analogy," which compares the opinion of climate scientists to the opinion of doctors in a fictional situation where you, the patient, have been told by a majority of doctors that you have cancer. Following their diagnosis, you find one doctor who says he is not 100% sure that you have cancer, and you decide to put off treatment altogether. The message of this analogy is that ignoring climate change in the face of scientific consensus about

its origin and effects, is like ignoring a cancer diagnosis, hoping it goes away. This analogy is popular with presenters, particularly when dealing with skeptics. However, it is generally used as an analogy of last resort. Presenters appear to find the analogy too aggressive in dealing with audience members (likely concerned about wider audience judgement of how they deal with a skeptic). This analogy is potent because it turns the weapon of doubt against skeptics, e.g. “You wouldn’t take a chance with a cancer scare, so why take a chance with climate change?” but it is also aggressive in that it uses the potential mortality of one’s rhetorical opponent to make its point.

The “Sports Star Scoring Analogy” was created by Robert and was subsequently picked-up by Al Gore and other presenters. The analogy is used to counter skeptic arguments suggesting that an inability to predict the weather makes climate prediction an impossibility. The presenter counters by explaining that a three-decade weather trend (a running standard measure of climate) is analogous to Wayne Gretzky’s hockey career:

You could predict in 1984 roughly how many points Gretzky would get in 1986. You could predict that he’s been in a range, assuming he was healthy and getting older in his career, from 160 to 140 points, year-over-year. (Robert)

The analogy goes on to point out that sports observers never knew how many goals Wayne Gretzky was going to score on any given night (equivalent to predicting the weather). Sometimes it was a hat trick and sometimes it was zero, but you knew what the longer-term trend was (analogous to a climate trend).

Climate action detractors will sometimes argue that there’s little point to taking action if an individual’s contribution to global warming is tiny relative to global emissions. This is of course a logical and rhetorical fallacy. James counters this free-riding argument by point out that the same logic means that it’s okay to litter or to go home and murder one’s wife, because neither will make a difference to the overall littering or murder rates in the country. However, they are both morally wrong. The murder rate analogy emerged during a particularly heated exchange between James and a skeptic. James described himself as “just hot as a pistol” when he said it, and felt that he may have overreached, shocking the audience with his newfound analogy.

“How will you live your dash?” is an original metaphor developed by Anthony, and it asks audiences to see their lives as the dash between their birthdate and death date on a mentally visualized tombstone. The metaphor asks audiences to turn the dash from a “minus sign” into a “plus sign” meaning that their life should make a positive contribution to the larger order of things. While reminiscent of a clichéd motivational speaker, the metaphor is meant to encourage audiences to take control of their own lives, and to “own” climate change as their problem, not something that someone else is going to fix. Anthony feels strongly that there is a culture of entitlement and apathy with respect to citizens waiting for government intervention on issues like climate change. He feels they need to take a more active role in demanding change, something many of the scholars in our literature review advocate (change at the community level, as well as demand for government regulation).

That most of these analogies are defensive, as opposed to positive and transformational (e.g. leveraging rhetoric to envision a compelling low-carbon future), says something about the public dialogue and reception of climate change as an issue culture. The glaring lack of bridging metaphors in communicating climate change was identified by Ungar in 2000, but it is not clear he anticipated the deployment of even more powerful counter metaphors and analogies by professional climate skeptics, for example, carbon dioxide as food for plants, or climate change producing pleasantly warmer summers in previously chilly locales. Anecdotally, the most effective analogies for silencing skeptics are those that make blunt moral arguments, however presenters also seem inclined to use these with a lighter touch.

Anthony’s “how will you live your dash?” shows some promise as an attempt to connect climate change to personal intrinsic and extrinsic goals, using personal action against climate change as a measure of accomplishment. It is also possible that more middle-of-the-road analogies like the sports star scoring analogy are more effective in steeling moderate audience members against small doubts or unresolved questions, such as the difference between weather events and climate patterns. However, as Ungar’s larger thesis would suggest, as clever as sports star scoring analogies are in explaining the difference between weather and climate trends are, how many hockey fans are actually calculating the scoring averages and trends of their favourite players? The analogy converts one form of specialized knowledge (weather and climate trends)

into another (sports statistics). It could benefit from some simplification. The fact that Al Gore and other presenters asked for permission to use this analogy speaks volumes to climate communicators' continuing failure to fully appreciate the knowledge-ignorance paradox, or to engage the public, at least as far as bridging metaphors are concerned.

Dealing with climate skepticism

Presenters reported encountering fewer skeptics at their presentations in recent years, a phenomenon they attribute to more entrenched opinions and positions. In the early days of the presentations (circa 2007), skeptics were still forming an opinion and were more likely to attend a presentation as part of their information gathering process.

Today, online discussion groups and echo chambers feed a steady supply of denialist misinformation and propaganda, keeping many skeptics at home, safe and comfortable in their ill-gotten beliefs. When skeptics are encountered, they come in two varieties, calling for two distinct strategies of engagement: 1) The hardened evangelist and 2) confused and earnest skeptics still gathering information. In the case of the hardened evangelist, they are attending presentations for the purpose of disruption, talking over the presenter and distributing counter-information. Presenters consider engagement with these skeptics a waste of time. There have been instances where the behaviour of these skeptics has been extreme, for example, causing enough disruption that event organizers felt compelled to call security guards.

At least two presenters described ongoing encounters with extreme skeptics who would "stalk" them at multiple presentations, often in an attempt to disrupt their presentations and to attack them personally. One persistent "climate denier" created a five minute YouTube video about a presenter, "connecting" her to Nazis and population control. Some of the extreme comments in the video included veiled physical threats against the presenter as an environmentalist ("Greenies should be made into fertilizer") and she eventually reported the individual to the police. These experiences are especially disheartening given the volunteer time and financial resources presenters devote to the community while presenting. Short of calling the police, the best way to deal with hardened evangelists is a respectful but firm engagement, beginning with an acknowledgement of respect for their opinion but also making it clear that it is not shared:

Every time there's a skeptic I just acknowledge their position. I thank them for their opinion. 'I respect your opinion but I don't share it, if you want a room, go and organize your own presentation. I am the presenter and the host invited me not you, so if you want to talk after the presentation you will be welcome and I would be glad if I can show you things that can update your mind.' (Simon)

This engagement is based on the importance of establishing and holding a frame of reference, politely refusing to adopt the skeptics' frame of reference (e.g. an esoteric junk science debate about glacial melt water), and if the skeptic persists, confronting their bullying behaviour firmly. A helpful tactic is to appeal to the wider audience's time being wasted (this is when audience self inoculation can kick-in, whereby the audience uses their own knowledge to "shutdown" the skeptic).

Learning to effectively engage skeptics involves an experiential learning curve. In their first few presentations, some presenters would lose their cool, getting upset and engaging skeptics in a heated, point-for-point debate. While potentially satisfying, this approach risks losing the connection between presenter and audience (aggression makes audiences defensive). It also has strategic setbacks. Presenters are taught at the AIT training that adopting the skeptics' frame of reference lends credence to their way of thinking, and so the goal is to not lose any audience members, while simultaneously transitioning away from the skeptic's frame of reference and forwards into the remainder of the presentation. Using local examples to show that something is wrong, and appealing to other higher community values like using resources sustainably, energy self-sufficiency, clean air etc. makes it difficult (if not impossible) for skeptics to disagree. The goal is to avoid engagement and to shift to solutions:

'We can agree these solutions make sense no matter if you think that climate change is a problem or not, so let's start talking about that. I happen to be interested in it because I think climate change is a problem. You can be interested because you think oil is too expensive or it's important to diversify our energy supply.' I don't engage in that debate anymore, I'm just moving forward to solutions. (Michelle)

'You know it's okay for us to have a disagreement on this, but I've gotta say, even if you don't believe that climate change is caused by people, the kind of activity that you're trying to curb by addressing climate change needs to be addressed anyway, so we need to be changing our behaviour in this manner for the good of the world no matter whether you

believe this or not, and I think that we can agree on that,' and they [skeptics] don't have anything to say to that, because it's true. (Kathy)

In the case of confused and earnest skeptics (e.g. high-school students who have heard skeptic arguments at home, but are trying to form their own opinion) presenters stress the importance of having an open, understanding conversation. Rather than using hard rhetoric, presenters will ask skeptics to examine the source of their own beliefs and whether or not there are other motives behind particular opinions (e.g. “The weapon of doubt”). In general, presenters focused on “staying open” and where necessary, attacking the idea, as opposed to the person. Some people are just honestly confused, which is understandable given the amount of paid misinformation circulating in the public sphere. Skeptic and denial arguments are treated like confused thinking or memetic viruses to be exposed and rooted out. It is the idea or action that is wrong, not the person. This is a subtle contrast from the more aggressive approach adopted by Al Gore in attacking skeptics and “denialists” in public, and is especially important in dealing with confused and earnest skeptics who might otherwise feel personally insulted by aggression, and therefore much less likely to be open to learning more about the issue.

According to presenters, audiences are past the need for a scientific problem definition (cognitive engagement has been achieved) and are instead interested in feeling something about climate change and engaging in solutions (affective and behavioural engagement). The insights in this chapter, particularly with respect to the value of personal narratives, humour and other rhetorical strategies shed some light on how to achieve this. They also suggest promising future research directions, namely further research into the development of personal narratives, especially narratives drawn from audiences themselves, and a more robust deployment and study of humour as a storytelling technique. We now turn to larger questions of how to achieve sustainability and truer, more effective, more resilient public engagement on climate change.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

Playing chicken with climate change

Recent research by Dr. Kevin Anderson (2011), deputy director of the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research, suggests the challenge of mitigating climate change is much greater than researchers have previously thought. In what appear to be nearly impossible scenarios for avoiding dangerous climate change, Anderson's research shows the inadequacy of every recent climate target proposed by governments around the world. Most targets miss the mark by an order of magnitude.

According to Anderson's research, the pace and depth of reductions required to avoid dangerous climate change is grim, relative to the track record of societal response to climate change. I briefly summarize Anderson's findings here because they have important implications for how quickly, where, and at what scale demand-side and supply-side decarbonization must occur - important considerations for defining audiences and behavior change goals for climate change communication and public engagement efforts.

To give the world a 50/50 chance of avoiding a two degree Celsius rise in global mean temperature, defined by numerous scientific organizations as "dangerous climate change," Anderson says that global emissions must peak in 2020, and then fall by 10-20% per year, for the next two decades, before achieving total decarbonization (zero emissions, excluding food production and deforestation) by 2035-2045. Most climate modeling scenarios suggest this is nearly impossible. To put the challenge into perspective, Anderson cites the 2006 Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change, which points out that reductions of 1% per year, have only ever been associated with economic recession or upheaval. The collapse of the Soviet Union economy, for example, resulted in a 5% reduction per year for about ten years (Anderson, 2011). As impossible as voluntary reductions of this magnitude seem, the alternative - an even warmer world - is even less tenable.

To hold to a more extreme four degree Celsius rise in global mean temperature, described by scientists as a temperature rise that “should be avoided at all costs,” and that is “incompatible with any sort of organized global community,” emissions need to peak by 2020, and then fall by 3.5%, per year, thereafter, again sharply at odds with society’s current trajectory of 3-4% growth per year (Anderson, 2011).

What does a four degree Celsius mean temperature rise look like? Because it is hotter on land than in the oceans, the world would experience a five to six degree rise in global land mean temperature. On the hottest days, this would mean an increase of six to eight degrees in Chinese cities (already struggling with heat), and 10-12 degrees in New York. This past summer New York reached 40 degrees Celsius during a July heat wave (Harris, 2011). Is 50-52 degrees Celsius something North America can even cope with, and at what cost?

In the context of feeding the world, at low latitudes, a four degree warmer world would mean a reduction of 30-40% in rice and maize production (food staples for the world’s most populous nations), at a time when global population is heading towards nine billion. Faced with those numbers, it is easy to understand the consensus among climate researchers that a four degree rise would be beyond what humans can adapt to in a “rational, reasonable manner.” (Anderson, 2011). Furthermore, it would be devastating to ecosystems and would include a reasonable to high probability of going past four degrees by setting in motion other climate tipping points (e.g. the melting of the arctic permafrost, releasing trapped methane, an even more potent greenhouse gas) taking us to even higher temperatures, perhaps five, six, seven, eight or more degrees. To repeat, four degrees is a temperature rise that “must be avoided at all costs.”

In slicing up the “emissions cake” and attempting to ascertain responsibility and technical agency for emissions reduction, Anderson finds that roughly 80% of the world’s emissions come from 20% of the population. Slicing even finer, he finds that 50% of emissions are produced by 1% of the population. That 1% is us, anyone who gets on a plane, and anyone who lives a carbon-intensive lifestyle. In response to those who might ask “But, what about China or India?” Anderson points out that for the vast majority of Chinese and Indians to reach a consequential carbon intensive lifestyle, it would require 10% per annum growth rates for 20 or 30 years, long past the decarbonization the world

must achieve in the next two to three decades. As he says, “The poor cannot grow fast enough to affect the basics of these maths.”

So there we have it. The audience for climate change communication efforts going forward is the 1% of the global population responsible for 50% of emissions, a group that can easily afford to make these changes.

In terms of technical agency in reducing emissions, demand opportunities (behavior change) dwarf those from supply in the short term (Anderson, 2011), though supply changes (e.g. switching to renewable energy) are still a prerequisite for achieving reductions in the long term. What this means is that climate change communication must focus on behavior change, through individual and community-level action, as well as collective political action in demanding regulation. Immediate emissions reductions are paramount, as emissions are cumulative with a lifespan of 100 - 200 years. Everyday we fail to reduce emissions, we commit ourselves to greater and longer term warming, reducing hope for a safe and secure future for our families, our friends and ourselves. Anderson suggests we could face 3.5 degrees warming by as early as 2035, far earlier than anyone has imagined, putting dangerous climate change squarely within our lifetimes.

Against these numbers, we can assess current climate change communication efforts and make recommendations for future approaches. Unfortunately, our starting point is a disinterested public sphere, and existing climate change communicators who have been slow to learn the lessons of earlier climate change communication efforts. Very few climate change communicators are talking about the demand-side focus or political action that Anderson’s research says is necessary to mitigate climate change.

Missing the mark

The Climate Reality Project (the new name for The Climate Project) hosted a global event running from September 14-15, 2011, titled, “24 Hours of Reality,” and described as follows (<http://climaterealityproject.org/the-event>):

“24 Presenters. 24 Time Zones. 13 Languages. 1 Message. 24 Hours of Reality is a worldwide event to broadcast the reality of the climate crisis. It will consist of a new multimedia presentation created by Al Gore and delivered once per hour for 24 hours, representing every time zone around the globe.” (Climate Reality

Project, 2011).

A colleague of mine from the environmental movement begrudgingly promoted the event on Facebook as “24 hours of PowerPoint slides and apocalyptic narratives!” expressing the distinct lack of enthusiasm the event inspired among members of the environmental community.

I watched the Canadian presentation, held in Victoria, online from 7pm to 8pm PST on September 14th. The presentation was delivered by Peter Shiefke, the National Manager of The Climate Reality Project Canada.

Marred by awkward timing, as well as what appeared to be a lack of rehearsal, the presentation broke many of the aforementioned golden rules of presenting. I couldn't help but feel disappointed. The event struck me as clear proof of the public engagement setback climate change communicators have experienced in recent years, and it showed no signs of having learned any of the lessons necessary to re-engage the public.

The tell tale sign of the setback was the presentation's focus on the theme of “reality,” and its verbatim recycling of the “Smoking/Weapon of Doubt” slides and language from the original 2006 AIT presentation, discussed in the previous chapter. Apparently climate skeptics have found their aim, because The Climate Reality Project felt the need to engage them head-on, adopting the skeptic's frame of reference, a rhetorical “no no.”

Beyond a rhetorical attempt to ground audiences in “reality,” the presentation was also lacking the affective and behavioral dimensions of public engagement, as advocated by Lorenzoni et. al. Expanding on Carl Sagan's narrative summary of “The Pale Blue Dot” photo, Mr. Shiefke intoned that,

“Somewhere there may be an earth where it's not getting hotter, where rainstorms are not getting more intense, where floods are not wreaking havoc on populations, where wildfires are not burning more intense [sighing], killing more people and livestock and crops. Where windstorms are not getting more intense and destructive. Somewhere, but not here. Unfortunately we have to live in reality.”

He then whisked through a series of dramatic images showing global climate impacts in places like Pakistan (record rainfall “destabilizing a nuclear armed country”), and Australia. After explaining each impact, he would finish with the tagline, “Ruining

people's lives and destroying their livelihoods," repeating this phrase often enough to suggest it originates from some kind of public opinion research, perhaps focus grouping. Its affective qualities left much to be desired.

In turns, the presentation was boring and shrill, recycling many of the same approaches of the original AIT slideshow, but updating them with more recent examples of global impacts. Noticeably absent were local examples or affective stories; instead, in reference to international climate impacts and rising food prices, Shiefke suggested, "You might know people affected by this." There was no attempt at a dialogue, which might actually ascertain whether audience members had personal or familial connections to climate impacts. Indeed there was no time – but that is not an excuse, it is an error of format.

In terms of behavioral connection, the Climate Reality solutions section focused on supply-side solutions, the opposite of the demand-side focus Anderson's research says we must adopt. Many of Shiefke's examples were drawn from the developing world, where the motivation to act is based on growing electricity demand and attempts to improve standards of living, as opposed to efforts to decarbonize (as Western economies must do). Solution examples included wind power investments in Kenya, India, China and Mexico, finally touching down locally on the much maligned "Eye of the Wind" turbine on Vancouver's Grouse Mountain. Meant as a local example of "British Columbia starting to take action," critics have pointed out that the turbine produces far less power than originally advertised due to poor siting, and serves largely as a symbolic feature on the city's skyline.

In general, Shiefke's examples, including solar PV installations in the U.S., and the design and implementation of super grids and geothermal plants were glossed over as being either close to reality or just around the corner, ignoring many of the social, economic and political barriers such projects face in both the U.S. and Canada. In trying to be optimistic, the actual contribution these renewable energy examples might make to decarbonization was overplayed, leaving audiences without a clear picture of the scale and pace of change required, not to mention the fact that they were all supply-side solutions.

In terms of offering actions the audience could take, Shiefke provided five:

- Speak-up, win conversations with deniers; use social and traditional media to get the scientific consensus view “out there.”
- Get involved with the climate project - request a presentation, so that a trained presenter can come to your workplace or community event and talk about “the science and solutions.”
- Support the David Suzuki Foundation - here the foundation was plugged as running “an incredible number of innovative campaigns,” protecting the environment for generations to come.
- Deepen your commitment to green consumerism - “Make consumer choices that reduce energy use,” and “Consider the environmental impact of ALL the items you buy.”
- Don’t give up - changing laws is more important than changing light bulbs. Tell your leaders this matters to you! Let them know you will support or strongly oppose them based on what they say and DO about solving the climate crisis.”

Absent from these solutions is any notion of community building. The frame of reference is that of the individual consumer, and potential political actor. There was no mention of conservation or reducing consumption levels (using less energy, flying less, eating less meat). The effect of the David Suzuki Foundation was exaggerated as though “protecting the environment for future generations” was within its reach. Finally the political section was non-partisan, quickly glossed over, and never mentioned voting. It came across as an uncomfortable moment in the presentation rather than a strong call for collective action. There was no mention of resources to help organize and inform voters. There was no attempt to identify the 1% responsible for 50% of emissions, or to portray Western levels of consumption as a global equity or human rights issue.

Clearly the solutions section of the new “Climate Reality” project is completely out of step with the scale, pace and depth of action required to mitigate dangerous climate change. In that respect it differs little from the original AIT slideshow. However, interacting directly with the public and faced with uncertainty about the efficacy of the solutions section, AIT presenters have experienced productive cognitive dissonance, and their attempts to reconcile the dissonance, have resulted in new ideas and techniques for public engagement, including potential solutions.

We now turn to AIT presenters’ own prescriptions for change, which offer valuable insights for improving climate change communication.

Prescriptions for change

Presenters were asked for their own personal prescription for how they thought the climate crisis should be solved. They generally fell into two camps reflecting an ideological difference of opinion on where the onus for change should be. In one camp, a minority of presenters favor a market-oriented perspective that emphasizes individual responsibility and actions as the place to make change. In the other camp, a majority of presenters put the onus on government and regulation for solving the climate crisis. I discuss the two camps and what the implications of their attitudes towards social change might be for public engagement on climate change.

The individual responsibility camp

A minority of presenters, typically those with business backgrounds, put the onus for change on individuals, often addressing audiences as consumers. This more individualized and market-friendly perspective stresses personal initiative and posits that change, including government regulation, will only come after consumers and businesses change their own habits, reaching a tipping point at which point government will catch-up.

David is very critical of efforts to blame climate inaction on governments. He puts responsibility squarely on the shoulders of the individual, and stresses an array of detailed, immediate solutions that audiences can implement at home:

My own philosophy is don't wait for government. Don't wait for other people to act. Just do it. If you do it, you become a leader, you become a role model and that's the only way that change happens. I always end with the Jane Goodall quote, 'The only way that change has happened in this world is by a few individuals acting.' That's what I encourage people, you can complain all you want about other people, don't wait for them.
(David).

Despite the potential shortcomings of abandoning collective action (at least in terms of political vehicles), David is unique in the specificity of his solutions - he offers 12 actions that can be taken on the same day as the training - and the way he ties their reduction potential to an actual carbon footprint. As a corporate sustainability manager, his job is to measure and manage environmental impacts, and that comes through loud and clear in his solutions section. In terms of scaling-up action, he asks audience members to

focus on their friends and family to collectively produce millions of tons of emissions reductions. His approach is earnest, but is also tempered by a contention that individuals will not need to change their lifestyles drastically, that little changes can collectively make a big difference. This is a contention that flies in the face of Anderson's climate models, which question the sustainability of many aspects of the Western lifestyle, including personal transportation (as it currently exists):

In many ways people are worried you're a tree hugger coming to tell them to get out of their cars, they can't go to a football game or enjoy air conditioning in the summer, and that's how I began to understand how to communicate change. Change is incremental, it's something you've got to decide on where your boundaries are and then push them. (David)

In describing his approach to encouraging audiences to "push" their boundaries, David references a fundraising slogan from a community organization he has volunteered with in the past. Their slogan used to be, "give until it hurts" (a predominantly extrinsic value frame emphasizing concern for personal affluence), but it was recently changed to "give until it doesn't hurt" (an intrinsic, bigger-than-self value frame). "Giving more makes you feel better, you do a little bit, you think it hurts a little but it goes away and it feels better. No pain, no gain." (David). Other presenters have asked for copies of David's slides, which use this framing, to integrate into their own presentations.

As we have seen, climate change communication scholars emphasize the importance of intrinsic value frames when conceptualizing personal "sacrifice" in the form of low carbon social innovation. David's framing shows promise in appealing to audiences, but its individual focus still feels limited. Perhaps it is possible for this larger-than-self frame to go a step further, serving as a bridge to push the personal social change views of presenters away from a strict focus on individual responsibility to include support for government regulation as well.

Failure to present a mix of individual and collective responsibility leaves presenters open to charges of hypocrisy when their behavior is inconsistent with their values, even when such behavior is largely determined by barriers, which require political solutions to overcome. Anthony advocates for a mix of regulation and individual action, but still leads with a personal "ownership of the problem" argument, emphasizing individual consumer actions:

We're led that way, we're taught that way. We see 2000 messages everyday that tell us we have to buy because we suck if we don't. I borrow a little bit from the analogies looking at consumption and social habits. When talking to a teenage audience, some of the stuff you have to be delicate with, you have to give them difficult information, 'Look at the new iPod you bought that replaced the one from eight months ago. Look at that new phone that you've got. Why the iPhone 4 when the iPhone 3 does most things anybody would ever want it to? (Anthony)

While Anthony provides a useful critique of consumer advertising and our throw-away tech booster culture, one that flirts with addressing audiences as citizens as opposed to consumers, the challenge in his approach is that it does not leave room for appeals to collective action. With so much emphasis on individual change, subsequent appeals to collective action seem like an unappealing afterthought.

During one presentation, Anthony found himself being "called-out" by students who asked him why he drove to the presentation (an individual act of carbon-intense consumption). In response, he gave a "we're not all perfect" speech and then explained that public transit would take five times as long as driving to the presentation. He then made an appeal to the students to help address the structural barrier of poor transit: "but now we need to fight for a better more efficient transit system," an appeal that sounded besides the point, a detour from his larger message of personal responsibility.

The danger in the approaches of David and Anthony is that audiences, having been fed a steady diet of messages emphasizing individual action, will be less able to make the leap to collective action (and community building) when it is necessary, especially when the cushy and consoling "we're not all perfect" air bag is sitting between the two, ready to catch those who fail to make the transition.

The stance of the individual responsibility camp is not surprising given their business backgrounds. Generally speaking, the business community is ideologically opposed to government regulation and almost always stresses personal responsibility on questions of the environment (for example, environmental fees). This makes good business sense because personal responsibility picks up all of the externalized costs of doing business, for example recycling or disposal of product packaging.

Kathy, who also believes in a mixture of regulation and individual action, only talks about politics and policy when dealing with middle-aged or older audiences. She

otherwise keeps her solutions section focused on individual actions. This strategy seems upside down, given that older audiences seem less likely to adopt new attitudes or behavior change versus younger audiences (the adage “You can’t teach an old dog new tricks” comes to mind). She believes that small “acts of green” are what “really need to be heard by the most people possible,” believing that a critical mass of citizens engaged with basic personal sustainability actions will eventually prepare society for deeper shifts. Kathy is unique in that she strongly believes in the importance of collective community action, however she feels the experience of taking action must come first, though one cannot help but feel that collective action and politics should also be part of her appeal.

The regulatory camp

Government regulation is by far the most common prescription for change among presenters. Most believe that individual behavior change alone will not solve the climate crisis, and they are generally pessimistic about the kinds of actions advocated for in the solutions section of the presentation. They are cynical about the value of changing light bulbs and encouraging more fuel-efficient transportation. While they acknowledge these social changes have some value, they feel that they pale in comparison to the need for strong government leadership in developing international climate change accords and national regulation. Karen captures the harder edge of this sentiment, contending that behavior change can come about only through regulation:

To a large extent it’s changing behaviors in order to change attitudes. So forcing changes, and that can only come through government, through carbon taxes, through different incentives, through banning of things, just like we banned smoking indoors. Let’s just force it on them and then they’ll move because it’s too difficult to change habits. (Karen)

Given her pessimistic view of public volition in achieving social change, it is not surprising that Karen doubts the impact (and indeed even the point) of her presentations. Her sentiments suggest that TCPC needs to provide a stronger vision of social change for presenters, that can rationalize and explain their piece of the puzzle.

James makes some attempt to articulate such a vision. He believes strongly in the importance of both regulation and public education, but his view of social change focuses on reaching what he calls a “useful plurality,” a “useful minority of committed individuals” who will “demand political action and start demanding that the media take

this seriously and stop being completely irresponsible.” Similar in conception to issue publics, as conceived by Ungar and others, James contends that, “we don’t have to convince the whole world that this is a problem, we don’t even have to convince a majority.” James believes this plurality will serve as a fulcrum in tipping the political scales in favor of climate action. He keeps this picture of social change in his mind before every presentation, and reminds himself that he doesn’t know who, or how many new members of the “useful plurality” might be in any given audience, but that “This may be the day where you get exactly the right person, where we push a little bit closer to critical mass.” James finds this conception useful for rationalizing the time he spends presenting to audiences.

Indeed, any vision that emphasizes the building of a political movement (preferably larger and more mainstream than James’ version) would be useful in addressing the efficacy concerns of presenters like Karen. Such a vision would broaden the objectives they are trying to achieve, beyond individual behavior change (an unlikely outcome given AIT’s lecture-style transmission model and what we know from the research of McKenzie-Mohr and others) to include, or perhaps even focus on individual action and political mobilization through active citizenship at the community-level, a focus that is strangely lacking in a public engagement effort conceived by a career politician.

A role for politics?

Because they believe in regulatory solutions, and despite their cynicism, the pro-regulation camp makes pessimistic but hopeful appeals for strong political leadership.

Taking a geo-political perspective, Robert sees US climate leadership as a prerequisite for global action, and for that to occur he singles out campaign finance reform - removing the political influence of fossil-fuel corporations and lobbyists: “...the biggest hope for change would be to change the way U.S politicians can campaign and their contributions.”

The preference for regulation based on strong political leadership provides an ironic contrast to the deep distrust and lack of confidence these presenters express in the political process (a distrust and apathy that is mirrored in the general public). This might account for the anemic inclusion of political citizenship and calls to action in the

solutions section of the slide show. The exception are those presenters with political careers who still have faith in the process:

I would say as a politician I know that we listen to our constituents. So if our constituents are telling us that we're not addressing an issue that is important to them and you hear it not just from one person but a lot of people, then you believe that there is an issue you're not addressing that's important to them. That's the same at every level. So I would say taking action in your own home is fabulous, influencing things in your business is really great to do, but you know a lot of the solutions lie with provincial, federal, municipal governments and please be sure that you let your elected officials know that this is important to you. (Candace)

These presenters emphasize the importance of writing and speaking to politicians at all levels of government, however very few encourage direct political action (e.g. voting) or participation in the political process, for example joining a political party, volunteering, or running for office.

Another apparent contradiction of the pro-regulation camp, and perhaps another part of the explanation for a lack of politics in its public communication, is that their stronger sentiments about what is actually required to solve the climate crisis are rarely expressed during their presentations, because they feel the public is not ready to hear them. Daniel believes in strong regulation that would challenge the consumptive paradigms of Western society, but he is reluctant to express some of these opinions with audiences because he doesn't believe the public is ready to change:

It seems to me that even in a sustainable world there's no way that we can do some of the things we do now. I would challenge if there's a role for personal transportation in a sustainable world that's not human-powered. I don't say that too, too often because lots of people aren't ready to go there, but here's something I've said, I put up an Einstein quote, 'We can't solve the problems by using the same thinking we used when we created them.' (Daniel)

The Einstein quote is emblematic of the fuzzy, aspirational language of climate change communicators who are unwilling to provide tangible, reality-based personal targets for carbon footprints, for fear of turning-off their audiences. However, in private conversation, Daniel makes strong sustainability pronouncements, which seem useful in understanding the true scale and pace of change required:

We can't keep doing what we're doing. We'll either do something voluntary or it'll happen on its own. All that's to say we need to focus on population, consumption per capita – rethinking everything we consume – and we need to develop an obsession with consuming less as quickly as possible. (Daniel)

One wonders if such frank talk might be more effective than the softer solutions approach of AIT, which emphasizes supply-side clean energy technologies and small personal actions and steps, largely addressed to a consumer identity. There is also the danger that the public might mistake small steps for actual solutions, or (and this has been alluded to throughout our interviews with presenters) that audiences can see the mismatch between suggested baby steps and the larger climate problem. If solutions are perceived to be inadequate, if efficacy is out of reach, a defense and denial approach to the threat of climate change becomes the default. In contrast, Daniel's tough talk is not alarmist, but it also is not sugarcoated, instead it is blunt and prescriptive, qualities that audiences are hungry for.

Indeed, it seems the pro-regulation camp, the group whose favored solutions are dependent on collective, political action should give their audiences more credit as political actors (or at least not give up hope in their potential to act). These presenters appear to feel that the real solutions required to combat the climate crisis are politically unpalatable. However, this belief and resulting apolitical approach is self-defeating, as presenters bear witness to increasingly demotivated, disinterested audiences who are frustrated by a lack of real solutions, and who can smell the ineffective ones a mile off.

If audiences want something more real, and climate science tells us we need real solutions (serious reductions in carbon emissions and rates of consumption), why not serve them straight up? Could a political movement based on simple citizenship, a political orientation that emphasizes a simple, mindful, low carbon lifestyle paired with active citizenship, appeal to the masses, or at least a useful plurality? Repositioning their role as advocates, as engaged citizens stoking citizenship, could previously disaffected presenters be re-energized and re-engaged?

The pace of change

When asked about the pace of social change, presenters agreed it is a slow process, a “long-game,” with long time horizons:

Put your hands in the air a couple feet apart. Your right and left hand represent polar positions on the issue. People can only come down a certain distance, moving down that line in baby steps or in incremental steps. You can't move people too far at once. Sometimes you just hope you've put enough information in their mind that they'll listen to the next piece of information they receive and that it accumulates into a belief system that believes that climate change is happening. (Candace)

Simon accepts that it is likely he may not see a substantive solution to the climate crisis in his lifetime (though based on the latest climate research, we must all sincerely hope that he does), a fact that he steels himself against by conceptualizing his work as a moral crusade: "It's not a reason to resign. I work for sustainable development because it's a moral issue."

While presenters (and this researcher) have varying degrees of discomfort with the idea that public engagement with climate change and requisite social change will be slow, the individual responsibility camp seems quite comfortable with it. David compares social change (with which he is fascinated, and enjoys "pushing along") to the slow, deliberate and forward thinking necessary to change the direction of an oil tanker:

I think of public perceptions and attitudes towards the environment as a super tanker that needs to be gently prodded, to change a little bit at a time and eventually achieve a 180 or at least 90-degree turn. (David)

A 90-degree turn is again symbolic of the minimal lifestyle changes that David thinks society needs to adopt to mitigate climate change. The simile of a super tanker itself is indicative of a carbon-intense future, an inappropriate simile to connote low carbon social innovation (such symbols should not be taken for granted, but rather challenged). Indeed, the concept of "baby steps" towards a tipping point is popular among the individual responsibility group. They believe that change is incremental and that it needs to be as "humanly easy" as possible.

The pace and scale of change that climate researchers say must happen in the next two decades to avoid dangerous or even catastrophic climate change, suggests the "baby steps" message may actually be counterproductive, misleading audiences into believing there is time or room for easing into a sustainable lifestyle.

Technology and hypocrisy

Significantly, only one presenter cited technological “silver bullets” as a solution to the climate crisis, believing new technologies that drastically change the way we produce and consume energy will be developed. This is significant because it shows a majority of presenters put few eggs in the technological solutions basket. This is a sharp contrast with the AIT solutions section which we have seen deals largely in supply-side technological solutions, congruent with Al Gore’s close association with technological innovation (he sits on the board of Apple, is a senior adviser to Google, and has founded his own television network, Current TV).

Indeed, it can be argued that AIT was partly a commercial for Apple, and the Mac Book Pro laptop specifically. Al Gore’s ubiquitous laptop never left his side, whether he was presenting, being driven in cars, or traveling on airplanes. In fact, technology makes an impressive debut in AIT, from the slideshow itself and the scissor lift that Al Gore uses to show temperatures going “off the charts,” to the high-tech “Al Gore Bat Cave” (his home office) where he watches projected climate news clips from around the world, including what look like live shots of Hurricane Katrina. In particular, his busy use of transportation technology itself (likely intended by the filmmakers to show the amount of traveling he undertakes to spread his message) actually romanticizes carbon-intensive personal mobility. In fact, Al Gore’s jet-setting lifestyle (including ownership of multiple palatial mansions) has made him susceptible to the same accusations of personal hypocrisy that his own AIT presenters and other environmental advocates face.

Walter Mead’s essay “The Failure of Al Gore” is an especially sharp attack on the inconsistencies between Al Gore’s climate change message and his own personal behavior, a dressing down that is hard to ignore because it comes from a well-known writer and expert in American foreign policy at Yale university, who also happens to be a centrist democrat:

The head of Mothers Against Drunk Driving cannot be convicted of driving while under the influence. The head of the IRS cannot be a tax cheat. The most visible leader of the world’s green movement cannot live a life of conspicuous consumption, spewing far more carbon into the atmosphere than almost all of those he castigates for their wasteful ways. Mr. Top Green can’t also be a carbon pig...There’s a gospel hymn some people in Tennessee still sing that makes the point: “You can’t be a beacon if your light don’t shine.” (Mead, 2011)

Many environmental advocates would prefer to gloss over accusations of hypocrisy as fallacious ad hominem attacks. At best, they offer specious rationalizations for their own carbon-intensive lifestyles, including notions that it is important for “key influencers” to fly around spreading the message rapidly, either to wider audiences, or powerful decision makers. On occasion, they offset such flights to help deflect criticism and ease their consciences. Anticipating such a response from Gore, Mead continues his attack:

It is not enough to buy carbon offsets (aka “indulgences”) with your vast wealth, not enough to power your luxurious mansions with exotic low impact energy sources the average person could not afford, not enough to argue that you only needed the jet so that you could promote your earth-saving film. (Mead, 2011)

Regardless of questionable rationalizations, the conclusion drawn by the public is inescapable. Mead is blunt in surmising how skeptics view Gore’s carbon-intensive lifestyle: “...if the peril were as great as he says and he cares about it as much as he claims, Gore’s sense of civic duty would call him to set an example of conspicuous non-consumption.”

At the same time Gore was receiving the Nobel Peace prize along with the IPCC for his climate change communication work, a conservative think tank used the opportunity to criticize him for using an average of 16,000 kilowatt hours of electricity, per month in his Nashville mansion. His average monthly bill of \$1,206 in 2006, was contrasted with the typical Nashville home, which uses about 1,300 kilowatt hours a month (Associated Press, 2007). In response, Gore told an interviewer with CNN (as reported by the Associated Press) that, “You’re going to have people try to attack the messenger in order to get at the message. They have not been able to succeed...The only way to solve this crisis is for individuals to make changes in their own lives.” (The latter half of this statement affirms the position of the individual responsibility camp). Gore made this statement in 2007. Since then, it could be argued, climate skeptics have been successful in attacking the messenger and the message. The “Climate Reality” setback that introduces this chapter is evidence of this.

As previously discussed, TCPC presenters find themselves attempting to communicate within a public sphere that is less hospitable to the climate change message today than it was in 2007. Perhaps this is partly due to perceived inconsistencies between the climate change risk message and the actual behavior of

environmental intermediaries themselves. Within TCPC itself, presenters received enough questions from their audiences that they launched a petition asking Al Gore to clarify his meat-eating habits. As bestselling author and environmentalist, John Robbins points out, “Refusing meat is the single most effective thing you can do to reduce your carbon footprint.” (2010, p. 165). Robbins points out the absence of consumption-targeted solutions in AIT: “...Al Gore presents a compelling argument for the seriousness of human-induced global warming. But for some reason he asks us to change our light bulbs while never asking us to change our diets.” (2010, p. 164).

Questions about consistency of values and behavior are not *ad hominem* attacks. They cannot be swatted away as pesky questions. They are persistent, important human concerns that seek information not only to confirm the seriousness of the climate change message, and the credibility of intermediaries, but also the viability of the proposed solutions. As long as environmental advocates live a carbon-intensive lifestyle, how can their audiences ever take their climate warnings seriously? More importantly, is a viable climate politics and collective action even possible without congruent personal values and behavior?

Writing in a recent *New York Times* op-ed, Gernot Wagner contends that individual action, “distracts us from the need for collective action, and it doesn’t add up to enough. Self-interest, not self-sacrifice, is what induces noticeable change. Only the right economic policies will enable us as individuals to be guided by self-interest and still do the right thing for the planet.” (Wagner, 2011). While it is true that individual action alone is not enough to tackle the climate crisis, and individual acts face considerable barriers often best overcome by collective action, Wagner’s reasoning contradicts itself. If self-interested, extrinsic values are the only, or even the predominant motivation to act, how can a viable climate politics based on intrinsic, bigger-than-self values (as advocated by Crompton and others) emerge? Don’t the “right economic policies” (Wagner is referring to putting a price on carbon) require the kind of political currency that can only come from deeply held intrinsic values on the part of the electorate, stoked at the community-level?

Personally, I’ve experienced the power of local, community-level action like community gardening and urban agriculture, initiatives that require some level of individual action. At a minimum, they require individuals who are motivated by intrinsic values and willing to make a bigger-than-self investment in time and effort to improve a

public space. Local residents will admire and support such initiatives from afar, perhaps politically, but they need to see something, some bigger-than-self action to agree with and believe in, in the first place. That is where individual action, well publicized and communicated at the community-level, is critical. Intermediaries must walk their talk. If not us, then who? If not now, then when?

Sustainable degradation

...you cannot be a leading environmentalist who hopes to lead the general public into a long and difficult struggle for sacrifice and fundamental change if your own conduct is so flagrantly inconsistent with the green gospel you profess. If the heart of your message is that the peril of climate change is so imminent and so overwhelming that the entire political and social system of the world must change, now, you cannot fly on private jets. You cannot own multiple mansions. You cannot even become enormously rich investing in companies that will profit if the policies you advocate are put into place. (Mead)

Here Mead is alluding to Gore's personal financial investments in a variety of green technologies as documented by Broder (2009), including some made as a partner in Kleiner, Perkins, Caufield & Byers, one of the world's most successful venture capital firms, based in Silicon Valley and specializing in IT, energy, greentech industries, life sciences, utilities and pharmaceuticals. While Gore has pledged to donate his salary from the position, he has said nothing about the money he stands to gain through investments. Mead's criticism is of course valid, but it also answers its own question: Al Gore is part of the global power elite, and all indications are that he expects the elite to lead (and live lavish lifestyles) on the money-paved road to "sustainability," hence his retort that the only way to solve the climate crisis "...is for individuals to make change in their *own* lives (my emphasis)." In other words, 'Mind your own business, and I'll mind mine.'

All of this gives Luke considerable ammunition for his conception of sustainable degradation – the systematization of environmental degradation in "sustainable forms" - a wider critique of AIT and the commodification of climate change that is truly damning:

At best, Gore's work seems essentially to 'greenwash' existing networks of corporate organization and expert technocracy with renewed institutional legitimacy that only rinses today's unsustainable economic

status quo in the refreshing, but not fully cleansing, waters of sustainable development ideology. While there is a need for systemic reforms in economic production, government regulation, technological innovation, and social distribution to mitigate climate change, Gore's many engagements with big business, venture capital, and global media do not appear to offer such a radical transformation. Instead, his basic project of decarbonizing the commodity chain mainly would appear to be a new program for further economic development that might not even retard, much less fully reverse, current climate change trends. (Luke, p. 1811)

Through sustainable degradation, Luke contends that, "climate-changing companies can maintain economic development by sustaining the degradation of natural environments with products tied to:

- Greener growth, not necessarily truly green growth;
- A cleaner environment, not a really clean environment;
- Individual choice, not collective institutional transformation;
- Painless consumer choices (Priuses, green buildings, and compact fluorescent light bulbs, etc.) as new principles of living, not burdensome producer regulation (stringent carbon taxes, serious fuel regulation standards etc.)." (Luke, p. 1819)

Based on Luke's criteria, the solutions section of AIT can be read as a checklist for sustainable degradation. TCPC's website, listing sponsorships from climate-changing companies and short write-ups about their commitments to sustainability, further corroborates Luke's argument.

Perhaps at his most cynical, Luke suggests that in order for Gore to maintain his "proconsular" status as the green defender of the world, he must engage in continuing exercises of "mass persuasion" to keep from becoming "old news," and that global warming must be re-spun to keep the topic "rolling as 'must see' pop culture infotainment." (p. 1813). Luke points to the Live Earth concerts, and would also point to the WE campaign and the most recent 24 Hours of Reality campaign, as evidence of this. The WE campaign was a \$300 million dollar three-year public advocacy campaign, centred largely on television advertising and other mass media, targeting "influencers," and described by The Washington Post as "one of the most ambitious and costly public advocacy campaigns in U.S. history." (Eilperin, 2008). One presenter was resentful about the amount of money spent on television ads in the WE campaign, and felt the

money could have been better spent organizing on-the-ground presentations of AIT.

Perhaps the larger ethos of sustainable degradation accounts for the ENGO community's continuing reliance on information deficit-based mass persuasion campaigns. The political actors against which these organizations seek to renew their legitimacy, are not predominantly the general public, but rather the technocratic, corporate and government leaders who pay close attention to media coverage and other forms of elite discussion. They are impressed by big ad budgets (not the particulars of the message) because of what they reveal about elite opinion. If the general public does not have a seat at the sustainable degradation table, beyond the role of consumers and token demos, the affective and behavioral elements of public engagement need not be exercised, hence the continuing preference for information-deficit based campaigns.

There is no shortage of moral pronouncements among the ENGO community, but there is a shortage of moral action. To reiterate one of Luke's observations, "While Gore sees saving the Earth as an immediate moral imperative, sustainable degradation turns it into a long-term business plan." The model of social change adopted by AIT and numerous other ENGOs (probably unwittingly), is that of sustainable degradation, far too little, far too late, relative to what climate science tells us is necessary to avert catastrophic climate change.

In the long-term, this inadequacy cannot continue. Luke thinks the alliance between "moralizers" and "managers" will not be easy, "since the atmospheric alterations and biospheric ill-effects of global warming are apparent now." In the coming decades those effects will worsen, "so sustaining capitalism, democracy, and ecology will be a tremendous challenge with an intrinsic legitimation problem." (p. 1819). Luke sees this as the reason CEOs are flocking to "envirocratic" roundtables and transnational alliances of "mutual interest," seeking shelter and a wider community (made up of NGOs, academia, government and business) with which to share the inevitable blame. The underlying goal is to be seen as coping "with ecological collapse in a public spirited manner, but still turn a profit, stay in power, and dominate the debate." (p. 1820).

The mismatch between the gravity of climate change and the solutions proposed by AIT, and perhaps even the notion of an all-knowing presenter itself - an intermediary with confidence out of proportion to reality - is dangerous. On the tableau of "An Inconvenient Truth," Gore is positioned as the truth keeper and savior, and his

intermediaries as disciples, but the gospel is conceited. Luke contends that “There is far too much presumption of a power and knowledge not yet attained implied by Al Gore’s naïve belief in ‘an Earth in Balance’ [referencing Gore’s earlier book on sustainability], reprocessed GIS images, and ecological moralizing PowerPoints as An Inconvenient Truth implies.” That is, the conceit that we know how to balance the earth blinds us to the deeper unsustainability of modern society. Without humility and a true grasp of the challenge and changes society must undertake, we are poised to miss the mark.

As Luke points out, when the diagnosis of global climate change is read closely, it “undercuts its equally promising prognosis for global economic, political and social change to reverse the mounting ill effects of global warming.” Luke concludes that the prevailing systems of sustainable degradation as well as Gore’s “planetarian ethics” are dictating both a massive capital and infrastructural renewal, but also a continued march towards, in Gore’s own words (as quoted by Luke), “...a degraded, diminished, and hostile planet for our children and grandchildren and for human kind.”

How do we extricate ourselves from the cognitive dissonance cast by the long shadow of sustainable degradation with its deep and insidious roots in the sustainability movement – much of which was cultivated by AIT itself? There is an answer to the dissonance, the same kind of clarity and resolve that climate change will bring in just a few short decades. To quote Daniel, “We can’t keep doing what we’re doing. We’ll either do something voluntary or it’ll happen on its own.” That is to say that public engagement will be forced to abandon the ethos of sustainable degradation in the light of true community dialogue and collaboration, and to engage citizens as equal partners – whether it likes it or not. The bottleneck will blow itself up.

As we have seen, many of the limitations and discomfort of presenters in interacting with audiences through the rubric of AIT, are rooted in the sustainable degradation ethos of the AIT message and TCPC organization (e.g. the disinterest in feedback and true dialogue, and a proprietary approach to climate change education). This is not to say that TCPC presenters, board members or even Al Gore himself are aware of this ethos, that is precisely why it is so problematic – it is an ideological blind spot that locks ENGOs into successive waves of all too ineffective information deficit-based campaigns. It is an ethos that at its core is not serious about public engagement. Fortunately, cognitive dissonance of the variety induced by the threat of climate change

and the plain inadequacy of current social response has the potential to be enormously productive. It is an opportunity to change attitudes and behaviors, and among its first converts are AIT presenters themselves. Their interactions with real-life public audiences have produced powerful insights and ideas for public engagement that go beyond sustainable degradation, and that as discussed previously, are based on social capital and community-level dialogue – the “new conversation.” We now return to the concentrated canvas of the intermediary and the tears in the fabric of everyday life over which they preside, to find the broad strokes of a new vision for public engagement on climate change.

A vision for truer, more effective, more resilient public engagement

Through our preceding chapter conclusions, we have identified specific tactics and approaches for public engagement by intermediaries, and we have explored some of the practical elements and support required to host the “new conversation” within communities. In these final pages, I explore some of the broader themes that emerged in the research, and that offer prescriptions for *truer*, more *effective*, more *resilient* public engagement, not only for climate change, but also social change communication more generally.

I say “truer” because as the last section shows, current approaches to public engagement efforts, especially those practiced by ENGOs, are conceived largely within the conceit of sustainable degradation, a process that does not offer the public an equal seat, and that contrasts sharply with the kind of community building, collaborative environmental planning and social capital generation, discussed in our literature review as being requisite for the achievement of true sustainability (hence the “effective” description).

Indeed, sustainable degradation is just one symptom of the larger erosion in community that has been characterized and rationalized by modernization. It is one of many community ailments that Rossing and Glowacki-Dudka (who advocate renewing community at the local level) see reaching “crisis proportions” and which is beginning to spark “conscious efforts to reverse these trends by reconnecting people at the local level and by tapping their creative energies.” (2001, p. 730).

I say “resilient” in the community sense of the word, defined by Chaskin (2008) as a “positive, adaptive response to adversity” (p. 66), and to borrow a more formal definition from the Centre for Community Economic Enterprise (as quoted by Healey and Hampshire) “intentional action to enhance the personal and collective capacity of its [a community’s] citizens and institutions to respond to, and influence the course of social and economic change.” (2003, p. 1). Resiliency of the intermediary community itself, is a prerequisite for sustained and successful engagement on climate change within communities.

Perhaps not surprisingly, many of the themes that might produce a truer, more effective and more resilient public engagement, mirror the foundational elements of resilient communities. For the purposes of organizing these themes, I hew roughly to a community capital framework as articulated by Callaghan and Colton (2008), as well as community building and collaboration concepts and models like the Community Health Governance model and narrative based dialogue. Callaghan and Colton break community capital into six constituent parts: Environmental capital, human capital, social capital, cultural capital, public structural capital and commercial capital. Apart from the foundational importance of environmental capital, human capital, social capital and cultural capital are the most relevant to the following discussion and recommendations.

A community is born

At the outset of a public engagement effort, the make-up of the institution and the initial launch of an intermediary community are of the utmost importance. TCPC was the seed of the AIT presenter community, and because of an inauspicious start in terms of organizational intention and subsequent support for presenters, the presenter attrition rate was high. The direction and purpose of the community was unclear.

Like many organizations, TCPC attempted to maintain tight, top-down control over content and presenter innovation (perhaps getting caught up in some of the siege mentality of climate scientists, concerned about climate skeptics manipulating and taking their findings out of context, a defensive and insular mentality that spawned “Climategate”). This kind of command and control causes community to wither on the vine, because it disrespects human capital.

Organizations that seek to build community must support nascent community

both in terms of basic logistics and more importantly with honest moral support. Top-down and proprietary sensibilities must be replaced with humble open source approaches to both interpersonal relations, as well as the design of electronic communication platforms and other forms of logistical support that emphasize sharing. Such support can help guard against presenter burnout, and extend presenting life, resulting in a healthier, longer-lived presenter community. Such a community is a rich environment for social capital generation, and as we have seen, such capital is important not only for behavior change among audiences, but also in reducing barriers and increasing motivation for presenters to continue presenting and modeling change.

Embrace your citizens

As we have seen throughout this research, status quo public engagement lacks affective and behavioral dimensions (as per Lorenzoni et. al), because of ideological blind spots about the importance of true public engagement. Historically, such engagement has not fit with the technocratic, expert model of risk communication and sustainable degradation favored by government and ENGOs. Many organizations avoid “preaching to the converted,” partly because they think they have actually achieved something with their audience, and partly because they do not know how to engage them any further. Creating educational situations where citizens can become “subject-interpreters” and “subject-social actors” (as Gonzales-Gaudio and Meira-Cardia call them), aka active, engaged citizens, is not part of their DNA.

In a powerful commentary titled, “Inclusive Community Engagement: a Grounding Principle for Collaborative Problem Solving,” Baker and Collier, in reflecting on the Community Health Governance Model of Lasker and Weiss, are prescriptive about what true public engagement is. They show just how sharply offside contemporary public engagement and scholarship on climate change communication has been, including the use of intermediaries themselves:

Engaging community members and groups in collaboration is not about inviting them to be foot soldiers for an already determined initiative that is for or about them. Neither is it about community groups simply collecting data, holding focus groups, mobilizing the community, or otherwise validating an externally driven initiative. It is no longer acceptable for “professionals” to determine the issues and think that they, because of their “expertise,” know how to fix them. If the people who are affected do

not participate in and “own” the solutions to the problems, implementations will be half-hearted at best, probably misunderstood, and, more likely than not, fail. (Baker and Collier, 2003, p. 48)

Public engagement efforts must fully embrace their citizens, especially those active citizens who keep coming back for more, wanting to engage more deeply and build community with like-minded people. These citizens should be equal partners in the message and the solutions. Notions of expertise are false. True engagement should be written and conducted like a charter of rights or a constitution (minus the founding fathers), treating all citizens as equal. In the absence of such engagement, citizens become increasingly distrustful, disengaged and disinterested, hence the public backlash to information deficit-based transmission campaigns, and the adamant “not an expert” positioning of intermediaries.

In this same spirit of equality and accessibility, we are reminded of the multifaceted power of “the local.” Local is something we all feel. It is that which is closest to us and matters the most. It is the physical and non-material territory we care about, that we understand, hopefully intimately. In those respects, the local is the ideal place to make information relevant and accessible, countering the knowledge-ignorance paradox, through familiarity and accessibility. By showing changes in the natural environments and cycles with which we are most familiar, the local enables discussion frames like global warming preparedness, which is important not only for considering adaptation, but also overcoming scientific disagreements to endorse the importance of mitigation (as per Kirby, et. al). Localization lowers barriers of cognition, is more affective and credible, and thus more engaging. Embracing citizens means embracing the local.

Communication is the lifeblood of community

One of the few media businesses surviving these days, and even turning a profit, is community newspapers. That is because in spite of modernization, there is a strong (and maybe even increasing) appetite for local news - to feel connected to one’s local community and environment.

Communication is the lifeblood of community; it is critical for establishing shared values, making value propositions, and generating social capital. Intrinsic values and model citizenship are captured and disseminated through communication – the basis of

social change. Communication is also the means for “putting an issue in the air” (Ungar) and transforming institutional risk definitions into public issues, even hot crises (via bridging metaphors). It is through conversation that issue cultures emerge.

Throughout this research we have seen the importance of engaging small groups, and promoting genuine dialogue. We have also seen the important role of early human contact (shaking hands, sharing stories) in allowing audiences and intermediaries to trust one another, and to be more open and vulnerable, allowing stronger empathetic connections.

One of the most important forms of communication, especially in light of a sometimes-hostile public sphere, is feedback between audiences and presenters. Without such feedback it is difficult for audiences and intermediaries to feel connected, and it is impossible for intermediaries to know if they are making a difference. Feedback is a prerequisite for both efficacy, as well as giving intermediaries a sense of purpose.

Innovation and community renewal

Public engagement, like a small town, must be open to innovation and new ideas – new blood - lest it become stagnant and stifling. Static messages, presentation formats, and the traditional lecture format, are dead in the water.

Hybrid presenters pose an interesting challenge: How can the AIT message grow and change and make itself relevant to other interpretive communities? How can the scientific credibility of a message be preserved while embracing an open source approach to information sharing? Is there potential in Creative Commons copyright licensing? Community members need to feel ownership over the message. They should be provided with tools and translations, and encouraged to take the message and modify it and make it their own, reshaping it in ways that make it more interesting, relevant and valuable within their interpretive communities. This is the way to facilitate the spread of shared wisdom and “aha moments.” The value of engaging audiences as equal partners in the design of messages and community dialogue cannot be overstated.

A community of stories and laughter

Resilient communities are communities of strongly shared narratives and a sense of humor. Throughout our research we saw the importance of local, personal, affective stories. We saw the importance of emotion and vulnerability in storytelling. We also saw the value and multiple uses of humor in facilitating empathetic communication that respects community member needs, as well as makes things fun. Humor empowers. It is a survival tool, particularly when challenges are dire. Humor as a tool for public engagement is underdeveloped and rich with potential for generating community dialogue and expressing shared values. It deserves further exploration.

Rhetorical narratives can remove barriers and resistances. They can motivate and empower. Our research identified the importance of local, personal, “everyman” narratives. Parental narratives, including parent/hero epiphanies are especially powerful, and very difficult for critics to take issue with. Stories that position intermediaries as PLUs and can induce “person in the room” empathy are also powerful.

Community narratives should emphasize the power of individuals and collective action (e.g. “change your corner of the world,” and “the power of one”). Everyday heroes should replace glorified historical leaders. The focus of these stories on local, tangible impacts is a natural fit with local ecological management and collaborative environmental planning (e.g. Kirschenman’s contention that we can only really know and effectively manage what is right in front of us).

Finally, the most powerful stories are drawn from the community itself, and in this respect, the importance of equal, two-way dialogue cannot be overstated. To learn, and to be moved, we must all listen intently, as equals.

Model citizens

“Be the change you want to see in the world,” is a popular Gandhi quote bandied about in social change circles. Blinded by the ethos of sustainable degradation, truly sustainable behaviour is rarely modeled by those who advocate it. The practical effects

of this tendency are public perceptions of hypocrisy (severely damaging to credibility), as well as a lack of real-life examples of low carbon social innovation.

Walking the talk not only fills in the picture, it becomes a powerful way of maintaining presenter resolve (sustainability and communicating it to others become an important part of their lifestyle), and even resilience, as families realize they can live more modestly (reductions in consumption conserve resources). Such efforts should be accompanied by stories that emphasize the volunteer nature of the work, as well as other intrinsic, bigger-than-self values.

In addition to walking the talk, it is important that public engagement efforts seek out truly committed intermediaries. The exclusivity of the AIT training, attracted different tiers of presenters, including presenters who were looking for brand and title, and who following the training, promptly failed to present the agreed number of presentations. The influence of these presenters was damaging to a cohesive sense of community, creating the perception of different classes of presenters largely based on wealth and social status (some presenters bought their way into the training). A strong sense of community was also damaged by absent, hard to reach presenters. These presenters represent dead ends within the intermediary network. They compromise communication and social capital, are an unnecessary drain on limited resources, and should be weeded out prior to training (admission to training must be truly equitable). In general, they kill community.

Finally, it is simple, but also revolutionary: being friendly, authentic, good human beings goes a long way in creating meaningful community and a cooperation culture. Central to this is the ability to listen and to be genuinely interested in learning about other people and their experiences. Get to know your neighbor.

Community visioning and a values proposition

The goal of effective public engagement should be community visioning and subsequent personal and collective action. Central to achieving this is the creation of values statements, a process ideally stoked through questions about shared value propositions, like, “What can we do to live our commitment to X?” Public engagement advocates must ask honest, future-oriented questions that invite community dialogue.

The answers to these questions can reveal inconsistencies between values and actual behavior, and can produce the cognitive dissonance necessary for learning and behavior change.

An additional benefit of this approach is that a truly equitable process that engages participants in visioning, has the potential to weed out skepticism on its own. Indeed, community visions and larger community consensus appear to be incontrovertible, largely immune to attacks because they are aspirational and based on deeply embedded community values and truths - values like resilience, security, happiness and sustenance. This envisioning process should begin with a light overview of climate science and an accessible, locally-focused problem definition, before shifting to spend more time on visioning and solutions development.

Through our research we have seen the failure of public engagement efforts to provide clear-eyed problem definitions and a clear picture of the challenge posed by climate change. As a result, there has been a disconnect between the gravity of what audiences hear in the news, and the adequacy of proposed solutions. Solutions need to shift from a focus on supply-side, to demand-side reductions, based in shared community values. Intermediaries must engage audiences as citizens, and they should not shy away from politics. Tools like carbon footprint calculators are useful for situating responsibility both personally and collectively, as individuals are able to see the impact of their own efforts, as well as the limitations imposed by structural barriers that only government can help reduce, necessitating collective political action.

To conclude, Cox's conception of environmental communicators anchors this thesis firmly in community, and applies to social change communication more generally: Environmental communicators are spokespersons for other persons, birds, wolves, fish, trees, mountains or any other community member in an attempt to promote *community stability*. While I freely acknowledge that social change communication must often be disruptive (blowing up the bottleneck), rocking the boat on behalf of the social change issues with which we concern ourselves, we are ultimately seeking various forms of stability (e.g. ecological, health, social etc.) through resiliency.

As we head towards the possibility of irreversible climate change, we are playing a game of Russian roulette, with a gun full of bullets. The cost will be our own agency and freewill. In the absence of collective action to dramatically reduce the carbon

intensity of our industries and lifestyles, a social revolution on a scale and pace we have never seen before, we are throwing the hope of resiliency to the dogs of catastrophic climate change. There is still an outside chance to course correct, but doing so means that public engagement must become more than it has ever been before.

This heavy responsibility poses a value proposition to all would-be social change advocates: Does your commitment to your issue extend to actually taking personal and political action, to listening to and embracing community in a way that is commensurate to the threat, or moral wrong posed by your issue? If your answer is “no,” or “maybe,” it would be best to advocate for something else, otherwise you are likely standing in the way of real change.

Be the change you want to see in the world, for real.

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Appendix: Semi-Structured Interview Guide

JPEG images of the semi-structured interview guide (12 pages).

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTRODUCTION OF INTERVIEWER

Hello, my name is Andrew Frank, and I am studying the experience of presenters of *An Inconvenient Truth* as environmental communicators and their relationship with audiences.

During this interview, I would like to discuss your experience of presenting *An Inconvenient Truth* and the development of your own presentation content and style, as well as your relationship with audiences and other presenters. With these topics in mind...

SELF SELECTION & BIOGRAPHY

Grand Tour Q's	Probe Q's	Behaviour or Adaptation	Initiated By		What is the behaviour or adaptation in response to and what is its effect?
			Presenter	Audience	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can you start by telling me a little bit about yourself, occupation, interests, where you grew up (rural or urban)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why did you become a presenter of <i>An Inconvenient Truth</i>? 	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can you tell me how you became a presenter of <i>An Inconvenient Truth</i>? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Even before the ATT training, what qualities about yourself do you think qualified you for the role of presenter? Did anyone encourage you to become a presenter? 	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

PRESENTATION EXPERIENCE & DEFINITIONS OF SUCCESS

Grand Tour Q's	Probe Q's	Behaviour or Adaptation	Initiated By		What is the behaviour or adaptation in response to and what is its effect?
			Presenter/Audience		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can you describe the experience of being a presenter? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the most important, interesting or significant aspects of that experience from your perspective? What do you remember? What did you like about it? What did you dislike about it? What was the best aspect of the experience? What was the worst? What does the range of audiences you've presented to look like? 	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do you consider to be a successful presentation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do you know? Learning outcomes? Audience satisfaction? Goals? What do you do to achieve a successful presentation? 	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

CHANGES TO CONTENT

Grand Tour Q's	Probe Q's	Adaptation or Behaviour	Initiated By		What is the behaviour or adaptation in response to and what is its effect?
			Presenter/	Audience	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's different about your presentation today when compared to your first presentation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is it different than Al Gore's original presentation? • Have you ever edited, added or removed slides from the original slideshow? • Have you ever made changes in relation to external events? Why? How did you become aware of the event? E.g. CRU controversy? Copenhagen? New data about shrinking ice-caps? BC carbon tax? (PROBE EACH ONE FURTHER). • Anything changed in response to audience feedback? • Anything to make it more local? • Have the presentations required you to develop or create anything new for the presentation? • Have you ever updated any sections of your presentation? 				

DELIVERY

Grand Tour Q's	Probe Q's	Behaviour or Adaptation	Initiated By		What is the behaviour or adaptation in response to and what is its effect?
			Presenter/	Audience	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any sections of the slideshow that you present differently, for example, emotional delivery, timing/speed? Are there any special stories or anecdotes you use in making your presentation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you emphasize or de-emphasize any elements of the presentation? How do you use facial expressions or body language in your presentations? Anything you do consciously in terms of presenting information? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you ever adapt your presentation based on your audience? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Al Gore has mentioned a "hope and despair budget" - is this something you're aware of and how do you manage yours? Can you give examples? 				

CREDIBILITY, TRUST & RESPONSIBILITY

Grand Tour Q's	Probe Q's	Behaviour or Adaptation	Initiated By		What is the behaviour or adaptation in response to and what is its effect?
			Presenter/	Audience	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do you change during the presentations? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do you dress for your presentations? Do you dress consistently? If not, why not? Do you ever make changes to your personal introduction, biography or identity as a presenter? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do you present yourself to audiences? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the way you present yourself ever change? If so, how and why? Do you present yourself as an expert? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How would you describe your relationship with audiences? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do audiences trust you? Do you feel a desire to earn or maintain trust and credibility? How do you earn and maintain that trust and perception of credibility? 				

Presenters of An Inconvenient Truth as Intermediaries of Environmental Communication

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do you have a sense of responsibility when you're presenting An Inconvenient Truth? How would you describe it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What responsibility, if any do you feel to your audience? To the Climate Project?• Do you ever feel like your presenting bad news?• How do audiences react to the "bad news" of climate change?• How do you handle that?				
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RELATIONSHIP WITH AUDIENCE & AUDIENCE EMPOWERMENT

Grand Tour Q's	Probe Q's	Behaviour or Adaptation	Initiated By		What is the behaviour or adaptation in response to and what is its effect?
			Presenter/	Audience	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you do anything in advance to prepare for your presentations? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you ever adapt your presentation based on what you know about an audience in advance of a presentation? Do you have any interaction with your audience in advance of your presentation? During the presentation do you 'read' your audience? Do you ever make changes during a presentation based on audience reaction? Have you ever declined to give a presentation? Why? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you ever integrate audience feedback into your presentations? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you ever collaborate with your audiences during your presentations? 				

Presenters of An Inconvenient Truth as Intermediaries of Environmental Communication

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there anything you do to increase the chances that your audience will leave the presentation either better educated or more willing to take action on climate change? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you attempt to empower your audiences? How do you do this? Do you ever experience challenges in your presentations? How do you respond to these challenges? What's the most effective way you've found to facilitate audience participation, conversation or even debate? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you ever experienced climate skepticism during your presentations? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do you deal with climate skepticism? Have you observed an increase in climate skepticism? How (if at all) has "climate gate" affected your presentation? 				

CAUSATION, BLAME, ACTION & SOLUTIONS

Grand Tour Q's	Probe Q's	Behaviour or Adaptation	Initiated By		What is the behaviour or adaptation in response to and what is its effect?
			Presenter/	Audience	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During your presentation do you ever attribute causation or blame for the climate crisis? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do the factors or actors you attribute as playing a role in the climate crisis stay consistent across your presentations or do they change? If so, how and why? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During your presentation do you offer audiences solutions or encourage them to take action on climate change? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do the solutions or proposed actions stay consistent across your presentations or do they change? If so, how and why? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you ever express criticism during your presentation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is your criticism consistent in terms of its targets and the intensity of the criticism you express across presentations? Does it ever change? If so, how and why? 				

COLLABORATION, PARTING THOUGHTS & CONCLUSIONS					
Grand Tour Q's	Probe Q's	Behaviour or Adaptation	Initiated By		What is the behaviour or adaptation in response to and what is its effect?
			Presenter/	Audience	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have much contact with other presenters of AIT? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you ever watched other presenters present? Have you ever talked with them about your respective experiences as presenters? Was this useful or helpful? Have you ever collaborated with other presenters of AIT in developing your presentations or sharing presentation tips? What kinds of support do you provide one another? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some presenters focus their presentations on certain audiences. Is there an audience or community you've focused on more often or feel more of an affinity with? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can you describe the audience? How is it different presenting AIT to this audience? What works better? Is there anything you do differently? 				

Presenters of An Inconvenient Truth as Intermediaries of Environmental Communication

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What have you learned about audiences more generally? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What was your most successful presentation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why did it feel that way? What do you think made it successful? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What have you learned about presenting climate change information and An Inconvenient Truth? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What kind of assistance or help would you find more useful in terms of improving your presentation or your skills as a presenter? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice on science? Public speaking? Making good slides? Psychology of audiences? What has limited the impact of your presentations or your ability as a presenter? What information or advice do you think would help you become a better presenter? 			

Presenters of An Inconvenient Truth as Intermediaries of Environmental Communication

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What has been your greatest resource during the development and delivery of your presentations? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you ever benefited from outside assistance, advice or expertise? What was that advice? Why was it useful? Where did it come from? 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What words of advice would you have for future presenters of An Inconvenient Truth or similar environmental communication efforts? 					

THANK YOU! - Thank interviewee for their time and participation and remind them that they will receive a copy of the completed research. Ask if it's possible to call back or email for any subsequent necessary clarifications and ensure that proper contact information is on file (phone and email).
